

THE STUDY OF THE FACTOR STRUCTURE OF THE THAI VERSION OF GELOPH<15>

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Abstract: The present study was designed to investigate the factor structure of the Thai version of the GELOPH<15> scale in Thailand and test its reliability and validity via its relationship with measures of self-esteem and life satisfaction. The participants consisted of 210 Thai citizens (58 males, 152 females) aged over 18 years and willing to fill in the study's questionnaire. Exploratory factor analysis of the Thai version of GELOPH<15> yielded three factors (i.e., inability to deal with gelotophobia, negative reaction towards gelotophobia, and social avoidance) that are different from the original GELOPH<15> German version in which one dimension fit its data best and was identified by Ruch and Proyer (2008). Test of convergent validity showed that the GELOPH<15>'s three factors have negative correlation with self-esteem and life satisfaction. The analysis of demographic differences revealed that gender, age, and marital status have no significant effect on the three gelotophobia factors.

Keywords: GELOPH<15>, Gelotophobia, Life Satisfaction, Self-esteem.

Introduction

Most people fear being laughed at to some degree and do their best to avoid embarrassment; but there are those who have an intense and excessive fear of it. They have a hard time differentiating laughter because they always take laughter to be a form of ridicule and shy away from situations in which they might say or do something that would result in their being the target of laughter. For them, merely being around others who are talking and laughing can cause tension and apprehension. In the mid-1990s, an astute German psychologist, Michael Titze, recognized the problem for what it is: a debilitating fear of being laughed at. Since then, this phenomenon has attracted attention from scholars in psychology, sociology, and psychiatry. Even linguists and humor experts have examined this trait, technically known as *gelotophobia* – a term derived from two Greek words, *gelos* (γέλως) meaning “laughter” and *phobos* (φόβος) meaning “fear”. The first studies emerged from a clinical context (Titze, 2009) before moving to samples of the normal population (Ruch, Hofmann, Platt, & Proyer, 2013). According to Titze

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