

TARES: Test Adaptation Reporting Standards

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Introduction

The “Test Adaptation Reporting Standards” (TARES) were developed to alleviate the problems arising from inadequate reporting of test adaptations. The TARES checklist comprises an evidence-based minimum set of information for reporting in test adaptations. The TARES was developed by an international group of experts, under the leadership of the [International Test Commission](#) (ITC) to support an increase in the accuracy, transparency, and usefulness of test adaptations documentation.

Context

A number of initiatives have appeared during the past years in an effort to promote transparent and accurate reporting of research studies in health, education, and the social sciences, with the ultimate goal to enhance the value of the research literature. These initiatives have generated what we now call “reporting guidelines.” They have been spearheaded by groups gathered either around distinctive scientific associations, or influential research groups, and have had a profound impact on journal editors and peer reviewers, research funding bodies, and other key stakeholders with a mutual interest in improving the quality and transparency of scientific publications. Among others, we mention such influential guidelines as: CONSORT (randomised trials; see <http://www.consort-statement.org/>), STROBE (observational studies; <https://strobe-statement.org/index.php?id=strobe-home>), PRISMA (systematic reviews; <http://www.prisma-statement.org/>), CARE (case reports; <https://www.care-statement.org/>), SPIRIT (study protocols; <https://www.spirit-statement.org/>).

In the domain of testing and assessment, the need for more structure in test adaptations was felt more acute and was signaled in several ways during the past few years, for example, through the revision of the ITC [Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests](#) (ITC, 2017), as well as other influential publications (e.g., Hernandez, 2020; Iliescu, 2017; Zeinoun et al., 2021; Ziegler, 2020). In this context, the ITC has decided to facilitate efforts towards the development of the current standard.

Scope and *credo*

TARES recognizes that the cultural and linguistic adaptation of a test from a source to a target culture and/or language requires a sophisticated and work-intensive scientific process. Such processes are featured under different labels, among others “translation,” “indigenization,” “adoption,” “adaptation,” and “assembly.” These standards are applicable not only for pure “test adaptations,” but for this whole family of endeavors (van de Vijver, 2015).

TARES also recognizes that science and practice in the behavioral, social and medical sciences rely on good measurement, and that a significant part of such measurement is undertaken based on tests that are used in languages, cultures, or contexts other than those in which they were developed. Thus, the quality of a significant part of research and practice hinges on the accurate and transparent reporting of derivative work (i.e., adaptation) conducted on tests. Therefore, TARES is in essence a detailed set of requirements for the accurate and transparent reporting and documentation of test adaptations.

The elements of the TARES are prescriptive insofar as they are basic and minimal requirements that *need* to be featured in published papers and test manuals that report on the adaptation process. For example, Zeinoun et al. (2021) have observed that in some articles, authors do not go into details for some of these issues, but instead prefer to refer to previous articles for the adaptation process; unfortunately, in some cases, those secondary articles were published in obscure journals, are unavailable or are cryptical in what and how they report, which makes it difficult to judge the quality of the original translation. We argue against such a practice and for the need regarding all relevant information prescribed by the TARES checklist to be reported transparently in the main manuscript.

The concept of equivalence is often at the heart of any test adaptation. Equivalence has been conceptualized in many ways and can be tested with much place for methodological innovation. From all the various ways in which to approach it, we have opted for the approach that was championed in such papers as Byrne (2015), van de Vijver & Leung (1997), or van de Vijver & Tanzer (1997), that discuss bias vs. equivalence under three large headings: construct bias, method bias, and item bias. These are reflected in components 6a, 6b, and 6c of the TARES checklist.

The TARES adheres to the contemporary approach taken by the AERA et al. (2014) [*Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*](#) and by the ITC (2017) [*Guidelines*](#) that reinforce the concept of the *test use* and of the need to offer justification (i.e., validity evidence through data and analyses) related to the purpose of the testing. We therefore urge authors to keep in mind the need to provide validity evidence of adequate translation, and in many cases of score comparability, in their reports and documentation, to support valid *test score interpretations and uses*.

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