



Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Psychometric Validation of the Functional Assertiveness Scale among Indonesian College Students

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Abstract: This study aims to adapt and evaluate the psychometric properties of the Indonesian version of the Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS) (Mitamura, 2018). The scale was translated and culturally adapted following the International Test Commission Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (Second Edition) (ITC, 2018), involving three translators, six expert reviewers, and 11 lay reviewers. A quantitative approach was employed, and the adapted instrument was administered to 303 Indonesian university students aged 18-23 years selected through convenience sampling. Construct validity was evaluated using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and measurement invariance across gender was examined using Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MG-CFA). The CFA supported the original 12-item two-factor structure, with satisfactory model fit (TLI = 0.951, CFI = 0.937, SRMR = 0.045, RMSEA = 0.051) after residual covariances were added in single-group CFA. Reliability coefficients were satisfactory for the Objective Effectiveness subscale ($\alpha = 0.803$), the Pragmatic Politeness subscale ($\alpha = 0.713$), and the total scale ($\alpha = 0.799$). Furthermore, MG-CFA demonstrated strict measurement invariance across gender, indicating that the scale functions equivalently for male and female respondents. These findings provide evidence that the Indonesian version of the Functional Assertiveness Scale is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring functional assertiveness and supports its use in future psychological research and assessment in Indonesia.

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Introduction

Assertiveness refers to the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings, needs, and rights openly and appropriately while respecting the rights of others. Since its emergence in the mid-twentieth century, the concept has evolved from a communication skill emphasized in clinical psychology to a broader interpersonal competence that promotes effective social functioning and psychological well-being (Alberti & Emmons, 2017; Parray & Kumar, 2016). Because assertiveness enables individuals to communicate effectively without becoming passive or aggressive, it has become an important construct in psychological and educational research.

A growing body of research indicates that assertiveness contributes to positive outcomes across multiple life domains. In educational settings, assertive individuals are more likely to communicate their needs, seek support, manage academic demands effectively, and develop healthy interpersonal relationships. Beyond education, assertiveness is associated with leadership, workplace effectiveness, psychological well-being, self-esteem, and successful social adjustment. These findings suggest that assertiveness is an important

protective factor that supports both personal development and effective interpersonal functioning (Alberti & Emmons, 2017; Parray & Kumar, 2016).

Despite its importance, the expression of assertiveness is strongly influenced by culture. Indonesia is characterized by a predominantly collectivistic culture that emphasizes interpersonal harmony, politeness, and the avoidance of conflict. Consequently, openly expressing personal opinions or needs may be perceived differently from Western contexts, where many assertiveness theories and measurement instruments were originally developed. Previous studies have shown that collectivistic values are associated with lower levels of assertive behavior, highlighting the importance of culturally appropriate assessment (Alberti & Emmons, 2017; Zakiya & Hariyadi, 2022).

Because assertiveness is shaped by cultural norms, its assessment requires instruments that are conceptually and psychometrically appropriate for the target culture. Instruments developed in one cultural context cannot be assumed to function equivalently in another without rigorous translation and cross-cultural validation. Nevertheless, several international assertiveness scales have been applied in Indonesian research with limited evidence of systematic adaptation and psychometric evaluation. Inadequate adaptation may compromise construct validity, reduce item equivalence, and limit the comparability of research findings across studies.

The absence of a standardized and culturally validated assertiveness instrument has also encouraged many Indonesian researchers to develop their own measures based on different theoretical perspectives or modified versions of existing scales. Although these instruments have supported individual studies, the diversity of conceptual frameworks and measurement approaches has resulted in inconsistent operationalization of assertiveness, making comparisons across studies difficult and hindering the accumulation of a coherent body of evidence on assertiveness in Indonesia.

The Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS) (Mitamura, 2018) offers several advantages for cross-cultural adaptation. Unlike traditional assertiveness measures that primarily assess the frequency of assertive behaviors, the FAS conceptualizes assertiveness in terms of its functional outcomes: achieving one's goals while maintaining consideration for others. Through the dimensions of Objective Effectiveness and Pragmatic Politeness, the scale captures the balance between effective self-expression and interpersonal harmony, making it particularly relevant for collectivistic cultures such as Indonesia. Unlike traditional instruments that primarily emphasize the direct expression of personal opinions and needs, the FAS recognizes that assertiveness can be achieved through communication that is both effective and socially appropriate within the prevailing cultural context. Rather than prescribing a culturally specific communication style, the FAS adopts a functional, culture-flexible perspective in which assertiveness is evaluated according to whether communication is both effective and socially appropriate within the prevailing cultural norms.

Despite the growing importance of assertiveness research in Indonesia, no study has comprehensively adapted and validated the Functional Assertiveness Scale following the International Test Commission Guidelines for Translating and Adapting Tests (ITC, 2018). Therefore, this study aimed to translate, culturally adapt, and evaluate the psychometric properties of the Indonesian version of the FAS. Specifically, the study examined construct validity using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha, and measurement invariance across gender using Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis (MG-CFA).

The need for a culturally appropriate and psychometrically sound assertiveness instrument highlights the significance of the present study for both research and practice in



Indonesia. This study aims to develop and validate a culturally appropriate assertiveness measurement instrument for the Indonesian collectivist context. Specifically, it seeks to provide a valid and reliable tool for assessing assertiveness, enrich psychometric and psychological research on assertiveness, and support the development of evidence-based interventions and psychological practices tailored to Indonesia's cultural characteristics.

Research Method

The study employed a quantitative approach with the focus on psychometric assessment. The adaptation of the Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS) developed by Mitamura (2018) followed established adaptation procedures, and the collected data were analyzed to examine the validity and reliability of the scale. The study adapted the Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS), originally comprising 12 items divided into two dimensions: Objective Effectiveness (OE) or Efektivitas Tujuan (ET) and Pragmatic Politeness (PP) or Kesopanan Pragmatik (KP), each containing 6 items (Mitamura, 2018). The response format is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "always disagree" to "always agree," with all items phrased favorably. The adaptation followed the International Test Commission (ITC, 2018) guidelines for test translation and adaptation, which consist of eight stages: preconditioning stage, test development stage, synthesis stage, review stage, readability test stage, layout stage, data collection stage, and measurement model testing stage.

The forward-backward translation process involving three translators was conducted online through document sharing. The translation involved one HPI-certified master's graduate in English education and two bachelor's graduates in Psychology and English literature, with the latter two having TOEFL ITP scores above 600 and all three being experienced in translation. The expert review phase was conducted using a combination of offline and online methods, depending on the experts' availability. The panel consisted of six experts, including two psychology lecturers holding a master's degree in psychology and four psychology graduates with professional experience in communication and education, including copywriting and teaching. The readability test was administered via a Google Form containing Draft 2 items, completed by 11 laypersons who met the respondent criteria. The final Indonesian version of the FAS was compiled into an online questionnaire using Google Forms, including instructions, demographic questions, and answer options. The questionnaire link was distributed through various social media platforms to reach university students across Indonesia. Data collection was conducted from July to August 2024.

Data on measurement model testing stage were collected from 303 college student respondents across Indonesia aged 18 to 23 years. The sample consisted of 59.7% females and 40.3% males, with 49% identifying as Javanese, and 30.6% studying in West Java. The average age of participants was 20.44 years. Convenience sampling was used by distributing the survey via social media platforms such as WhatsApp, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the construct validity of the Indonesian FAS and its dimensions, using goodness-of-fit criteria from Kline (2023): RMSEA < 0.05–0.08, SRMR < 0.10, TLI > 0.90, and CFI > 0.90. Reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum threshold of 0.7. Measurement invariance across gender was examined using Multi-Group CFA (MG-CFA). Sequential models of configural, metric, scalar, and strict invariance were tested to evaluate the equivalence of the factor structure, factor loadings, item intercepts, and item residual variances, respectively. An instrument was considered invariant if the construct retained the same meaning across groups, allowing valid and fair comparisons of scores. Following Chen (2007), measurement

invariance was supported when changes in model fit indices between successive models met the following criteria: $\Delta CFI \leq 0.010$, $\Delta RMSEA \leq 0.015$, and $\Delta SRMR \leq 0.030$ for metric invariance, whereas $\Delta SRMR \leq 0.010$ was applied for scalar and strict invariance. All analyses were performed using JASP version 0.19.0.0.

Results and Discussion

Results of the Indonesian FAS Version

After obtaining permission the original FAS developer, the researcher conducted a series of adaptation steps, including forward translation, synthesis, backward translation, expert judgment, and layperson readability testing. Content validity assessed through qualitative methods yielded favorable results; six experts concurred that the FAS adaptation was suitable for use, with several recommendations for improvement. The items continue to undergo adjustments based on feedback received from both experts and laypersons, one of which is on item number 10 of the pragmatic politeness subscale.

Table 1. Changes in Item No. 10

Original Item	Draft-1	Draft-2	Final Item
I cause minimal embarrassment to a person when I try to get that person to change the way he or she dresses	<i>Saya membuat seseorang merasa sedikit malu pada saat saya mencoba membuat orang tersebut mengubah cara berpakaianya</i>	<i>Saya berusaha untuk tidak mempermalukan seseorang ketika saya berusaha membuat orang tersebut mengubah cara berpakaianya</i>	<i>Saya berusaha untuk tidak mempermalukan seseorang ketika saya berusaha membuat ia mengubah cara berpakaianya</i>

Sources: Mitamura (2018) & Personal Data (2024).

The construct validity test using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated that 12 items met the goodness-of-fit criteria, as presented in Table 2. In preparation for conducting multi-group analysis, the author also performed single-group CFA by gender. The results showed that the female group did not meet the criteria for CFI and TLI, whereas the male group was at the minimum threshold for TLI. Subsequently, the author performed model modification by adding residual covariances based on the top two recommendations from the modification indices, specifically between items 9KP and 12KP (Modification Index = 15.017; EPC = 0,118) and between items 10KP and 12KP (Modification Index = 9.449; EPC = 0,089). Following these modifications, all fit indices consistently improved, resulting in satisfactory goodness-of-fit values for both the full model and each single-group model according to Kline's (2023) criteria, thus allowing the analysis to proceed to the multi-group CFA stage.

Table 2. Results of Goodness of Fit Index FAS Indonesian Version

Fit Indicator	Criteria	Initial Model	Modified Model	Change
Full Model				
RMSEA	0.05 - 0.08	0.064	0.051	-0.013
SRMR	<0.10	0.054	0.045	-0.009
CFI	>0.90	0.921	0.937	+0.016
TLI	>0.90	0.902	0.951	+0.049
Female Single-Group				
RMSEA	0.05 - 0.08	0.077	0.063	-0.014
SRMR	<0.10	0.068	0.059	-0.009
CFI	>0.90	0.882	0.923	+0.041
TLI	>0.90	0.853	0.901	+0.048

Male Single-Group				
RMSEA	0.05 - 0.08	0.069	0.059	-0.010
SRMR	<0.10	0.066	0.061	-0.005
CFI	>0.90	0.920	0.944	+0.024
TLI	>0.90	0.900	0.928	+0.028

Sources: Kline (2023) & Personal Data (2024).

Furthermore, the factor loadings of the 12 FAS items ranged from 0.239 to 0.727, with three items (9KP, 10KP, and 12KP) not meeting the criterion for significant factor loadings, as their values were below 0.40. These items also exhibited correlated residuals, likely due to their overlapping semantic content and similar wording, as all three address subtle ways of correcting others without causing embarrassment or offense within the Pragmatic Politeness dimension. Their conceptual overlap may have introduced shared variance beyond the latent factor, which was accounted for by allowing residual covariances in the CFA model. Additionally, the item discrimination analysis showed that all items were significant, with values above 0.25 (Azwar, 2012), ranging from 0.258 to 0.542. Reliability estimates for each item, subscale, and the composite score also yielded significant results.

Table 3. Statistics of Items FAS Indonesian Version

Item	Factor Loadings	Rix	Reliability (α)
ET Subscale			0.803
1ET	0.479	0.468	0.782
2ET	0.535	0.522	0.777
3ET	0.727	0.542	0.774
4ET	0.725	0.460	0.785
5ET	0.598	0.524	0.776
6ET	0.705	0.527	0.776
KP Subscale			0.713
7KP	0.606	0.474	0.781
8KP	0.562	0.442	0.784
9KP	0.395	0.314	0.795
10KP	0.325	0.314	0.795
11KP	0.493	0.444	0.784
12KP	0.239	0.258	0.799
Total			0.799

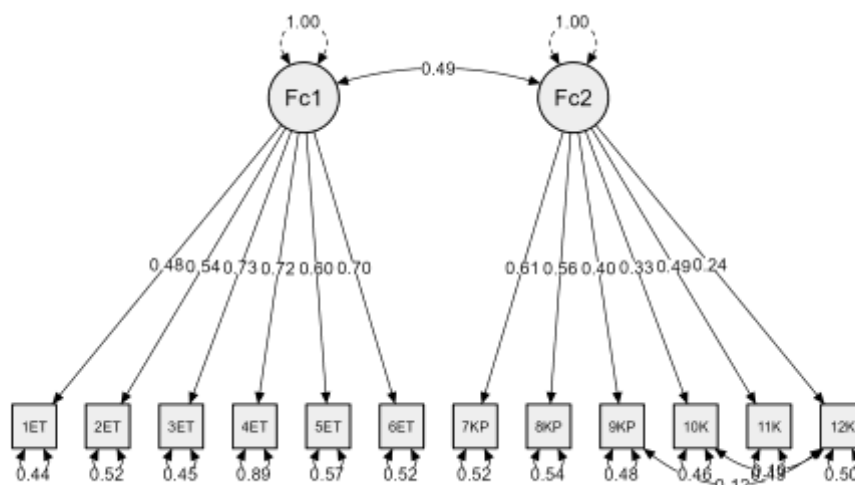


Figure 1. First-Order CFA Pattern of FAS Indonesian Version

Subsequently, measurement invariance testing was conducted using multi-group CFA across male and female groups. The results consistently showed good fit across all indices at the configural, metric, scalar, and strict levels. These findings indicate that the Indonesian adaptation of the FAS achieves strict invariance, the highest level in multi-group CFA, which imposes equality constraints on residual variances to test whether measurement error is consistent across groups. This demonstrates that the scale is stable and functions equivalently across groups, in this case, gender.

Table 4. Results of Multi-Group CFA FAS Indonesian Version

Model	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI
Configural	0.061	0.060	0.913	0.933
Metric	0.062	0.070	0.912	0.925
Scalar	0.058	0.071	0.922	0.928
Strict	0.058	0.073	0.923	0.921

Sources: Personal Data (2024).

Discussion

The present study demonstrated that the Indonesian version of the Functional Assertiveness Scale (FAS) possesses satisfactory psychometric properties. Following a comprehensive adaptation process based on the International Test Commission (ITC, 2018). Guidelines and recommendations by Azwar (2017, 2022), the Indonesian FAS demonstrated satisfactory construct validity, internal consistency reliability, and strict measurement invariance across gender. These findings support its use as a standardized instrument for assessing functional assertiveness among Indonesian university students. Although three items (9KP, 10KP, and 12KP) did not meet the recommended factor loading criterion and showed the highest modification indices, allowing residual covariances substantially improved the overall and single-group CFA model fit. These items shared overlapping semantic content and similar wording as they all describe subtle ways of correcting others without causing embarrassment or offense, which may have introduced shared variance beyond the latent Pragmatic Politeness factor.

The psychometric findings of the present study were generally consistent with the original validation of the Functional Assertiveness Scale by Mitamura (2018). The Indonesian version maintained the original two-factor structure, and the final CFA demonstrated satisfactory model fit indices (CFI = 0.937, TLI = 0.951, RMSEA = 0.051, SRMR = 0.045), which were comparable to the original study (GFI = 0.96, AGFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.06). Reliability estimates were also comparable, although slightly lower than those reported by Mitamura (2018) (Objective Effectiveness α = 0.803 vs. 0.81; Pragmatic Politeness α = 0.713 vs. 0.84; total scale α = 0.799 vs. 0.84). Similar findings were reported by Ishii et al. (2026), who supported the two-factor structure and reported acceptable model fit (SRMR = 0.048, CFI = 0.893, TLI = 0.867) with good internal consistency (α = 0.85) among Japanese adults. In Indonesia, Janice et al. (2023) found acceptable item-total correlations (0.263–0.606) and internal consistency (α = .747) after removing one item that did not meet the minimum criterion. Collectively, these findings support the applicability of the FAS across cultural settings while suggesting that further linguistic and cultural refinement of several Pragmatic Politeness items may improve its measurement performance in the Indonesian context.

The relatively low factor loadings of items 9KP, 10KP, 12KP may also reflect cultural differences in communication. One expert noted that item 12KP (“I do not carelessly insult my friend when I am trying to get him to stop doing something annoying or causing trouble”) was particularly difficult to evaluate because the situation described is less familiar within the



Indonesian context. Respondents' limited experience with this type of interpersonal communication may have resulted in greater hesitation and response variability, reducing the items' ability to reflect the intended construct. Nevertheless, these items were retained because their overall psychometric performance remained acceptable and they contribute conceptually to the Pragmatic Politeness dimension. Future studies may refine the wording of these items while preserving the original construct.

The satisfactory psychometric performance of the Indonesian FAS may also be explained by the conceptual compatibility between functional assertiveness and the Indonesian collectivist cultural context. Unlike traditional assertiveness measures that primarily emphasize direct self-expression, the FAS evaluates assertiveness according to whether individuals achieve their communication goals while maintaining consideration for others. This functional perspective is consistent with communication norms in collectivist societies, where interpersonal harmony and politeness are highly valued (Alberti & Emmons, 2017; Perceka et al., 2019). Consequently, the underlying construct of the FAS appears to be appropriate for assessing assertiveness within the Indonesian cultural context.

The selection of university students as the target population may also have contributed to the satisfactory adaptation results. Compared with younger populations, university students are generally more exposed to diverse interpersonal experiences and educational environments that encourage the development of assertive communication (Perceka et al., 2019; Widaningrum, 2015; Wigunawati, 2019). This is consistent with previous findings showing that university students demonstrate higher levels of assertiveness than high school students (Widaningrum, 2015). Furthermore, assertiveness supports various aspects of student functioning, including communication, problem-solving, stress management, prosocial behavior, and time management (Afriyana et al., 2020; Anfajaya & Indrawati, 2016; Bishop, 2013; Kristanto et al., 2022), making this population particularly suitable for evaluating the Indonesian version of the FAS.

The findings of this study have several important implications. First, the availability of a standardized Indonesian version of the Functional Assertiveness Scale provides researchers with a psychometrically sound instrument for assessing functional assertiveness, thereby improving the consistency and comparability of future assertiveness research in Indonesia. Second, the demonstration of strict measurement invariance across gender indicates that the instrument can be used to make meaningful comparisons between male and female university students. Finally, the emphasis of the FAS on achieving personal goals while maintaining consideration for others makes it particularly suitable for investigating assertiveness within the Indonesian collectivist cultural context and may support the development and evaluation of evidence-based psychological and educational interventions.

Conclusion

The adaptation of the Functional Assertiveness Scale in Indonesia, conducted through a comprehensive and sequential procedure, has resulted in a measurement tool with strong psychometric properties. The Indonesian version of the FAS demonstrates validity, reliability, and strict measurement invariance across gender groups, supporting its use for Indonesian college students and other similar populations with minimal adjustments. The compatibility of the Functional Assertiveness Scale with the Indonesian collectivist cultural context and its applicability among university students further support the successful adaptation of the instrument. These findings pave the way for broader application of the FAS in Indonesia and provide a solid foundation for further assertiveness research.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, future research is recommended to refine Items 9KP, 10KP, and 12KP by rephrasing their wording to improve clarity and cultural relevance while preserving the original construct, followed by re-evaluation of their psychometric properties. Removal or replacement of these items should only be considered if subsequent validation studies continue to demonstrate unsatisfactory psychometric performance. Future studies are also encouraged to examine measurement invariance across demographic groups beyond gender, such as age, educational level, and cultural background, and to conduct further cross-cultural validation of the Indonesian FAS. In addition, recommendations that were not implemented in the present adaptation may be considered to further optimize the instrument in line with the evolving characteristics of Indonesian society. For practitioners, including psychologists, university counselors, and educational practitioners, the Indonesian version of the FAS may be used as a standardized instrument to assess functional assertiveness among university students and comparable populations. However, the instrument should be interpreted alongside other relevant assessment data and clinical or professional judgement rather than as a stand-alone basis for evaluation, diagnosis, or intervention.

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