

# A measure to study the Uniqueness Perception in adolescents: adaptation of Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale to the Italian population

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This work aims at adapting the Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale to the Italian population. The scale assesses the perception of personal uniqueness, understood as the perception by adolescents of their being special and distinct from all others in their individuality. The uniqueness represents one of the dimensions that structure the personal fable, part of the new theoretical perspective regarding the intellectual egocentrism in adolescence (Lapsley, 1993). The Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale, translated and adapted to the Italian population, was administered to 211 adolescents aged between 16 and 19. In addition, we set out to examine possible gender differences. Another aim was to assess the validity of divergent/convergent Uniqueness as compared to other constructs of psychological distress (social anxiety, loneliness). These constructs were selected, on the basis of the indications provided by the literature indicates that significant positive and negative associations between them (Gossens et al., 2002; Laspley, 1993). The statistical analysis made it possible to verify the internal consistency and the factorial structure of the scale. The results confirm the validity and reliability of the Italian adaptation to the original scale. Even in the Italian version the scale seems to be useful to investigate the perception of uniqueness by adolescents. There were no gender differences in our sample. Finally, the results confirm the convergent validity.

Key words: *validation and adaptation, personal uniqueness, personal fable.*

## I

### Introduction

Uniqueness, invulnerability and omnipotence represent specific dimensions of “Personal Fable” used by adolescents when they begin to think about their thoughts and feelings in order to fulfil its tasks of development. These self-reflective resources appear due to the achievements of the hypothetic-deductive thinking.

The theoretical perspectives of both “Personal Fable” and “Imaginary Audience” were traditionally associated with changes in cognitive development

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during the transition from childhood to adolescence. From this point of view, both constructs have been considered as lacking or dysfunctional acquisition of formal operations. In other words, adolescents seem not exploiting the new cognitive achievements and in particular the new ability of “thinking and reflecting on their own thinking”, especially regarding the ability to differentiate their perspective from the others perspective (Piaget, 1962). According to traditional theoretical explanations, the two constructs mentioned (personal fable and imaginary audience) were characteristic manifestations of cognitive or intellectual egocentrism. Furthermore, the imaginary audience could be seen as a failure in the differentiation between one’s own thought and others’ thought, whereas personal fable can be described as an over-differentiation of feelings.

Starting from early formulations of Inhelder and Piaget (1955), Elkind (1967) suggest that intellectual egocentrism in adolescence is a new type of egocentrism different from child egocentrism: adolescents are self-centred and believe that others are worried about the way they look and behave, like them. In this perspective, the intellectual egocentrism despite being a consequence of the most sophisticated cognitive skills acquired by the adolescents, it would represent just a “distortion” of the latter. The adolescents, especially in the initial phase of formal thinking acquisition, may find the differentiation their thoughts, feelings, and interests from others (Elkind, 1967) as a difficult task.

In deepening the nature, manifestations and behaviors related to adolescents’ egocentrism, Elkind pointed out that developmental tasks lead adolescents to perform a significant “centration” on them as the focus of their attention, interests and concerns. For this reason the adolescents tend to believe the others are also focused on same thoughts and interests, which they are focused on. This would also explain the exclusive meaning that adolescents tend to confer to their own experiences, thoughts and feelings.

Both constructs, the “Personal Fable” and the “Imaginary Audience”, conceived as a direct consequence of adolescent egocentrism, however, represent temporary distortion of social reasoning and tend to be overcome in the transition from first to middle and late adolescence through the formal operations consolidation (Elkind, 1967).

More specifically, research focused on the perception of personal uniqueness (Lapsley, 1991, 1993) in adolescence as a core aspect of personal fable, which will be the object of this study.

## 2

### **Personal Fable and Imaginary Audience: From Elkind to New Look**

The personal fable concerns the personal myths that adolescents elaborate about their uniqueness, omnipotence and invulnerability. In particular, the personal

uniqueness can be defined as the adolescents' perception of a "special essence" of their lives, because of this strong connotation of uniqueness, cannot be understood and shared by others.

The imaginary audience was described by Elkind as the tendency of adolescents to assume that the others pay constantly attention to their person, observe them and then also judge and criticize them. Perceiving themselves as constantly "under the limelight", the other's object of attention, adolescents also tend to anticipate the reactions of others, projecting them into real or imaginary situations. Later, Lapsley (1985) has further deepened the constructs of imaginary audience and personal fable, proposing a new interpretation defined New Look (Lapsley, Murphy, 1985; Lapsley, Rice, 1988) inspired by both the contributions of Selman's (1980) socio-cognitive perspective and the separation-individuation process in adolescence (Blos, 1962).

Strong point of New Look is the integration of models apparently very far from each other within a general model of ego development in adolescence, which would read in a new key some normative and not normative behaviors (Lapsley, 1985; Lapsley, Murphy, 1985; Lapsley, Rice, 1988; Lapsley, 1991, 1993). In particular, Lapsley and Murphy (1985) have underlined that the emergence of personal fable and imaginary audience would be congruent with the capacity to "social understanding" gained in the Selman's (1980) third level of "perspective taking" ability, during which is building an "observing ego" (Selman, 1980) and the adolescent becomes able to use a point of view third with respect to the self-other interaction.

The socio-cognitive skills gained in this level would favor the emergence of the two constructs thanks to the perception of the adolescent to be able to control and anticipate the reactions of others, in real or imaginary situations. The decline of the personal fable and imaginary audience would occur in late adolescence, when the subjects having reached the next level (fourth level) of the ability of "perspective taking" are able not only to imagine the possible reactions of others in various social situations but also to coordinate their perspective with that they give to the other.

Moreover, according to the New Look, the personal fable and imaginary audience are modalities through which adolescents try to cope with the second process of separation-individuation (Blos, 1962) and in particular the needs, apparently conflicting, to stay connected to their parents and, at the same time, to separate from them to become independent. In this perspective, the imaginary audience would correspond to what Blos (1962) defines "object relational fantasy", ideation that would allow adolescents to move away from their parents without the fear of losing the primary love object, maintaining, therefore, the link with this (Goossens *et al.*, 2002; Lapsley, 1991).

According to Lapsley and Rice (1988), the personal fable coincides with Blos (1962) definition of "intense internal perceptions of self": this helps adolescents

to develop self-affirmation and identification, through an active focus on themselves. More specifically, the three dimensions of personal fable (personal uniqueness, omnipotence and invulnerability) help adolescents engaged in the task of re-establishing the boundaries of the ego weakened by the process of separation and individuation (Goossens *et al.*, 2002; Lapsley, Rice, 1988).

In this perspective, the personal fable and the imaginary audience could be intended as constructs with defensive functions and restoring properties that facilitate the adolescent in dealing with the social and emotional experiences and relationships with reference figures different from parents and peers (Lapsley, Rice, 1988).

In summary, the New Look doesn't mean personal fable and imaginary audience only as cognitive distortions (Elkind, 1967), because this approach is limited and induces to read these constructs mostly in terms of factors that may facilitate the recruitment of risk behaviors. Vice versa, the possibility to reinterpret them as a peculiar socio-cognitive capacity (Selman, 1980), from which the adolescent is supported in positively overcome the process of separation/individuation (Blos, 1962), adds new interpretations to ego development in adolescence.

### 3

#### **The perception of Personal Uniqueness in adolescence**

The new interpretations of personal fable and imaginary audience constructs have highlighted their meaning and function performed in ego development in adolescence. In particular, the personal fable seems to provide the necessary strength for adolescents to go to their own way, it states that the adolescent in the effort to re-establish the weakened boundaries of the ego as a result of the process of separation from parental figures (Lapsley, Rice, 1988). Later studies (Lapsley, 1991, 1993; Goossens *et al.*, 2002) have stressed the need to deepen the personal fable as unitary construct composed by three different dimensions: personal uniqueness, invulnerability and omnipotence. Even if there are broad convergences and correlations between constructions, they can be conceptually and empirically distinct. The need to devise measures that evaluate the individual dimensions that compose the construct of personal fable is, therefore, necessary. Measure object to validation and adaptation currency, indeed, one of the illustrated dimensions the personal uniqueness. It is the conviction of adolescents that their emotions and lived experiences are unique. In view of this, they cannot feel understood by whom it is not able to identify with them because he did not share his experiences.

The research based on the traditional view of Elkind's (1967) constructs had never investigated and/or clarified the nature of each dimension that constitute the personal fable. The prospect of the New Look has stimulated the study of the relationship between each dimensions showing that they are only moderately

correlated among them. In view of this result, several authors have developed the study of single dimensions and have built scales from subscales of the New Personal Fable Scale (NPFS; Lapsley *et al.*, 1989).

Goossens *et al.* (2002) have investigated the correlation between the measures of New Look and the measures of Old Looks, New imaginary Audience Scale (NIAS, Lapsley *et al.*, 1989), New Personal Fable Scale (NPFS of Lapsley *et al.*, 1989) and Imaginary Audience Scale (IAS; Elkind, Bowen, 1979). On the basis of results obtained, Goossens *et al.* (2002) show that the subscales concerning omnipotence and invulnerability and personal uniqueness are relatively independent.

According to the authors, therefore, the scales of New Look do not assess a single underlying construct, such as Elkind's theory suggested. In addition, the study has found positive correlations between personal uniqueness, depression and loneliness, but it has not found the same associations with the other dimensions of the Personal Fable, confirming the independence of the construct.

Aalsma, Lapsley and Flannery (2006), according to the findings of Goossens *et al.* (2002) research, suggest the personal fable as a multidimensional construct with different implications. In a recent study, they have correlated the three dimensions of personal fable (invulnerability, omnipotence and oneness) with narcissism, measured via Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI, Raskin, Hall, 1981), with some internalizing factors evaluated using Children's Depression Inventory (CDI, Kovacs, 1985) and some risk behaviors measured by Self-report Delinquency Battery (Rowe, 1985).

Also in this case, the results showed that the personal uniqueness is negatively associated with mental health, while omnipotence and invulnerability are associated with both positive and negative aspects of adolescent functioning. The Uniqueness is also a strong predictor of depressive mood and suicidal ideation, while the Omnipotence is a predictor of self-esteem, control and coping capacities, and Invulnerability is predictor of different risk behaviors. In particular, with regard to the Uniqueness, Aalsma Lapsley and Flannery (2006) confirmed the results of Goossens *et al.* (2002), showing gender differences.

#### 4

### **Personal Uniqueness Scale by Lapsley: Description of the original scale**

The scale of the Personal Uniqueness (PUS) comes from the development of subscale that originally belonged to the New Personal Fable Scale (NPFS; Lapsley *et al.*, 1989).

The first study on the development and validation of a measure for measuring the perception of Personal Uniqueness in adolescence dates back to 2000 (Duggan, Lapsley, Norman, 2000). In the same study was also validated the scale of adolescent invulnerability (Adolescent Invulnerability Scale).

Standard procedures were used for the validation of both dimensions, in three consecutive phases, but here it will be shown only those relating to scale that is object of study.

In the first phase of the development of PUS the authors have defined 26 items. In a second step, after a revision of the item list, they eliminated 2 items and revised 3 items, therefore, the final scale is composed by 24 items. This latest version is the object of the Italian validation presented in this study. In a third and final stage, the 24-item scale was administered to a sample of 228 participants, balanced for gender, mean age 21.85, for purpose determining a factor structure. Factor analysis, conducted by the Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation, showed the presence of two factors, one of which seems to focus on the doubts about being understood while the other concerns the perception being the same as others.

Based on the results regarding the factor loadings, the authors have eliminated an additional 3 items with poor factor loadings. With regard to the reliability of the scale measured by Cronbach's alpha, in the version reduced to 21 items, it turns out to be 0.85; specifically, factor 1: being understood (13 items)  $\alpha = 0.85$  and factor 2: being the same (8 items)  $\alpha = 0.69$ .

The original study (2000) also showed the correlation of Personal Uniqueness with depressive symptoms as measured by the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CED-D, Radloff, 1977).

## **5 Aim**

The overall purpose of the present study was to validate an Italian version of the Personal Uniqueness Scale (PUS; Duggan, Lapsley, Norman, 2000) for adolescents in the 24-item version. To that end, we first tested reliability and factorial structure of the version developed for the Italian sample. Second, we explored differences by gender. Third, to further assess the Italian version construct validity we evaluate the divergent validity of PUS by analyzing associations of PUS dimension with social anxiety and loneliness dimensions. We selected these scales as the literature on such topics indicates that they present significant positive and negative correlation with the PUS (Gossens *et al.*, 2002; Lapsley, 1993).

## **6 Method**

### **6.1. Participants**

The sample consisted of 211 adolescents ranged in age from 16 to 19 years (M: 17.66; S.D.: 0.97), balanced for gender (M = 46.92%, and F = 53.08%) attending

different types of high school and residents in Campania Region. Before the study, permission to administer questionnaires was obtained from the high school managers and from adolescent parents, in the full protection of anonymity and privacy, during school hours. The compilation took from 15 to 30 minutes.

## 6.2. Measures

### 6.2.1. Personal Uniqueness

The scale of the Personal Uniqueness (Duggan, Lapsley, Norman, 2000, 24 items) measures a type of personal myth concerning the perception of uniqueness that adolescents attribute to themselves, to their experiences and their feelings. It is, as well as omnipotence and invulnerability, one of the distinct dimensions that compose the Personal Fable as theorized by New Look (Lapsley *et al.*, 1989). Adolescents live experiences so special that no one can really understand the way they feel or see the world. The scale is composed by two factors defined “being the same” – to be similar to others (item example: “I have a lot in common with my peers”), and “being understood” – to be understood (item example: “No one really understands me”). For the adaptation and validation of the scale for the Italian population was used the full version of the 24 item scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reverse items in this version are 6.

### 6.2.2. Social Anxiety

The Scared (Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders; Italian version developed by Crocetti *et al.*, 2009) comprises of 38 items that can be grouped into five subscales. The instrument has a five-factor structure that fitted equally well to boys and girls, and to early and middle adolescents. For this study was taken only the subscale about Social Anxiety composed by 4 items (item example: I am nervous with strangers) scored on a 3-point scale: 1 (almost never), 2 (sometimes), 3 (often). Cronbach’s was 0.82.

### 6.2.3. Loneliness

The LLCA (Louvain Loneliness Scale for Children and Adolescents; Italian version developed by Melotti *et al.*, 2006) assesses loneliness and it’s composed by four subscales: loneliness in the relationship with parents, loneliness in the relationship with peers, aversion toward loneliness, and affinity for loneliness.

The Italian version scale comprises of 45 items scored on a 4-point scale, from 1 (never) to 4 (often). Item example are: “I feel I have very strong ties with my parents” (loneliness in the relationship with parents), “I think I have fewer friends



than others” (loneliness in the relationship with peers), “When I am lonely, I feel bored” (aversion to loneliness), and “I want to be alone” (affinity for loneliness). The application of the LLCA confirmed the original structure with four factors: all four subscales of the LLCA have high reliability (Cronbach’s Coefficients range from 0.78 to 0.89).

### 6.3. Procedures and Data Analysis

The original questionnaire was translated using back version procedure and administered to 50 subjects in a pre-test phase. The Pus was translated from English to Italian and back translated from Italian to English. The findings suggested some changes in order to make all the items adapted for the cultural characteristics of the Italian population. The resulting version was administered to the total sample.

At first, the collected data have been analyzed through explorative analysis considering frequency distributions of scores, central tendency and dispersion values. In order to verify the discriminative capacity of the each item asymmetry and kurtosis indices were calculated. For none of the items he simultaneous presence of marked characteristics of asymmetry and kurtosis was detected: there weren’t scant discriminating items.

In a second time, an explorative factor analysis with two factors was performed (as indicated in the original scale by Duggan, Lapsley, Norman, 2000) through the technique of principal axis factoring, choosing a promax rotation for related factors<sup>i</sup>.

Then, we used confirmatory factor analysis models, which allow to achieve more precise estimates of the factor configuration and relationships within of the construct under investigation. For this purpose, we tested the reference theoretical model through confirmatory factor analysis at two factors using the software Lisrel (Jöresborg, Sörbom, 1985).

In order to verify the goodness of fit of the model, we relied on various indices: the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI; Tucker, Lewis, 1973; Bentler, Bonett, Douglas, 1980), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), SRMR (Hu, Bentler, 1998) and the IFI (Hu, Bentler, 1999). In addition to these, we considered the Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA, Steiger, Lind, 1980; Steiger, 1989) and the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI; Jöresborg, Sörbom, 1985) for completeness of information, and also because they are the most commonly used in practice.

Finally, we performed an internal consistency analysis of the two subscales considered by calculating Cronbach’s alpha. Then, we evaluate the presence of differences due to a gender effect through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparing means on both PUS subscales. Correlations between each of two dimensions of the PUS and the other considered scale of anxiety and loneliness have been considered in order to assess the convergent/divergent validity.



## 7 Results

### 7.1. Explorative Factor Analysis

From the first explorative factor analysis without any constraint of the number of factors six factors emerged, considering the eigenvalues greater than 1, six factors seem to emerge. However, by analyzing the factor loadings of the single items, they generally reproduce the original configuration at two factor proposed by the Authors.

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TABLE 1  
Factor loadings of the final version at 20 items

	Being Understood	Being the Same
Item 1	0.53	-0.23
Item 2	0.74	-0.02
Item 5	0.57	0.14
Item 6	0.72	0.06
Item 8	0.48	0.34
Item 11	0.66	-0.26
Item 14	0.31	0.50
Item 16	0.32	0.28
Item 17	0.68	0.04
Item 18	0.76	-0.02
Item 19	0.60	0.10
Item 21	0.54	0.24
Item 22	0.76	-0.08
Item 23	0.69	-0.00
Item 24	0.73	-0.16
Item 4r	-0.02	0.66
Item 9r	-0.17	0.71
Item 10r	-0.02	0.47
Item 12r	-0.07	0.65
Item 15r	-0.14	0.74

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Indeed, 20 items saturate on the first two factors, while the remaining four items (3, 7, 13 and 20) reveal complex saturation patterns. In particular, the item 7 shows

a negative saturation on the first factor and a positive saturation with the same size on the third factor: this result may be connected to a wrong interpretation of the meaning of the item by respondents because of the presence of a double negation, however, the item 20 doesn't saturate on any factor. Therefore, we have decided to remove the item 7 and 20 from the Italian version. Concerning the factor loadings of the items 3 and 13, their strange pattern seems may depend on the fact that both these items are referred to different relational partners from those considered in the other items. They, in fact, relate specifically to the parental figures while the other items relate rather to an "other" that in some cases is generalized and in other cases is collective, but with connotations less concrete and personalized. Therefore, we have removed the items 3 and 13 from the final version of the Italian scale. So we performed a new analysis by considering only the 20 items and constraining the solution to two factors. The saturations of this new factor analysis are reported in TAB. 1. It explains the 43.17% of the total variance. The factorial structure reproduces the original model, two-factor "being understood" and "being the same", coinciding with those hypothesized by the authors. In addition the two factors are related to each other as in the original scale.

### 7.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In order to verify the model with two factors, using the 20-item version emerged, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis. The Table 2 shows that the indices of goodness of fit of the model are satisfactory. The analysis of t-value (FIG. 1) shows that all the factor loading were significant and that the items contribute in a substantially similar and well balanced way and to the determination of each of the two factors.

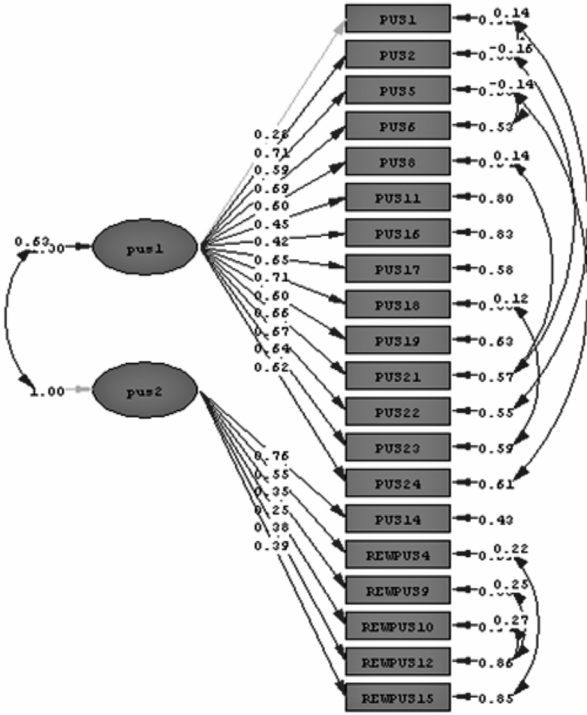
TABLE 2

Fit Indices

CFI	GFI	NNFI	RMSEA	SRMR	IFI
0.97	0.89	0.97	0.052	0.062	0.97

We point out that the factor loading for the first item of each scale is set equal to one as an estimation constraint to provide verse and scale to the latent factor. The existence of variances and covariances between latent factors (see TAB. 3) shows how the two factors hypothesized by the authors ("being understood" and "being the same") are conceptually distinct but interrelated.

FIGURE 1  
T-value standardized analysis; factor loadings estimates



Chi-Square=247.62, df=159, P-value=0.00001, RMSEA=0.052

TABLE 3  
Variance and covariance

Lambda-x	Being Understood	Being the Same	Exstimates
Item 1	1.00	—	
Item 2	2.05	—	4.48
Item 5	1.79	—	4.31
Item 6	2.17	—	4.49
Item 8	1.92	—	4.35
Item 11	1.45	—	3.97
Item 16	1.19	—	3.80
Item 17	1.89	—	4.41

(continued on next page)

TABLE 3 (continued from previous page)

Lambda-x	Being Understood	Being the Same	Exstimates
Item 18	2.25	—	4.52
Item 19	1.78	—	4.33
Item 21	1.97	—	4.37
Item 22	2.07	—	4.44
Item 23	2.09	—	4.44
Item 24	1.95	—	4.32
Item 14	—	0.68	8.51
Item 4r	—	0.56	7.93
Item 9r	—	0.64	6.31
Item 10r	—	0.37	4.41
Item 12r	—	0.56	6.51
Item 15r	—	0.54	6.95
PHI	0.14	—	2.32
PHI	0.20	1.00	3.94

These results are in line with the findings of the exploratory factor analysis with promax rotation that testify to the unitariness of the construct, even if there is a differentiation of factors. The reliability coefficients (assessed by Cronbach's alpha) of the two scales are good (TAB. 4). Analyzing the values of alpha for each subscale, eliminating one item at a time, we can see that the internal consistency of each subscale is that it does not require modification or deletion of any item.

TABLE 4

Reliability of scale measured by Cronbach's alpha

Factors	Cronbach's alpha
Being Understood	0.89
Being the Same	0.64
Total Scale	0.88

Finally, the results of the ANOVA analysis for comparing means indicated that there weren't significant differences for gender ( $F = 0.58$ ; Sig. = 0.45; Male: Mean = 2.71, SD = 0.65; Female: Mean = 2.80, SD = 0.58). This finding didn't confirm the results obtained by the authors, but this difference may depend on the different size of samples.

### 7.3. Divergent Validity

Regarding to Divergent Validity, associations between PUS, self-esteem, loneliness and social anxiety were examined by a correlation analysis (see TAB. 5). The PUS was negatively correlated to the subscale loneliness in relationship with parents while it was positively correlated to the subscale loneliness in relationship with peers. We found a positive correlation between PUS and Social Anxiety.

TABLE 5  
Correlations

	L_par	L_peer	L_a_ne	L_a_po	Pus	Anx
L_par	1	-0.219*	0.021	-0.133	-0.135*	-0.131
L_peer		1	0.104	0.558*	0.526*	0.538*
L_a_ne			1	-0.155*	0.504*	0.080
L_a_po				1	0.504*	0.353*
PUS					1	0.231*
Anx						1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Note: L\_par = loneliness in relationship with parents; L\_peer = loneliness in relationship with peers; L\_a\_ne = aversion toward loneliness; L\_a\_po = affinity for loneliness; PUS = personal uniqueness; Anx = anxiety.

## 8

### Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to validate the Italian version of the Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale (PUS), a tool developed to assess a type of personal myth concerning the perception of uniqueness that adolescents attribute to themselves, to their experiences and their feelings (Duggan, Lapsley, Norman, 2000; Lapsley *et al.*, 1989). Findings revealed that the PUS is a promising tool for evaluating this dimension in Italian adolescents. This claim is supported by a number of results.

First, we found that the factorial structure emerged in our study was comparable to that of the original version of PUS, identifying the two factors named by the authors “being understood” and “being the same”. Moreover, the explained variance of our own adaptation has larger values than the version of the Authors. The two scales found were both at 20-item in the final version even after the elimination of different items except for item 20 that was removed both from the original version and from our adaptation. Second, we found that Cronbach’s alphas were good for both the PUS subscales.

As regards to the reference population, we pointed out that the original version of the scale, although conceptually referring to adolescent population, it was administered only to late-adolescents. In the Italian version, here validated, this restriction was exceeded in the sample, extending the age range of the entire adolescent section.

Third, in contrast to results obtained by Lapsley (1993), girls didn't show higher score than boys. In our opinion this different result would depend on the fact that our sample was lower than the sample in the original study.

Fourth, divergent validity of the Italian version of the PUS was demonstrated through theoretically consistent associations of the social anxiety and loneliness. Specifically, Lapsley (1993) hypothesized that the sense of personal uniqueness was linked to psychological distress (social anxiety and loneliness). Our results, in line with findings of other researches (Goossens *et al.*, 2002; Lapsley, 1993), confirmed that adolescents' belief in their own uniqueness is at risk for social anxiety and for loneliness, in particular loneliness relationship with peer. According to Goossens *et al.* (2002) a strong sense of uniqueness may prevents an emotional closeness with peers, because of the belief that peers couldn't share their own experiences.

In the light of the results presented, we believe that the scale of Personal Uniqueness can be a valid and effective measure to investigate the dimension of the perception of uniqueness in Italian adolescents too. This measure, for example, could be used to deepen the study of many adolescent behaviors often interpreted as non-normative. According to the authors, in fact, the possibility of integrating different theoretical contributions in the interpretation of the constructs of personal fable and imaginary audience would allow a broader and more complex vision for the explanation of this behavior.

Furthermore, in line with what Goossens *et al.* (2002) suggested, we consider particularly interesting the study of the individual dimensions that comprise the Personal Fable (omnipotence, vulnerability and personal uniqueness) in terms of risk or protective factors in the ego construction.

Finally, research in this area could aimed at clarifying and further deepening socio cognitive levels theorized by Selman (1980) in the interpretation of dimensions of the personal fable, as Personal Uniqueness. The lack of depth in this sense, in fact, is one of the criticisms about theory of the New Look (Goossens *et al.*, 2002).

## Note

<sup>1</sup> The extraction method of the factors known as principal axis factoring is a procedure used as an alternative to the maximum likelihood method in the case of non-normal distribution of the data, as in our case (Fabrigar *et al.*, 1999; Costello, Osborne, 2005).

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## Riassunto

Il presente lavoro si propone come obiettivo l'adattamento dell'*Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale* per la popolazione italiana. La scala valuta la percezione di unicità personale, intesa come percezione da parte degli adolescenti del proprio essere speciali e distinti da tutti gli altri nella loro individualità. L'unicità rappresenta, a sua volta, una delle dimensioni in cui si articola la *personal fable*, nell'ambito della nuova prospettiva teorica inerente l'egocentrismo intellettuale in adolescenza (Lapsley, 1993). L'*Adolescent Personal Uniqueness Scale*, tradotta e adattata per la popolazione italiana, è stata somministrata a 211 adolescenti dai 16 ai 19 anni. Inoltre, ci siamo proposti di esaminare eventuali differenze di genere. Un altro obiettivo è stato quello di valutare la validità divergente/convergente della *Uniqueness* rispetto ad altri costrutti di *psychological distress* (*social anxiety*, *loneliness*). Tali costrutti sono stati selezionati, sulla base delle indicazioni fornite dalla letteratura che indica significative associazioni positive e negative tra essi (Gossens *et al.*, 2002; Lapsley, 1993). Le analisi statistiche hanno permesso di verificare la consistenza interna e la replicabilità della struttura fattoriale della scala. I dati confermano la validità e l'attendibilità della versione italiana rispetto alla scala originaria. Pertanto, anche nella versione italiana la scala appare uno strumento utile per indagare l'egocentrismo intellettuale degli adolescenti, con particolare riguardo alla loro percezione di unicità personale. Non sono emerse differenze di genere nel nostro campione. Infine, i risultati confermano la validità convergente.

Parole chiave: *validazione e adattamento, unicità personale, favola personale.*

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