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'To err is human' – but small mistakes matter! A further note on Bitan et al. (2020)



The Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) was originally developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020) and has now been validated in at least eight languages (Pakpour et al., 2020a). Bitan et al. (2020) validated the Hebrew FCV-19 and has already received methodological criticism by the original FCV-19S co-developers out (Pakpour et al., 2020b). However, we would like to comment on one small but important mistake. Bitan et al. noted:

“The scale has been adopted in India and the UK (Harper et al., 2020; Sakib et al., 2020), and was found to sustain its stable psychometric properties” (Bitan et al., 2020, p. 2).

The authors mistakenly attributed the Bangla version as being Indian in origin (i.e., the validation paper by Sakib et al. [2020] was carried out in Bangladesh, not India). People from Bangladesh would be upset to see their research attributed to another country and another language. We would like to remind Bitan et al. (and readers of this journal more generally) that:

(i) Bangladesh is an independent country and the Undergraduate Research Organization researchers who published the Bangla FCV-19S validation paper were somewhat insulted by this mistake;

(ii) Bangla is the only official language in Bangladesh. Maybe Bitan et al. thought that people in Bangladesh spoke Hindi (i.e., the official language of India) as their main language;

(iii) The official Bangla language only exists due to the sanguinary political movement and is one of the few languages worldwide where individuals gave their lives to preserve the language. Bitan et al. unknowingly dishonored Bangladesh's language-martyrs;

(vi) International Mother Language Day (i.e., February 21) is a national holiday in the country and is given in honor of Bangladesh's language-martyrs (if Bitan et al. were aware of the sacrifices made just to keep Bangladesh's mother tongue, they may have not have made such a mistake in the first place);

(v) We collected data from 8,550 Bangladesh citizens for the Bangla validation study and the reporting by Bitan et al. was unwittingly disrespected all our participants and our efforts that were invested in the project implementation;

(vi) Approximately 250 individuals from Bangladesh volunteered to collect the data for the validation (see the acknowledgments in Sakib et al. [2020]), and again our volunteers feel dishonored by the

data being reported as Indian in origin; and

(vii) We informed the corresponding author (i.e., Dr. Bitan) about the mistake at the pre-proof stage of publication of the Hebrew FCV-19S and requested the change to be made, but the request was ignored.

Based on the aforementioned issues, we think our views should be made more public as this will help give all the Bangladeshi people who participated and collected the data in the Bangla FCV-19S validation study some due credit and respect, as well as giving international researchers some insight as to how something so apparently small can cause offence to large numbers of people.

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Supplementary materials

Supplementary material associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at [doi:10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113234](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113234).

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