General Self-Efficacy Scale

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Abstract
General Self-Efficacy (GSE) scales are used to measure the extent to which individuals possess a
general sense of mastery that is not tied to a specific situation or behavior. The present study
assesses whether the language in which a GSE scale is presented yields different responses in
Arabic-English bilingual female students and whether differences can be traced to emotional
reactions triggered by cultural norms dictating modesty in attitudes and behavioral expression.
Female students residing in the Eastern Province of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia completed the
New General Self-Efficacy (NGSE) scale and reported the valence and intensity of their
reactions to each of the statements of the scale. The English version of NGSE produced higher
scores than the Arabic version. Because arousal was either minimally related to NGSE scores
(English version) or not related at all (Arabic version), the higher reported arousal of the English
version may be due to the lower automaticity with which a second language is processed. For
the English version, the higher the NGSE scores, the more positive was the emotional response
to the statements of the scale, whereas for the Arabic version, the higher the NGSE scores, the
less positive was the emotional response. If disapproval of the individualistic, self-focused
approach of the NGSE scale is inferred from the valence of participants’ reactions, the results of
the present investigation are consistent with the notion that Arabic can trigger cultural codes of
modesty.