On the factorial structure of self-esteem as measured by the Italian translation of the Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale – Revised (SLCS-R)

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In two studies, we investigate the factorial structure of the Italian translation of the Self-Liking/ Self-Competence Scale – Revised (i.e., SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), which was developed in order to measure two distinct dimensions of self-esteem: self-competence and self-liking. More specifically, in Study 1 we provide evidence that the two sub-scales actually address different aspects of self-esteem. In Study 2, with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) we show that a model including the dimensions of self-esteem (competence and liking) as different traits, and positive versus negative wording of items as different methods, provide a superior fit to the data as compared to both a unidimensional model of self-esteem and to a bidimensional model not including the wording factor.

Entering the word *self-esteem* on Google-Image you would find a popular picture portraying a little cat in front of a mirror, in which it can see its reflected image. Surprisingly, in the reflected image there is not a little cat, but a beautiful lion with a thick mane. The picture is matched with the sentence: «What matters most is how you see yourself» and this statement reflects the common popular definition of self-esteem, namely the evaluation of the way in which one sees oneself. However, are we sure that we have only a unique image about ourselves? The present work is mainly aimed at investigating the factorial structure of the Italian translation of one of the most widespread scales used in order to measure self-esteem, namely the Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale – Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), and thus in the end our purpose is to give an important contribution to the validation of the scale in the Italian context.

1. One-dimensional or multi-dimensional self-esteem?

The concept of *self-esteem* was initially introduced by William James (1890) to indicate a person's attitude toward oneself. For James (1890) self-esteem was determined by the difference among one's own expectation and the outcome of one's

own action. After James (1890) many other authors paid close attention to the concept of self-esteem proposing original and personal definitions. According to Mruk (1999), for instance, there were indeed over one hundred different definitions of self-esteem before the end of the last century. The presence of several different definitions may represent a problem, for instance, when someone wants to estimate the relationship between self-esteem and other constructs. Just as an example, scholars have expressed conflicting opinions on the importance of self-esteem for individuals' well-being (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003; Swann, Chang-Schneider & McClarty, 2007; Trzesniewski, Donnellan, Moffitt, Robins, Poulton & Caspi, 2006). According to some authors, the utility of the concept of self-esteem for the prediction of individuals' well-being is perhaps underestimated because of the different ways in which it is conceptualized (Swann et al., 2007; Trzesniewski et al., 2006). One of the most controversial problems, that probably has determined different definitions, concerns the unidimensionality or the multidimensionality of this concept.

In the initial definitions, self-esteem was most often conceived as an indivisible construct (Marsh, 1986). Consistent with this idea, the most widespread measure of self-esteem was the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965), in which self-esteem is conceived as unitary. Recently, Gray-Little, Williams and Hancock (1997) asserted that the RSES is a reliable and valid measure of self-esteem and «deserves its widespread use and continued popularity» (p. 450). However, other authors through factorial analysis has revealed that the items of RSES reduce to two correlated but distinct factors, one positive and one negative. This has been interpreted as a *methodological artefact* by Carmines and Zeller (1974), and as a *response set* by Hensley and Roberts (1976). Other authors interpreted it as the sign of two subtly distinct dimensions of the whole concept: positive and negative self-esteem (Goldsmith, 1986; see also Owens, 1993).

During the last decades many authors have proposed that self-esteem might have different dimensions, and suggested that these may be based not only on valence. More specifically, research has pointed out that there may be other underlying factors related to the most important dimensions of social judgment, namely competence and warmth (e.g., Fiske, Cuddy & Glick, 2006). In this vein, Tafarodi and Swann (1995) have hypothesized two distinct dimensions of self-esteem: one more related to social worth (i.e., *self-liking*) and one more related to competence (i.e., *self-competence*). Their work indicated that a two-factor model better supports empirical data than a one-factor self-esteem model (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). This distinction also has implications for understanding the relationship between self-esteem and other important constructs, such as subjective well-being, as mentioned above, and success. For instance, it was shown that self-esteem is differently related to the cognitive and affective reactions to success and failure (Dutton & Brown, 1997). Grounding on previous research, showing that self-esteem may predict important life outcomes (e.g., Trzesniewski et al., 2006), it is important to further

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understand which aspects of self-esteem are most strongly related to an individuals' life outcomes, in order to accomplish a specific diagnosis and in order to better understand which individuals would benefit from psychological interventions. Moreover, this new knowledge may have an important impact in the development of specific clinical interventions directed to reinforce each specific fragile aspect of self-esteem. An important step in this direction is to develop sound measures and advance our knowledge on their functioning.

2. Self-Liking/Self-Competence Scale (SLCS)

As said, in 1995 Tafarodi and Swann proposed a two-dimensional self-esteem scale. According to their proposal «rather than experiencing ourselves as simply positive or negative, we experience ourselves as globally *acceptable-unacceptable* (referred to here as *self-liking*) and globally *strong-weak* (referred to here as *self-competence*)» (p. 324). Their scale is based on two correlated dimensions that reflect the aforementioned universal dimensions of social judgment, namely competence and warmth (Fiske et al., 2006). These factors are described by several authors as the two axes of general self-esteem (Franks & Marolla, 1976; Gecas, 1971; Gecas & Schwalbe, 1983; 1986; Harter, 1985, 1990; Tafarodi & Milne, 2002; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995; Tafarodi & Vu, 1997).

S*elf-liking* is theoretically conceived as influenced by values and social norms, and thus it is socially dependent. Following a Cooley's (1922) metaphor, it develops by a *looking-glass process*. Indeed, this dimension is based on the self evaluation that individuals make based on the reactions provided by the social others, coming to view themselves as the social world looks at them. By this way, individuals evaluate themselves as entities with social significance (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), and thus as good or bad persons. For instance, Tafarodi and Swann (1995) found that individuals with high *self-liking* scores were usually well accepted and integrated in their social context.

Self-competence is influenced and related to individuals' perception of their own efficacy and power. As suggested by Tafarodi and Swann (2001, p. 654) «it refers to the overall positive or negative orientation toward oneself as a source of power and efficacy». In a sense, *self-competence* is based on the difference between one's own expectation and the outcome of one's own action. When people are able to achieve their goals the difference is low, and thus they are usually characterized by high scores on this subscale, whereas low values might indicate demotivation or depression (Tafarodi, Marshall & Milne, 2003; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995).

The first version of SLCS, proposed by Tafarodi and Swann in 1995, consisted of two 10-item subscales, and participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each item. However, one of the most debated problems about this scale was the high correlation between the two subscales (r = .69, see Tafarodi &

Swann, 2001) that could undermine the assumption of bidimensionality. To reduce the correlation between the two dimensions, in 2001 Tafarodi and Swann provided a revised scale (SLCS-R) consisting of two 8-item subscales. For half of the items in each subscale high levels of agreement indicate high self-esteem, and for the other half low levels of agreement indicate high self-esteem.

This scale has been used in several countries (e.g., Aidman, 1998; Vandromme, Hermans, Spruyt & Eelen, 2007). However, the assumption of bidimensionality based only on the evaluated dimensions of personality was not always confirmed. For instance, Aidman (1998) in an Australian sample found three principal components called *positive self-attitude*, *self-disliking* and *self-incompetence*. In other words, one dimension emerged for positive attitudes, whereas for negative attitudes two different dimensions were found for competence and warmth. For this reason it is important to examine the factorial structure of the SLCS-R also in the Italian context. The present work represents a first attempt in this direction.

3. Overview

With the present research we aimed to provide an Italian translation of the SLCS-R, and to contribute to the validation of this scale by further investigating its factorial structure. More specifically, in Study 1 we examined the validity of the two subscales by investigating whether the two dimensions predict different aspects of self-directed evaluations. Then, in Study 2, with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), we further investigated the factorial structure testing four different models in order to take into consideration not only the role of the semantic content of the item (i.e., competence vs. likeability) but also the role of their valence (positive vs. negative).

4. Study 1

4.1. Method

4.1.1. Participants and Design

A convenience sample of 202 Italian respondents (106 females, 48 males, 48 failed to report their gender; 162 university students and 40 non-students) voluntarily participated in the study ($M_{age} = 25.49$, $SD = 8.83$, ranged from 19 to 56). Half of them were randomly assigned to the *emotions toward the self* condition, and the other half to the *discrepancy of competence* condition, described later on. Participants with missing responses were excluded from the analyses (overall, 3 participants), as well as data from 1 participant assigned to the *discrepancy of competence* condition, because he/she did not follow instructions (final sample $N = 198$).

4.1.2. Procedure

Students were tested in class during course hours and thus in a group context; non-students were tested during individual interviews. All participants were asked to fill a paper-pencil questionnaire. In the first part of the questionnaire there was the Italian translation of SLCS-R (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001; the Italian translation is included in appendix[1]). Participants were required to indicate the degree of agreement with 16 items from 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 6 (= *strongly agree*). In the second part of the questionnaire, participants assigned to the *emotions toward the self* condition were administered a feeling thermometer: They were asked to indicate the emotions that they felt when they thought about themselves. Responses were provided along a continuous line anchored at the extremes with 0 (= *very cold and negative*) and 50 degree (= *very hot and positive*). This question made reference to the emotions toward one's self and no evaluation of one's abilities was implied. Therefore, we expected that self-liking scores would better predict answers to this question, as compared to self-competence scores of the SLCS-R.

Participants assigned to the *discrepancy of competence* condition, in the second part of the questionnaire were asked to indicate how much their current competence diverged from their ideal competence along a scale running from 0 (= *no discrepancy*) to 100 (= *completely discrepant*). In this case, «*zero*» indicated that one was expressing his/her competence at its maximum level. We argued that this question would be more related to self-competence, and we anticipated that in a regression analysis the answers to this question should be negatively predicted more by the self-competence subscale than by the self-liking subscale of the SLCS-R.

4.2. Results

The answers to items 1, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13, 15, and 16 were re-scaled so that high values indicated high self-esteem. Then, summed scores for each subscale were computed. Confirming previous results (e.g., Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), a high positive correlation between self-liking ($M = 33.52$, $SD = 7.55$; $\alpha = .76$; 95% Confidence Interval = .71 to. 80) and self-competence ($M = 30.19$, $SD = 6.07$; $\alpha = .69$; 95% Confidence Interval = .63 to .74) emerged, $r(198) = .69$, $p < .001$.

In two linear regression analyses, the answers to the two questions about the *emotions toward the self* ($N = 100$; $M = 33.43$, $SD = 16.01$), and about the *discrepancy of competence* ($N = 98$; $M = 37.09$, $SD = 8.59$) were regressed on *self-liking*

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[1] The scale was translated and adapted to the Italian context separately by three Italian mother tongue persons with good English fluency. Differences in translation were resolved through discussion.

and *self-competence* scores. Both measures of self-esteem, when entered simultaneously in the analysis, predicted *emotions toward the self*, $\beta = .67$, $t(99) = 7.84$, $p < .001$ for self-liking, and $\beta = .17$, $t(99) = 1.96$, $p = .05$ for self-competence, $F(2, 97) = 84.91$, $p < .001$; adjusted $R^2 = .64$. Given that the two dependent variables were highly correlated to each other, $r(198) = .69$, $p < .001$, we checked for possible multicollinearity problems. However, the *variance inflation factor* (*VIF* = 1.96) indicated that in the model there were not multicollinearity problems. More interesting to the purpose of the current study and consistent with our hypothesis, the regression slope was significantly higher for self-liking as compared to self-competence: The affective reaction to the self was more strongly related to self-liking, than to self-competence, $z = 4.45$, $p < .001$ (one-sided; Cohen, Cohen, West & Aiken, 2003). Moreover, in the second multiple regression analysis, in line with our predictions, only self-competence predicted the answers to the *discrepancy of competence* question, $\beta = -.29$, $t(95) = -2.22$, $p = .03$, whereas self-liking was not significant, $\beta = -.05$, $t(95) = -.40$, $p = .69$; $F(2, 95) = 5.53$, $p = .005$; adjusted $R^2 = .10$; *VIF* = 1.77 (indicating again an absence of multicollinearity problems), $z = 1.71$, $p = .04$ (one-sided).

In sum, these results showed that the two subscales actually measure two different but related aspects of self-esteem: feeling of one's likeability and belief in self-competence. Indeed, the *self-competence* subscale negatively predicted the answers to the question about competence discrepancy; in other words, the higher one participant's scores in this subscale, the lower the perceived discrepancy between real and ideal competence. Conversely, the liking subscale emerged to be more positively related to answers to the question about the felt emotions toward ourselves. Indeed, the more an individual had high scores in the *self-liking* subscale, the more he/she reported to perceive hot and positive emotions toward the self.

Finally, confirming previous literature (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995; 2001), the correlation between the two subscales was high. Indeed, we obtained exactly the same level of the first version of the SLCS scale (i.e., $r = .69$; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995) and slightly stronger, as compared to the second English revised version of the scale ($r = .57$ for women and $r = .59$ for men; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Therefore, in Study 2 we analyzed in-depth the factorial structure of this scale.

5. Study 2

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Participants

A convenience sample of 255 Italian university students participated in the experiment during course hours. Because data were collected in very small classes (*N*

always < 30), in order to preserve an absolute anonymity no demographic information was asked. Overall, participants were young adults (approximately aged between 20 and 25 years old), with a stronger presence of female as compared to male participants. Data from one participant who failed to answer one item were discarded (final sample $N = 254$).

5.1.2. Procedure

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement with the 16 items of SLCS-R (see Study 1) from 1 (= *strongly disagree*) to 6 (= *strongly agree*) in a paper-pencil questionnaire. Just like in Study 1, the answers were initially scaled so that high values indicated high self-esteem. Polychoric correlations between items, as well as means and standard deviation of the 16 items are reported in table 1.

Then, we performed CFA on the collected data using the software LISREL (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1996) to test the fit of four different models. It is important to stress that, as indicated by Yang-Wallentin, Jöreskog and Luo (2010), CFA was originally developed for continuous variables using the maximum likelihood (ML) method. With ordinal variables, such as in this specific case, Yang-Wallentin and colleagues (2010) suggest the use of polychoric correlations and the use of the robust diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS). Following these suggestions four different models were tested and for each model we reported in table 2 the Chi-square corrected for non-normality, the comparative fit index (*CFI*; Bentler, 1990), the Tucker-Lewis (or non-normed) fit index (*NNFI*; Bentler & Bonett, 1980), the standardized root mean square error of approximation (*RMSEA*), and the standardized root mean square residual (*SRMR*). Moreover, because the four tested models were not nested we included also the Akaike information Criterion (AIC; Burnham & Anderson, 2004). The four models tested in the current study are described below.

Model I tested the presence of one single underlying factor, and thus the assumption of one-dimensionality of self-esteem: the 16 items reduced into a single common factor, as indicated in figure 1 (panel a). Subsequently, we tested Model II in order to investigate the presence of two factors, reflecting the original scale as designed by Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001). Indeed, in Model II the 16 items reduced into two factors as indicated in figure 1 (panel b), namely self-competence and self-liking. Each item was considered as expression of one and only one factor, and correlation among them was allowed. Then, Model III (figure 1, panel c) tested the presence of four factors based both on the two dimensions described by Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001), namely self-liking and self-competence, and on valence, namely positivity and negativity: items from the scale were grouped in four separate clusters (positive self-liking, negative self-liking, positive self-competence, and negative self-competence) according to their content and wording. Correla-

TAB. 1. *Polychoric correlation matrix with means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis of the 16 items*

	TS1_LR	TS2_C	TS3_L	TS4_C	TS5_L	TS6_LR	TS7_LR	TS8_CR	TS9_L	TS10_CR	TS11_L	TS12_C	TS13_CR	TS14_C	TS15_LR	TS16_CR
TS1_LR	1.00															
TS2_C	.42	1.00														
TS3_L	.44	.44	1.00													
TS4_C	.41	.61	.51	1.00												
TS5_L	.41	.51	.39	.42	1.00											
TS6_LR	.28	.25	.28	.30	.27	1.00										
TS7_LR	.58	.28	.48	.33	.31	.43	1.00									
TS8_CR	.46	.44	.37	.52	.31	.34	.33	1.00								
TS9_L	.42	.40	.62	.43	.24	.27	.55	.31	1.00							
TS10_CR	.51	.39	.34	.30	.60	.15	.44	.48	.28	1.00						
TS11_L	.31	.31	.36	.19	.18	.26	.32	.21	.44	.24	1.00					
TS12_C	.31	.49	.39	.40	.60	.28	.28	.23	.59	.21	.44	1.00				
TS13_CR	.29	.31	.22	.35	.11	.16	.25	.47	.07	.37	.08	.09	1.00			
TS14_C	.40	.59	.35	.33	.56	.22	.29	.25	.46	.29	.45	.68	.12	1.00		
TS15_LR	.61	.38	.49	.40	.38	.46	.65	.50	.48	.46	.36	.26	.35	.30	1.00	
TS16_CR	.44	.45	.33	.35	.30	.16	.34	.42	.25	.49	.23	.20	.40	.29	.46	1.00
Means	3.71	3.90	4.11	4.14	4.56	4.18	4.17	3.96	4.55	3.54	3.80	4.13	3.27	3.83	4.04	3.11
SD	1.34	.99	1.22	1.12	1.05	1.51	1.53	1.47	1.16	1.36	1.44	1.11	1.25	.98	1.59	1.46
Skewness	-.09	-.17	-.54	-.38	-.62	-.48	-.43	-.29	-.64	.23	-.17	-.14	.16	-.08	-.29	.28
Kurtosis	-.77	.04	-.26	-.05	.10	-.86	-.98	-.97	.09	-.85	-.98	-.30	-.63	.07	-1.16	-.92

TAB. 2. *Fit statistics of factorial models*

Model	χ^2 (and degree of freedom)	*p*-value	*CFI* the higher the better	*NNFI* the higher the better	*RMSEA* the lower the better	*SRMR* the lower the better	*AIC*
Model I	431.73 (104)	$p < .001$	.89	.87	.14	.10	659.22
Model II	381.45 (103)	$p < .001$	.89	.88	.14	.10	646.19
Model III	281.22 (98)	$p < .001$	.96	.95	.08	.07	350.01
Model IV	236.28 (86)	$p < .001$	.99	.98	.05	.05	249.94

Note: $N = 254$; robust diagonally weighted least squares; Chi-square = Chi-square corrected for non-normality; *p*-value = *p*-value of Chi-square statistic; *CFI* = comparative fit index; *NNFI* = Tucker-Lewis (or non-normed) fit index; *RMSEA* = root mean square error of approximation; *SRMR* = standardized root mean square residual; *AIC* = Akaike information Criterion.
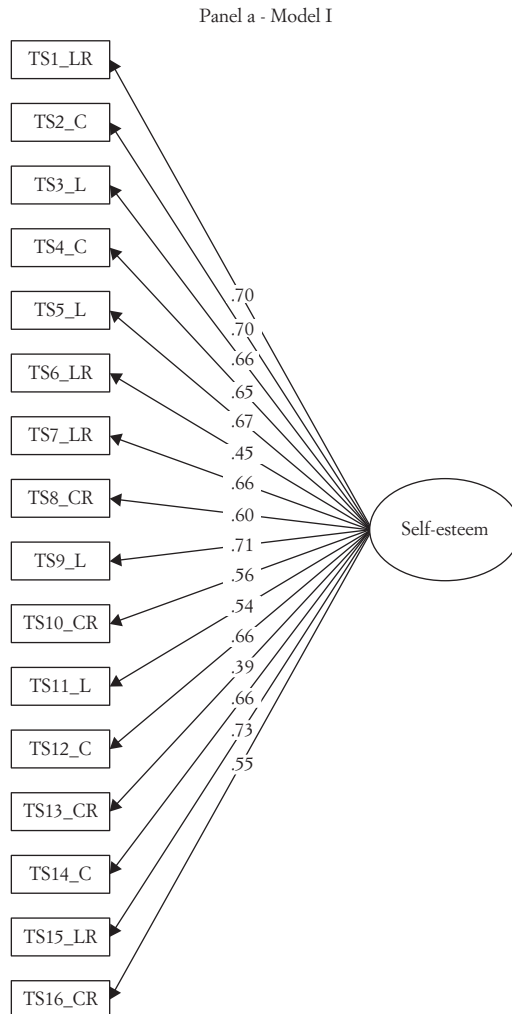

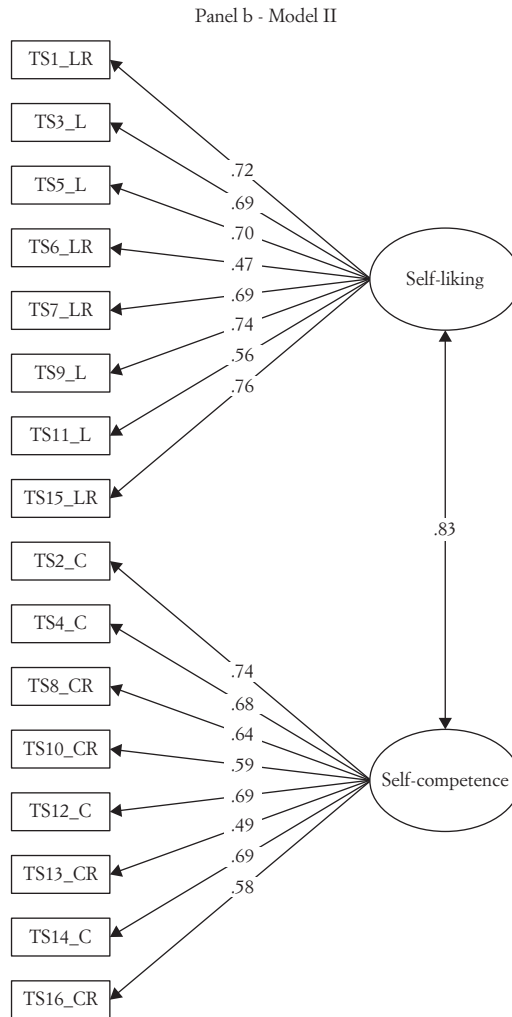Panel a - Model I

FIG. 1. *Models tested in Study 2. Panel a.*

FIG. 1. *Models tested in Study 2. Panel b.*

tions were allowed between the factors. Finally, we tested Model IV (figure 1, panel d) which was characterized by four latent dimensions like Model III, but with a different relationship between items and latent variables. Indeed, in Model IV, each item was conceived as related to either *liking* or *competence* as in Model II; differently from Model II, each item was also related to one of the two additional factors of positive and negative valence, according to whether higher scores indicate higher or lower levels of self-esteem.
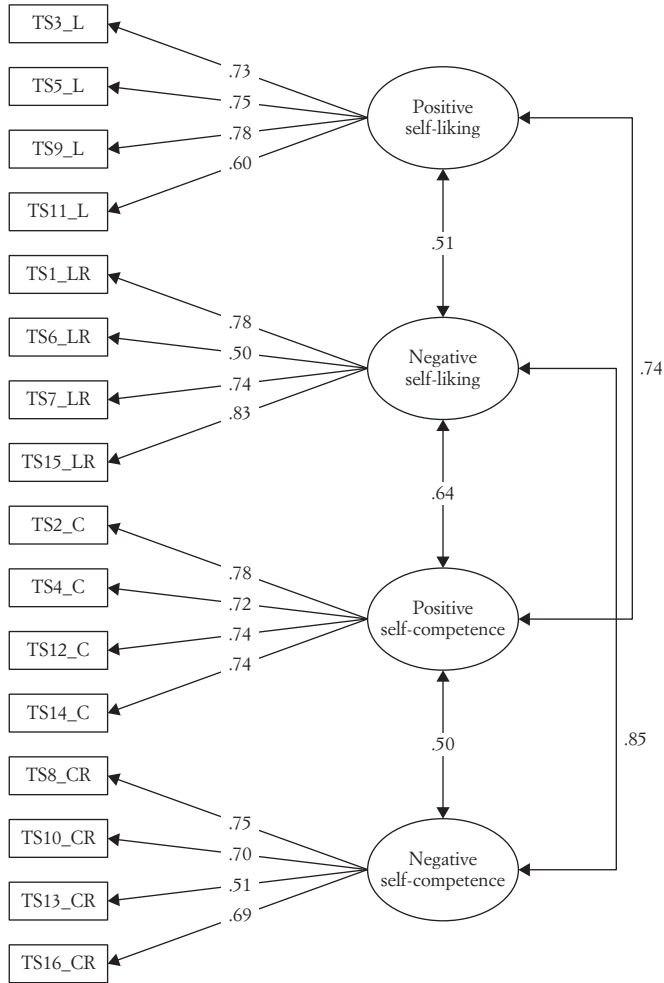
Panel c - Model III

FIG. 1. *Models tested in Study 2. Panel c.*

5.2. Results

We performed CFA using the software LISREL to test the fit of the described four models. As can be seen in table 2, Model I (figure 1, panel a), in which self-esteem was conceived as unidimensional, did not fit the standard values, and thus we can conclude that the structure of SLCS-R, at least in this sample, is not one-dimensional. Subsequently, we tested Model II in order to investigate the presence of two factors reflecting the original scale as designed by Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001; figure 1, panel b), namely self-competence and self-liking. However, as reported
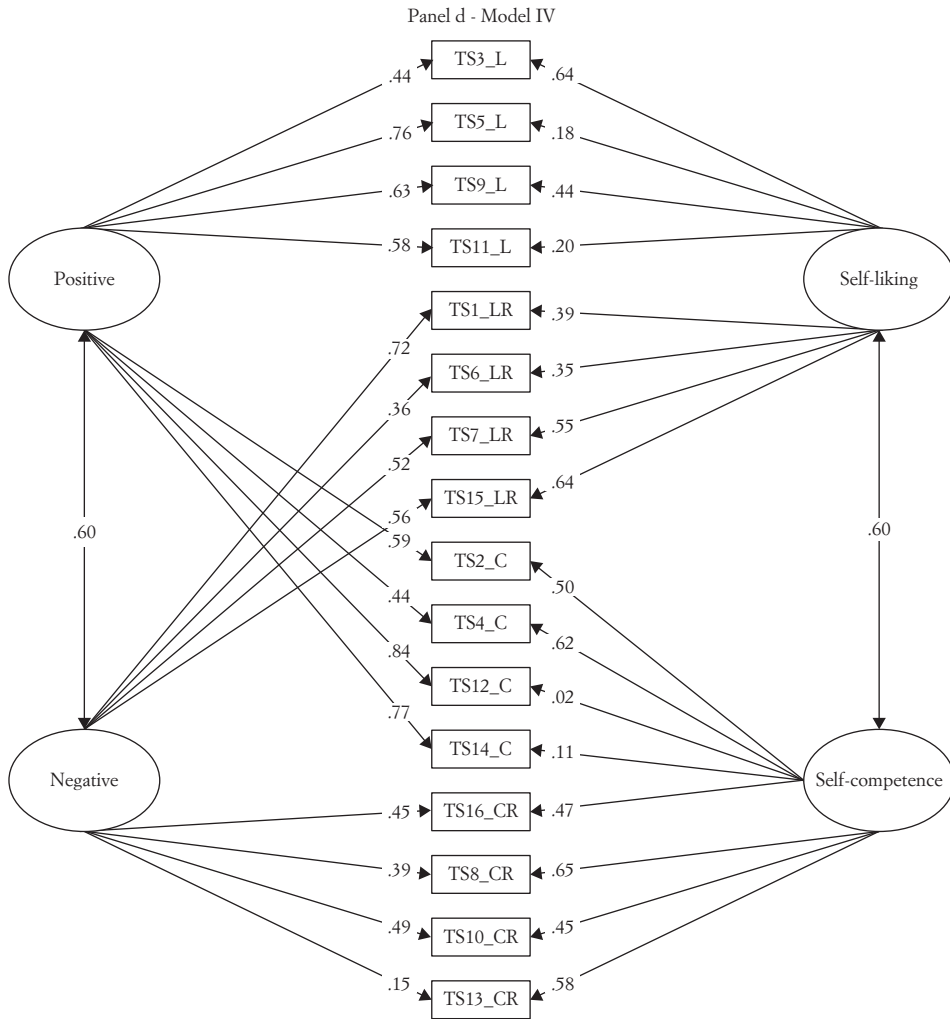
Panel d - Model IV

FIG. 1. *Models tested in Study 2. Panel d.*

in table 2, even this model did not reach the standard values of fit, suggesting the presence of more factors. Model III (figure 1, panel c) testing the presence of four separate factors, namely positive self-liking, negative self-liking, positive self-competence, and negative self-competence, reaches good fit only according to *NNFI*. Finally, we tested Model IV (figure 1, panel d), where each item was conceived as related to either *liking* or *competence*, and either *positivity* or *negativity* depending on how the item was worded. As reported in table 2, this model reached good fit according to all indexes used in the present analyses. Moreover, according to the AIC index (table 2) this last model emerged to be better than Model III. In other

words, it seems that, at least in our Italian sample, the factorial structure of the Italian translation of SLCS-R includes two different latent factors, that are self-liking and self-competence, measured by positively and negatively worded items[2].

In conclusion, only Model III and Model IV, that include not only a distinction based on content but also a distinction based on valence, present good fits. Specifically, in Model III only *NNFI* indicates good fit; in Model IV all the indexes point to very good fits. Moreover, *AIC* criterion indicates that Model IV is also the most parsimonious. This last model seems the most plausible also from a theoretical point of view. Indeed, it indicates that the two latent dimensions of self-esteem proposed by Tafarodi and Swann underlie responses to SLCS-R, and that positivity and negativity are added to these dimensions without any semantic difference in the items expressing each dimension in positive and negative terms.

6. Discussion

The main aim of Study 2 was to analyze in depth the presence of the two dimensions of self-esteem, namely self-competence and self-liking, and the possible presence of a further differentiation related to valence. In order to better understand the factorial structure of the Italian SLCS-R we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) analyzing four different models. Our results showed that among the four models here tested, the best fit to data emerged from Model IV in which each item was conceived as related to either *liking* or *competence*, and to either *positivity* or *negativity* depending on how the item was wording. This means that the expression of self-esteem in response to SLCS-R not only reflects the presence of two different dimensions in line with the original theoretical framework proposed by Tafarodi and Swann (1995), but it is importantly affected also by the (positive or negative) wording of sentences. In other words, whether a sentence is formulated so that higher values indicate high or low self esteem seems to play an important role, and should thus be considered as a separate aspect in data analyses. From a practical standpoint, we believe that the current results warrant the computation of two separate summed scores of self-esteem based on answers to SLCS-R, one related to self-competence and the other to self-liking. Indeed, the wording of items is shown to influence responses, but the number of positively and negatively worded items is balanced in both subscales, and counteracts this effect of method.

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[2] It has to be noted that, while in Model I, Model II and Model III all the factor loadings are significant (p < .05), in Model IV four factor loadings are very low and not significant ($p > .05$). We performed additional analyses excluding these items, but the new model did not reached the standard fit. For this reason, we suggest to include all the items in the computation of self-linking and self-competence scores.

As said, Model IV (see figure 1, panel d; table 2) seems the most plausible also from a theoretical perspective. It is indeed probable that the two latent dimensions of self-esteem proposed by Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001) lie behind responses to SLCS-R scale, and that positivity and negativity are just added to these two dimensions without any semantic difference in the items expressing liking in positive terms and in negative terms, which in both cases make reference to a self evaluation based on sociality and on seeing oneself as more or less acceptable in a global sense. The same is true also for the items expressing competence in positive and in negative terms. These outcomes are only partially in line with results described by Aidman (1998) in an Australian sample. Indeed, Aidman (1998) found that the items of SLSC-R reflect a distinction based on valence, in addition to the distinction between competence and likeability. More specifically, Aidman (1998) found a general positive evaluation without any differentiation between competence and likeability, but two different negative evaluations, one more related to competence and the other one more related to likeability.

7. Limitation of the current studies and future directions

The current research represents a first attempt in order to translate, adapt and validate the SLCS-R in the Italian context. Data and results presented here may be considered very important in order to understand the factorial structure of this scale, but at the same time they represent also only a small shot in this direction; future research is necessary in order to fill in some of the lacuna of the present work. For instance, data from Study 1 well support the theoretical framework proposed in 1995 by Tafarodi and Swann, confirming that the two subscales actually correspond to two different latent dimensions, one more related to affect and the other one more related to the perceived one's own competence. However, Study 1 is affected also by some limitations and thus the outcomes must be taken with caution. For instance, it must be noted that the model proposed for self-competence, even if it reaches the standard level of significance, presents an R^2 quite low ($R^2 = .10$) as compared to what we obtained for the other dimension ($R^2 = .64$). This means that the content of the question here used in order to detect one's own opinion about self-competence, is explained only in a small part by the item of the SLCS-R. This may be related to the specific criterion of self competence used here. The question aimed at detecting *the discrepancy of competence* was perhaps difficult to understand by participants because it was operationalized in a negative framework: it may be considered as more common and easier to use higher scores associated to positive rather that negative meanings. In order to solve this problem, future research may improve the methodology used in Study 1 by employing other measures in order to better tap self-competence. One possibility is, for instance, the use of a parallel measure of self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1977).

Finally, a replication with a wider and more representative sample of the population is necessary. Indeed, both in Study 1 and Study 2 the sample size was quite small and the sample was formed by a prevalence of young adults and with more females than males. For this reason, in order to better clarify the results obtained here, and in order to validate the Italian translation of SLCS-R, a replication is important.

Despite these limitations, as aforesaid, the present work represents an important starting point for future investigations. For instance, given the results of Study 2, it may be interesting in the future to further investigate whether the aforementioned distinction between different latent dimensions will actually emerge also at the implicit level in terms of automatic associations (e.g., Greenwald & Farnham, 2000). Moreover, future research may also analyze the influence of these different undertones of self-esteem in real life. More specifically, it may be interesting to investigate whether the whole self perception of a person is mainly related to self-liking or self-competence or, regardless to this distinction based on the content, whether the whole self perception is more influenced by positive or negative self-esteem. For instance, literature on intergroup processes describes warmth as the most important dimension as compared to competence (e.g., Fiske et al., 2006), and thus, even if a group is usually described along these two dimensions, the whole perception seems to be more related to the perceived sociability than to the perceived competence. At the same time, it may be the case that the relative superiority of self-liking vs. self-competence depends on the context, for instance the relative importance of the two dimensions for the self-concept of a manager may be different while in the office during business hours, as compared to at home during leisure time. Finally, given the important role of another dimension of social judgment, namely morality (e.g., Brambilla et al., 2012), especially in the evaluation of the ingroup, future research may also consider the possibility of a three dimensional self-esteem. For instance, also in the SLCS-R, here investigated, at least three items (i.e., 5-11-15) seem to be related to the moral domain.

In the end, the current work represents an important step forward in studying not only the factorial structure of self-esteem as measured by the Italian version of SLCS-R, but also in exploring self-esteem in general.

Appendix

Italian translation of the SLCS-R scale (L = self-liking; LR = self-liking reversed; C = self-competence; CR = self-competence reversed)

Tendo a sottovalutarmi. [TS1_LR]
Ho molto successo nelle cose che faccio. [TS2_C]
Sto molto bene con me stesso/a. [TS3_L]
Sono quasi sempre capace di raggiungere quello che voglio ottenere. [TS4_C]
Sono sicuro/a di essere una persona di valore. [TS5_L]
Talvolta riflettere su me stesso/a mi risulta sgradevole. [TS6_LR]

Ho un atteggiamento negativo nei miei confronti. [TS7_LR]
Certe volte faccio fatica a portare a termine le cose che sono importanti per me. [TS8_CR]
Sono molto felice di essere la persona che sono. [TS9_L]
A volte affronto male le sfide. [TS10_CR]
Non dubito mai di essere una persona di valore. [TS11_L]
Ci sono parecchie cose che so fare molto bene. [TS12_C]
Qualche volta non riesco a raggiungere i miei obiettivi. [TS13_CR]
Sono una persona molto dotata. [TS14_C]
Non ho abbastanza rispetto per me stesso/a. [TS15_LR]
Vorrei essere più capace nelle cose che faccio. [TS16_CR]

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