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An emic-etic approach to personality assessment in predicting social adaptation, risky social behaviors, status striving and social affirmation

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ABSTRACT

This research tested the utility of an emic-etic approach to personality assessment in predicting three behavioral domains: Social adaptation, Risky social behaviors and Status striving and social affirmation. In this regard, two studies were conducted. The aim of the first study was to develop a personality measure of a psycho-lexically based six-factorial trait-taxonomic structure identified in the Romanian lexicon. In study 2 we tested to what extent these indigenous six-factor personality factors bring incremental validity in the prediction of behavioral domains. This emic-etic approach showed incremental validity in predicting Social adaptation, Risky social behaviors, and Status striving and social affirmation, over and beyond the Big five and the HEXACO.

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1. Introduction

A central concern in personality is well represented in the etic-emic distinction (Rolland, 2002). The etic approach assumes universal, cross-culturally valid dispositions (e.g., McCrae & Costa, 2004). The etic approach seeks to test to what extent a theoretical personality model is successfully replicated in a new cultural context (Rolland, 2002). The emic approach emphasizes the relevance of culturally specific characteristics, saying that personality is also shaped by culture (e.g., Benet-Martinez & Oishi, 2008). The main aim of the emic approach is to identify individual differences in personality that are characteristic of a cultural context (Saucier, Thalmayer, & Bel-Bahar, 2014).

To this date it is not clear whether an individual's personality is best defined in terms of “universal” (etic) factors or whether indeed indigenous cultural differences should be part of the definition. By now, research in this field seems to take place mainly either according the etic approach, or according to the emic approach, while, as argued by Cheung, Van de Vijver, and Leong (2011), a combined etic-emic approach might be more appropriate. This would involve using both etic-derived dimensions (personality dimensions mainly developed in a Western cultural context) and emic-derived dimensions (identified in a specific cultural context). Cheung et al. (2011) argue that the etic-emic approach is superior to the other two approaches. Yet, only few studies have

tested this assumption. Cheung, Cheung, and Leung (2008), for example, have shown that indigenous (emic-derived) personality traits present incremental validity in the prediction of external criteria over and above etic personality factors. The study was, however, restricted to clinical settings specific to the Chinese context. Another example is the study by Ion, Iliescu, Ilie, and Ispas (2016) who showed that an emic-etic approach had incremental validity in predicting job performance in the case of Chinese workers. Since so little is known about the utility of an emic-etic approach, we test the predictive power of the approach using a variety of broad behavioral criteria.

In Romania, various personality models and personality measures, such as the NEO PI-R, the NEO FFI, the Big Five Questionnaire (BFQ), the Big Five Adjectives (BFA), the California Psychological Inventory (CPI), and the Nonverbal Personality Questionnaire (NPQ), have been cross-culturally validated during the last decade, all following the etic approach. Most studies focusing on personality assessment in Romania (Dincă & Iliescu, 2009; Ion et al., 2017; Ispas, Iliescu, Ilie, & Johnson, 2014; Oakland, Iliescu, Dincă, & Dempsey, 2009; Sârbescu & Neguț, 2013; Sava et al., 2012; Sava, 2008), dealt with the cross-cultural validity and the predictive power of etic models of personality. Just a few other studies related to personality assessment followed an emic approach (Burtăverde & De Raad, in press; Minulescu, 2008; Nedelcea, Ciorbea, & Ion, 2012).

Minulescu (2008) was the first to develop a personality assessment inventory relying on the psycho-lexical approach. Minulescu (2008) followed the so-called Dutch approach as detailed in

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Brokken (1978). From a relevant Romanian dictionary, all trait descriptors were selected that fitted two heuristic criteria, namely whether the trait term would fit the sentences “*is a [trait term] person*” and “*is [trait term] by nature*”. The ultimate selection, consisting of both personality descriptive adjectives and nouns, was 453 terms. The analyses of ratings on those terms allowed the construction of a Romanian questionnaire measuring Extraversion, Maturity (*others say I am a profiteer; I am aggressive; to get what I want I am ready to argue*), Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Auto-actualization (*I want to find out the hidden meaning behind things; generally, I am tolerant; I ask a lot from myself; I am not bothered to say the truth*) (Minulescu, 2008).

More recently, Burtăverde and De Raad (in press), completed a second psycho-lexical study, this time according to the so-called German approach, as detailed in Ostendorf (1990) and Angleitner, Ostendorf, and John (1990). Characteristic of the German approach is that possible trait descriptors are categorized into a system in which distinction is made between, for example, dispositional traits, temporary conditions, social aspects, and overt characteristics. The contents of the dispositional category are utilized for a structuring of the personality trait domain. The study of Burtăverde and De Raad (in press) ultimately led to a six-factor structure with Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Morality (combining sincerity versus malignancy), and Unconventionality (a version of the Intellect factor). The results of this latter study are used for the development of a personality measure to represent the emic part in the present study. A summary of relevant details on the lexical origin of this measure is provided in the Method section.

To test the incremental validity of the emic or indigenous personality factors we selected behavioral criteria which are known to affect one's personal life from three broad behavioral categories, namely: (1) social adaptation, (2) risky social behaviors, and (3) status striving and social affirmation.

Social adaptation. Some of the broad personality factors, especially Extraversion and Agreeableness, are known to refer to relational and social aspects of one's life, (e.g., De Raad, 1995; Tov, Nai, & Lee, 2016; Trapnell & Wiggin, 1990). Criteria included in this adaptation category should be expected to be predicted by such broad personality factors. We chose the following five behavioral indicators: self-esteem, job satisfaction, career satisfaction, life satisfaction, and perceived stress. All these indicators have important implications for the social functioning of individuals, and research showed that these indicators are related to various personality factors. Self-esteem has been shown to be positively related to Emotional stability (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2002). Job satisfaction is positively associated with Emotional stability, Extraversion and Conscientiousness (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Career satisfaction is negatively related to Neuroticism and positively related to Extraversion (Seibert & Kraimer, 2001). Life satisfaction is positively related to Emotional Stability (Rigby & Huebner, 2005). Perceived stress is positively associated with Neuroticism (Ferguson, 2001).

Risky social behaviors. Taking into account that some other broad personality factors, such as Conscientiousness and Honesty-Humility, refer to what degree an individual complies with social norms, values, and principles (e.g., Burtăverde, Chraif, Aniței, & Dumitru, 2017; Schmitt, 2004), we aimed to select criteria that offer information about the extent to which an individual interacts with his or her environment in a maladaptive way. We chose the following four indicators: short mating orientation, previous socio-sexual behavior, safety-related risk activities, and traffic fines. All these indicators refer to behaviors that imply some degree of risk taking and sensation seeking. All of them have been linked to personality dispositions. Short mating strategies and socio-sexual behavior, for example, are negatively related to Honesty-Humility (Lee et al., 2013). Safety-related risk activities

are positively associated to Openness (Weller & Tikir, 2011). Traffic fines and violations are related to Extraversion (Loo, 1979).

Status striving and social affirmation. We also intended to select criteria that tell about what guides a person's behavior – to what extent is he or she internally or externally motivated. We considered this aspect important because many authors showed that this is closely related to the level of personal development and growth of the individual (e.g. internal motivation and autonomy are characteristics of personal development whereas external motivation and controlled orientation indicate low personal development) (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Considering that some broad personality factors may refer to aspects of personal development (e.g. Honesty-Humility, Emotional Stability), the criteria selected for this category should be predicted by one's personality. We chose the following four indicators: materialism preference, desire for power, time spent on social networks, and posts on social networks. These criteria refer to individuals characterized by the need of social recognition and validation. All of these indicators have been associated with personality dispositions. Both materialism preference and desire for power are negatively related to Honesty-Humility (Lee et al., 2013). Time spend on social media platforms is positively related to Extraversion (Moore & McElroy, 2012).

It is important to mention that there are many other behavioral criteria that can be included in these three broad behavioral categories that we selected for this study. We opted for some of them that were related to personality in many instances. Therefore, this approach should be effective in the attempt of testing the incremental validity of a combined emic-etic personality assessment approach.

1.1. Present study

Based on the preceding literature review and empirical evidence, the aims of this research are: (1) to develop an emic personality measure, that assesses the six personality factors that proceeded from the Burtăverde and De Raad (in press) lexical taxonomy of Romanian personality descriptors, and (2) to assess the predictive validity personality measures, and especially to test the extent to which these emic or indigenous personality factors bring incremental validity in the prediction of external behavioral criteria. For etic measures of personality, use is made of standard Big Five and Big Six instruments.

2. Study 1: The development of an emic personality measure

The starting-point for the personality measure in Romanian was in the psycho-lexically based factor structure, consisting of six factors consisting of indigenous or emic versions of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Morality, and of Unconventionality. The Morality factor describes characteristics of Honesty-Humility (Ashton et al., 2004) and of Negative Valence (Almagor, Tellegen, & Waller, 1995), with such traits as *honest, ethical, and steadfast*, versus *lascivious, provocative, and perverted*. The Unconventionality factor seems to be a version of Big Five Intellect with a rebellious connotation, as had, for example, also been discovered in Dutch (De Raad, Hendriks, & Hofstee, 1992) and in Italian (Caprara & Perugini, 1994). Details of the study that produced these six factors are given in Burtăverde and De Raad (in press). A summary description of that study is given in the next section. The actual construction of the Romanian personality measure is described in the subsequent section.

2.1. The taxonomy and structure of the Romanian personality lexicon

This part of the study consists of two steps, the first step involving the construction of a representative list of the complete

Romanian trait vocabulary, and the second step consisting of the structuring of that representative trait list through the use of Principal Components Analyses on the basis of ratings on those trait descriptors.

2.1.1. Step 1: Taxonomy

Two people independently scanned a comprehensive Romanian dictionary for adjectives that were relevant for personality trait description. The combination of the two selections was an agreed upon list (Cohen's kappa: 0.89) of 1746 terms. These terms were classified by ten judges according to a system described by Angleitner et al. (1990), which comprised five main categories (Dispositions, Temporary conditions, Social aspects, Overt characteristics, Terms of limited utility). The judges assigned (inter-judge reliability: 0.87) 412 terms to the Dispositions-category, to be used for the structuring step.

2.1.2. Step 2: Structuring the Romanian trait domain

The list with 412 dispositional trait adjectives was administered to 515 participants (430 women and 85 men; mean age 31.4, ranging from 18 to 74) together with a measure of the Big Five (the 50-item IPIP (Goldberg, 1999)). The latter instrument was added mainly for the purpose of identification of the factors proceeding from the structuring procedure. The participants were instructed to provide self-ratings on both item-lists.

Given the ratings, 34 terms were removed that turned out to have very low means and which were predominantly evaluative in meaning. The ratings on the remaining set of 378 terms were ipsatized (within-subject standardized), and subsequently Principal Components Analysis was applied and Varimax rotated. Regarding the number of components to extract we used (1) the "scree test" (Cattell, 1966) and (2) Horn's parallel analysis based on Monte Carlo simulation (Horn, 1965), both suggesting six components. In addition, we used (3) the Bass-Ackwards procedure (Goldberg, 2006) leading to the hierarchical emergence of components, and (4) interpretability of components. The latter two techniques supported the six-components solution to be accepted as the proper structure to summarize the main contents underlying the Romanian trait population. Those components were labelled (1) Conscientiousness (e.g., *organized, perfectionist, precise* versus *reckless, careless, disorganized*), (2) Extraversion (e.g., *bold, energetic, dynamic*, versus *silent, taciturn, pessimistic*), (3) Agreeableness (e.g., *sentimental, sensitive, generous*, versus *arrogant, sly, machiavellian*), (4) Emotional Stability (e.g., *calm, temperate, non-aggressive*, versus *nervous, choleric, irritable*), (5) Morality (e.g., *honest, ethical, fair*, versus *lascivious, provocative, enticing*), and (6) Unconventionality (e.g., *unconventional, rebellious, disobedient*, versus *conformist, submissive, conventional, ordinary*). The contents of the these six factors formed the concepts used for the construction of the emic personality measure.

By their contents, these six emic factors seem to come close to the factors of the Six-factor model (Ashton et al., 2004). As a further aid in the interpretation of the factors, and to have an indication of the extent to which this Romanian structure corresponds to the Six-factor model, we selected markers of the factors of the Six-factor model (in the Appendix), to correlate the marker-scales with the lexically based factors (using factor scores). We were able to select seven markers for each of the factors of the Six-factor model. The results are given in Table 1, together with the alpha coefficients for the marker-scales. As can be seen, the lexically based C, ES, and U factors corresponded quite well with Six-factor model Conscientiousness, Emotionality, and Intellect, respectively, but the other factors did not have unique substantial correlations with a Six-factor marker scale. The multiple correlations tell that the Six-factor model markers were well covered by the lexical factors; Of the lexical factors, however, particularly Morality was not well covered by the Six-factor model markers.

In order to have an appropriate emic measure available for further use, we had the six lexically based factors each represented by the 20 highest loading trait adjectives (including both positive and negative terms). These 120 trait-adjectives are listed in the Appendix. Besides this 120-item emic set of items, we also formed a briefer version of this measure. Such a measure is useful in the present and in future studies for purposes of economy. This briefer measure consists of the 12 highest loading traits per factor. These trait-adjectives are indicated by an asterisk in the 120-list in the Appendix. Table 2 gives the correlations between the scales based on these 20 items and the scales based on the 12 items with the original factors, indicating a good representation of the original lexical factors by the marker scales.

3. Study 2: Incremental validity of an emic measure

In Study 2 we test to what extent the six indigenously developed or emic factor scales encompass individual differences related to personality and which are not included in the imported etic Big Five and HEXACO models. Moreover, we investigate whether these individual differences are important in predicting broad behavioral criteria. In the present study we use besides the 120-item emic measure, also the briefer 72-item version in order to collect information on its usefulness. Moreover, in the present investigation it is fair to make use of a measure that corresponds in length to the item lists of the imported instruments.

3.1. Method

3.1.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 218 undergraduate psychology students (180 women and 38 men) aged between 19 and 54 ($M = 22.85$, $SD = 6.79$). Taking into account the behavioral criteria

Table 1
Correlations between lexically based factors and six-factor model markers ($N = 515$).

Six-factor model markers	N of items	alpha	Lexically based factors						
			E	A	C	ES	M	U	Multiple-R
Extraversion	7	0.82	0.90	0.06	0.10	−0.09	0.01	0.12	0.92
Agreeableness	7	0.75	0.08	0.57	0.15	0.68	0.00	−0.01	0.90
Conscientiousness	7	0.79	0.21	0.04	0.87	0.06	0.07	−0.08	0.91
Emotionality	7	0.66	− 0.57	0.23	−0.36	−0.26	−0.25	−0.10	0.80
Honesty	7	0.71	−0.03	0.55	−0.36	−0.17	− 0.48	−0.14	0.85
Intellect	7	0.68	0.18	−0.17	−0.13	−0.08	−0.09	0.77	0.83
Multiple-R			0.92	0.79	0.89	0.76	0.61	0.81	

Note: E = Extraversion; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness; ES = Emotional Stability; M = Morality; U = Unconventionality. Correlations higher than |0.40| are in boldface.

Table 2

Correlations between the Romanian lexical factors and their derived 20-item marker-scales and 12-item marker-scales ($N = 515$). To enhance readability correlations above .40 are given in boldface.

marker-scales: 20-items/12 items	Romanian lexical factors					
	C	E	A	ES	M	U
Conscientiousness	0.85/0.85	0.24/0.24	0.16/0.15	0.12/0.12	0.12/0.11	−0.10/−0.08
Extraversion	0.17/0.15	0.88/0.88	0.17/0.15	0.13/0.13	0.01/0.01	0.05/0.02
Agreeableness	0.12/0.12	0.14/0.14	0.86/0.85	0.05/0.05	0.05/0.04	0.02/0.02
Emotional Stability	0.32/0.28	−0.02/−0.01	0.33/0.32	0.69/0.68	0.20/0.20	−0.09/−0.08
Morality	0.33/0.29	−0.04/−0.04	−0.24/−0.22	−0.21/−0.20	0.70/0.68	0.07/0.07
Unconventionality	−0.11/−0.09	0.33/0.30	−0.04/−0.02	0.05/0.04	0.13/0.12	0.73/0.71

included in the research, all participants were employed and possessed a valid driver's license.

3.1.2. Instruments

List of 120 items. The Romanian trait descriptive list comprised 120 adjectives, measuring the six lexically based factors as described above with 20 items per factor (the highest 20 loading adjectives per factor). With the 20-items based factor-scales, good internal consistency were obtained, using the ratings of the 218 participants (Conscientiousness = 0.85, Dynamism = 0.88, Emotional Stability = 0.88, Agreeableness = 0.83, Morality = 0.75, Unconventionality = 0.76). The shorter version of this measure consisted of 72 items, with 12 highest loading items per factor. The internal consistencies in this case dropped a little for some scales (Conscientiousness = 0.83, Dynamism = 0.88, Emotional Stability = 0.88, Agreeableness = 0.82, Morality = 0.71, Unconventionality = 0.71).

The participants were asked to give self-ratings, using a five-point item scale running from “1” (does not characterize me at all) to “5” (almost always characterizes me). A version of 12 items per factor was created in order to permit comparison with the etic measures in terms of reliabilities.

HEXACO-60. The 60-item HEXACO Personality Inventory (Ashton & Lee, 2009) is supposed to measure the factors of the six-dimensional model of personality (Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to Experience). The 60 item version includes four facets per factors. All items were rated on a 1–5 (disagree–agree) scale. The total score for each main personality factor was obtained by summing over the four facets per factor. The internal consistency reliabilities of the HEXACO PI 60 item version, reported in Ashton and Lee (2009), ranged between 0.76 and 0.80.

BFI. The Big Five Inventory (John, Nauman, & Soto, 2008) consists of 44 items grouped in five factors: Extraversion (8 items, $\alpha = 0.83$), Agreeableness (9 items, $\alpha = 0.77$), Conscientiousness (9 items, $\alpha = 0.83$), Neuroticism (8 items, $\alpha = 0.88$) and Openness (10 items, $\alpha = 0.84$). Factor-scale scores were obtained by summing the items per factor-scale. The internal consistencies were based on the ratings by the 218 participants.

Social adaptation. This broad criterion variable included five behavioral indicators:

- (1) *Career satisfaction*, assessed with a single item measure: “How satisfied are you with your career?” This item was rated on a five-point scale (1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied).
- (2) *Job satisfaction*, assessed using the sum of three items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (MOAQ; Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1979). A sample item is “All and all I am satisfied with my current job”.
- (3) *Life satisfaction*, assessed using the sum of the five items from the Satisfaction with life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). A sample item is “I am satisfied with my life”.

- (4) *Self-esteem*, assessed using a single item measure (Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001): “I have high self-esteem”, rated on a five-point scale (1 = not at all characterizes me, 5 = always characterizes me).
- (5) *Perceived stress*, measured using the short version of Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1994). This measure consists of 4 items (e.g. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?), rated on a five-point scale (0 = never, 4 = very often).

Risky social behaviors. This criterion variables included four behavioral indicators:

- (1) *Short mating strategies*, assessed using the Short-Term Orientation scale that is included in the Sociosexuality Measure (Jackson & Kirkpatrick, 2007) which contains 9 items (e.g. I believe in taking sexual opportunities when I find them), rated on a five-point scale (1 = 1 = not at all characteristic = very characteristic).
- (2) *Socio-sexual behavior*, assessed using the Socio-sexual Behavior scale (Jackson & Kirkpatrick, 2007) which consists of 4 items with open answers (During your entire life, with how many partners of the opposite sex have you had sexual intercourse with?).
- (3) *Safety-related risk activities*, assessed using Health/Safety Risk scale from the Domain-Specific-Risk-Taking Scale (Weber, Blais, & Betz, 2002). The scale consists of 6 items (e.g. I use to drink alcohol in excess in various social contexts), rated on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all characteristic, 7 = very characteristic).
- (4) *Driving fines*, assessed using the following item: In the last three years, how many traffic fines did you received?

Status striving and social affirmation. This criterion included four behavioral indicators:

- (1) *Materialism*, assessed with Materialism centrality scale (Richins & Dawson, 1992) which consists of 7 items (e.g. I Like Luxury), rated on a five-point scale (1 = not at all characteristic, 5 = very characteristic).
- (2) *Desire for social power*, measured with five values from Schwartz Value Survey (1992): social power, wealth, authority, preserving public image and social recognition. Participants were asked how important each value is for them (1 = not important at all, 7 = very important).
- (3) *Social media frequency usage*, assessed with a single item measure: “How often do you post on social media platforms”. This item was rated on a five-point scale (1 = very rarely, 5 = very often).
- (4) *Time spent on social media platforms*, assessed with a single item measure: “Home many hours do you spend on social media platforms a day?” Participants provided open answers to this item.

3.1.3. Procedure

A paper and pencil version of the measures was administered to each participant in an assisted task which took place in a supervised classroom. The participants were briefly informed about the aim of the study. Those who agreed to participate, received printed versions of the questionnaire. The participants were instructed regarding each measure. The mean completion time of the questionnaire task was about 30 min.

The data were stored on the Google Drive platform and other researchers can access it at the following link: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EqmqAg_E51BeV67jePiaBIW_m1_teSPALZ-BazcXlf0/edit?usp=sharing.

4. Results of study 2

4.1. Factorial structure of the 120-item questionnaire

We analyzed the factorial structure of the questionnaire based on the 120-item set, as a further check of the earlier found six-factor solution with a new sample of participants. Six factors were extracted using Principal axis factoring, followed by Varimax rotation. The obtained factor structure turned out to be very similar to the structure presented in Study 1, with Conscientiousness defined by items like *organized, precise, and diligent*, Extraversion (*bold, dynamic, energetic*), Agreeableness (*loving, affectionate, sentimental*), Emotional Stability (*quarrelsome, jumpy, tetchy*), Morality (*honest, ethical, correct*), and Unconventionality (*rebellious, unconventional, disobedient*). The six factors explained 51.26% of the total variance.

4.1.1. Scale statistics

Table 3 presents the scale statistics and the internal consistency of the six emic factor-scales, with both 20 items and 12 items per scale. Skewness and Kurtosis values indicated a normal univariate distribution for each scale.

4.1.2. Correlations between the six emic scales, BFI scales and HEXACO-60

In Tables 4 and 5 the correlations between the six emic or lexical factor scales, on the one hand, and on the other hand the BFI

scales and the HEXACO-60 scales, showed a moderate convergence. Both lexical Morality and lexical Unconventionality (U) were not well covered by the combined BFI scales. BFI-O, in turn, was not well covered by the combined six lexical scales (Table 4).

Lexical E, C, and ES were relatively well covered by the combined HEXACO-scales, but the lexical U, Morality, and A not. Morality correlated best with HEXACO-H, which makes sense (Table 5).

4.2. Predicting social adaptation, risky social behaviors, and status striving and social affirmation

4.2.1. Composite scores for criterion domains

To generate overall composite scores on the three criterion domains of (1) high social adaptation, (2) risky social behaviors and (3) status striving and social affirmation, we conducted principal component analyses with Promax rotation of the 13 criterion variables. As shown in Table 6, each of the variables showed its strongest loading on the designated factor.

4.2.2. Prediction of criterion variables

Four procedures are followed to assess the predictive validity and especially the incremental validity of the personality measures. The first is given by correlations and multiple correlations between the personality measures and the three outcome variables. The second is formed by hierarchical multiple regression to test whether certain personality measures add in the prediction above other personality measures. The third is Relative Weight Analysis (RWA) which assesses the amounts of variance predicted by certain personality measures, after controlling for their relationships with other personality measures. The fourth procedure is Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Regression analysis may fail to account for the effects of measurement (un)reliability, and the SEM approach may serve to overcome this.

Correlations and multiple correlations. Table 7 shows the correlations and multiple Rs between each personality model and the three outcome variables. Considering the Multiple correlations, of the criteria, Social Adaptation is relatively well predicted by all three models with the highest scale correlations for Extraversion, Emotional Stability and Conscientiousness. Risky social behaviors was best predicted by HEXACO Honesty and Emotionality and by Emic Romanian Morality and Unconventionality. The strongest correlates of Status striving and social affirmation were HEXACO Honesty and Emic Romanian Emotional Stability.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression. Relying on hierarchical multiple regression we tested whether the Emic Romanian lexical scales predict the outcome variables over and above what is predicted by etic scales of personality (BFI and HEXACO). The results are given in Table 8. In Step 1 we entered the BFI scales, in step 2 the HEXACO scales were entered, and in Step 3 the emic Romanian scales were entered.

Table 3

Scale statistics and internal consistencies, 120 items and 72 items ($N = 218$).

Lexical factors	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Extraversion	3.78/3.42	0.64/0.72	−0.42/−0.17	0.04/−0.45
Agreeableness	3.92/3.81	0.63/0.65	−0.63/−0.67	0.21/0.41
Conscientiousness	3.64/3.63	0.62/0.62	−0.52/−0.52	0.45/0.64
Emotional Stability	3.35/3.70	0.72/0.70	−0.42/−0.42	0.04/0.14
Morality	3.32/3.27	0.73/0.51	0.89/94	0.95/0.95
Unconventionality	3.05/3.04	0.61/0.44	0.31/0.30	0.36/0.35

Table 4

Correlations between six lexically based emic scales (both 20 items and 12 items per scale), and BFI (Big Five) scales ($N = 218$). To enhance readability correlations above .40 are given in boldface.

Lexical scales (20/12)	BFI -scales					Multiple R
	E	A	C	ES	O	
E	0.68/0.72	−0.05/−0.07	0.19/0.13	0.41/0.31	0.31/0.27	0.80/0.77
A	−0.02/0.00	0.71/0.69	0.22/0.17	0.24/0.17	0.11/0.09	0.73/0.71
C	0.03/−0.05	0.04/0.06	0.74/0.69	0.27/0.28	0.05/0.02	0.76/0.73
ES	−0.20/−0.17	0.67/0.63	0.21/0.16	0.58/0.57	0.02/−0.04	0.79/0.75
Morality	0.03/0.10	−0.37/−0.27	−0.39/−0.32	−0.25/−0.18	−0.13/−0.05	0.52/0.41
U	0.21/0.10	−0.12/−0.05	−0.36/−0.25	−0.01/0.03	0.33/0.25	0.50/0.36
Multiple R	0.75/0.76	0.77/0.76	0.78/0.73	0.74/0.69	0.46/0.38	

Table 5

Correlations between six lexically based emic scales (both 20 items and 12 items per scale), and HEXACO-60 scales ($N = 218$). To enhance readability correlations above .40 are given in boldface.

Lexical scales 20/12	HEXACO scales						
	H	E	X	A	C	O	Multiple R
E	–0.01/–0.04	–0.51/–0.40	0.77/0.75	–0.11/–0.11	0.16/0.09	0.08/0.06	0.82/0.78
A	0.24/0.20	.24.28	0.12/0.10	0.44/0.38	0.13/0.05	0.12/0.08	0.60/0.57
C	0.15/0.17	–0.16/–0.12	0.37/0.32	–0.04/0.01	0.77/0.76	0.04/0.05	0.81/0.78
ES	0.32/0.33	–0.05/–0.08	0.05/0.06	0.69/0.66	0.15/0.10	0.19/0.11	0.72/0.68
Morality	0.45/0.46	–0.09/0.09	–0.12/0.02	–0.19/–0.12	–0.30/–0.25	–0.10/–0.05	0.54/0.50
U	–0.11/0.03	–0.30/–0.24	0.09/–0.05	–0.15/–0.08	–0.28/–0.18	0.27/0.26	0.54/0.41
Multiple R	0.49/0.51	0.67/0.59	0.79/0.79	0.71/0.68	0.79/0.77	0.38/0.31	

Table 6

Principal component analyses of 13 outcomes variables (Promax rotation). Loadings greater than .40 are given in boldface.

Criteria		Factor I	Factor II	Factor III
Social adaptation	Career satisfaction	0.86	–0.02	0.07
	Job Satisfaction	0.82	–0.02	0.05
	Life satisfaction	0.83	–0.11	0.03
	Self esteem	0.71	0.06	0.08
	Perceived stress	–0.68	–0.10	0.18
Risky social behaviors	Short mating orientation	0.03	0.79	0.03
	Previous sex. behavior	0.02	0.73	–0.16
	Health risk behaviors	–0.04	0.72	0.17
	Traffic fines	–0.06	0.43	0.24
Status striving and social affirmation	Materialism	–0.06	–0.10	–0.71
	Social power	0.25	0.10	0.66
	Time spent on social networks	–0.19	–0.01	0.59
	Posts on social networks	–0.03	0.01	0.58

Table 7

Correlations and multiple Rs between personality measures and outcome variables.

Predictors		Criteria		
		SOCIAL	RISK	STATUS
BFI	Extraversion	0.30	0.24	0.14
	Agreeableness	0.05	–0.08	–0.17
	Conscientiousness	0.28	–0.26	0.04
	Emotional Stability	0.40	0.06	–0.21
	Openness	0.18	0.13	0.08
	Multiple R	0.54	0.37	0.29
HEXACO	Honesty	–0.01	–0.30	–0.47
	Emotionality	–0.32	–0.38	0.15
	Extraversion	0.63	0.09	0.05
	Agreeableness	–0.01	–0.04	–0.24
	Conscientiousness	0.34	–0.20	–0.06
	Openness	0.08	0.22	–0.09
Emic Romanian	Multiple R	0.68	0.55	0.51
	Conscientiousness	0.48	–0.21	–0.06
	Extraversion	0.50	0.23	–0.02
	Agreeableness	0.09	–0.12	–0.12
	Emotional Stability	0.10	–0.12	–0.30
	Morality	–0.10	0.30	0.11
	Unconventionality	0.13	0.44	–0.02
	Multiple R	0.62	0.53	0.33

Note: Correlations of $|0.18|$ or higher are significant at $p < .01$.

After controlling the effect of the BFI and HEXACO scales, the emic scales predicted all three categories of outcome variables: High social adaptation ($\Delta R^2 = 0.05$, $p < .01$), Risky social behaviors ($\Delta R^2 = 0.08$, $p < .01$) and Status striving and social affirmation ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04$, $p < .05$).

RWA. In order to inspect the individual contribution of each single predictor we conducted Relative Weight Analysis. Relative weight is calculated as the proportionate contribution that each predictor makes to R^2 , considering both its unique contribution and its contribution when combined with other variables (Johnson, 2000). This was done on the present data by running

the online (WEB) application RWA-WEB (Tonidandel & LeBreton, 2015). Confidence intervals for individual relative weights (Johnson, 2004) and all corresponding significance tests were based on bootstrapping with 10,000 replications, an approach recommended by Tonidandel, LeBreton, and Johnson (2009). Bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals were used because of their superior coverage accuracy, as recommended by Tonidandel et al. (2009). In all cases, 95% Confidence Intervals was used (corresponding to a significance testing alpha level of 0.05). The relative weight of a predictor is significant if the corresponding Confidence Intervals do not contain 0.

Table 8
Hierarchical regression for each personality model in predicting outcome variables.

Outcome variables	Step 1 BFI-Big Five R ²	Step 2 HEXACO ΔR ² change	Step 3 Emic factors ΔR ² change
High social adaptation	0.29**	0.19**	0.05**
Risky social behaviors	0.14**	0.22**	0.08**
Status striving & social affirmation	0.09**	0.19**	0.04*

* p < .05.

** p < .01.

RWA (see Table 9) showed that apart from the BFI and the HEXACO factors, the emic Conscientiousness (RW (Relative Weight) = 0.083, RW-RS (Rescaled relative Weight) = 15.94%), Extraversion

(RW = 0.055, RW-RS = 10.60%) and Unconventionality (RW = 0.020, 3.90%) had significant individual contributions in predicting Social adaptation. In the case of Risky social behaviors none of the BFI-Big Five factors were significant individual predictors. Emic Unconventionality was the second strongest individual predictor (RW = 0.081, RW-RS = 18.84%) after HEXACO Emotionality (RW = 0.085, RW-RS = 19.97%). In the case of the third outcome category, Status striving, only HEXACO Honesty was a significant individual predictor (RW = 0.173, RW-RS = 54.89%). These findings support the hypothesis that emic factors explain unique variance independently in the case of important outcome variables, after taking into account their contribution when combined with the other predictors.

SEM. Incremental validity based on multiple regression analysis may fail to account for the effects of measurement (un)reliability,

Table 9
Summary of relative predictor weight.

Predictor	RW	CI-L	CI-U	RS-RW%
<i>Criteria = Social (R² = 0.52)</i>				
BFI-Extraversion	0.032	0.012	0.057	6.13
BFI-Agreeableness	0.001	−0.021	0.006	0.30
BFI-Conscientiousness	0.023	0.006	0.049	4.45
BFI-Emotional Stability	0.047	0.017	0.096	9.09
BFI-Openness	0.007	−0.006	0.037	1.35
HEXACO Honesty	0.004	−0.007	0.033	0.86
HEXACO Emotionality	0.025	0.005	0.058	4.89
HEXACO Extraversion	0.166	0.116	0.225	31.74
HEXACO Agreeableness	0.009	−0.020	0.008	0.37
HEXACO Conscientiousness	0.042	0.043	0.083	8.03
HEXACO Openness	0.001	−0.020	0.008	0.20
Emic-Romanian Conscientiousness	0.083	0.043	0.141	15.94
Emic-Romanian Extraversion	0.055	0.030	0.088	10.60
Emic-Romanian Agreeableness	0.003	−0.014	0.017	0.60
Emic Romanian Emotional Stability	0.004	−0.014	0.012	0.90
Emic-Romanian Morality	0.003	−0.013	0.013	0.58
Emic-Romanian Unconventionality	0.020	0.001	0.055	3.90
<i>Criteria = Risky (R² = 0.42)</i>				
BFI-Extraversion	0.022	−0.007	0.053	5.26
BFI-Agreeableness	0.003	−0.030	0.006	0.70
BFI-Conscientiousness	0.013	−0.020	0.033	3.15
BFI-Emotional Stability	0.008	−0.023	0.014	1.99
BFI-Openness	0.004	−0.027	0.008	1.07
HEXACO Honesty	0.062	0.009	0.127	14.49
HEXACO Emotionality	0.085	0.031	0.147	19.97
HEXACO Extraversion	0.009	−0.027	0.015	2.18
HEXACO Agreeableness	0.002	−0.031	0.006	0.67
HEXACO Conscientiousness	0.008	−0.027	0.018	1.93
HEXACO Openness	0.031	−0.004	0.074	7.36
Emic-Romanian Conscientiousness	0.023	−0.008	0.065	5.54
Emic-Romanian Extraversion	0.025	−0.005	0.048	6.00
Emic-Romanian Agreeableness	0.004	−0.030	0.007	0.98
Emic Romanian Emotional Stability	0.006	−0.025	0.015	1.42
Emic-Romanian Morality	0.035	−0.002	0.076	8.36
Emic-Romanian Unconventionality	0.081	0.030	0.134	18.84
<i>Criteria = Status (R² = 0.31)</i>				
BFI-Extraversion	0.011	−0.032	0.029	3.72
BFI-Agreeableness	0.008	−0.039	0.011	2.61
BFI-Conscientiousness	0.001	−0.049	0.004	0.35
BFI-Emotional Stability	0.011	−0.033	0.023	3.64
BFI-Openness	0.006	−0.039	0.017	2.12
HEXACO Honesty	0.173	0.087	0.250	54.89
HEXACO Emotionality	0.010	−0.035	0.028	3.33
HEXACO Extraversion	0.006	−0.040	0.014	2.12
HEXACO Agreeableness	0.017	−0.023	0.038	5.68
HEXACO Conscientiousness	0.002	−0.047	0.004	0.65
HEXACO Openness	0.002	−0.044	0.011	0.78
Emic-Romanian Conscientiousness	0.001	−0.050	0.005	0.52
Emic-Romanian Extraversion	0.006	−0.041	0.012	2.19
Emic-Romanian Agreeableness	0.006	−0.042	0.009	1.96
Emic Romanian Emotional Stability	0.035	−0.005	0.057	11.13
Emic-Romanian Morality	0.010	−0.038	0.015	3.22
Emic-Romanian Unconventionality	0.003	−0.045	0.007	1.00

Note: RW = Relative weight; RS-RW = Rescaled relative weight; CI-L = Confidence interval Lower bound; CI-U = Confidence interval upper bound; Values in bold are statistically significant.

thus running the risk of committing Type 1 error. This usually happens because most of the researchers behave as if statistical conclusions obtained at the level of observed measures (regression analysis) can be automatically generalized to the level of latent constructs, which is not true (imperfect reliability of the predictors) (Westfall & Yarkoni, 2016). As the authors suggest, the regression analysis fails to consider the effects of measurement (un)reliability. Westfall and Yarkoni (2016) suggest that this limitation can be solved by using a SEM approach to control for measurement un(reliability). Therefore, we took into consideration running a Structural equation model (SEM) analysis in order to precisely estimate the contribution each personality model has on the three outcomes (i.e., social adaptation, risky social behaviors, status striving and social affirmation). SEM models allow us to specify the measurement model for each factor as part of the regression model

with measurement error associated with each factor becoming a part of the full model, as Westfall and Yarkoni (2016) suggest.

Using lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012) for conducting SEM analysis following the procedure proposed by Westfall and Yarkoni (2016). Results, given in Table 10, showed that Emic factors and HEXACO factors predicted Risky social behaviors ($\beta_{\text{Emic factors}} = -0.20, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{HEXACO}} = 0.32, p < .01$). No significant predictors have been found for Emic factors on Status striving and Social affirmation and social adaptation. Furthermore, HEXACO and Big Five personality inventory predicted social affirmation ($\beta_{\text{HEXACO}} = 0.223, p < .01$; $\beta_{\text{Big five}} = 0.22, p < .001$) (see Fig. 1).

5. Discussion

The aims of this research were (1) to utilize a recently developed taxonomy of indigenous (Romanian) personality dispositions relying on the lexical approach (Burtăverde & De Raad, in press) for the construction of a brief measure to assess the trait factors summarizing this taxonomy, and especially (2) to test to what extent an emic-lexical approach brings incremental validity in the prediction of external behavioral criteria.

The Romanian trait taxonomy revealed a six-factor solution with the factors labelled (1) Conscientiousness, (2) Extraversion, (3) Agreeableness, (4) Emotional stability, (5) Morality, and (6) Unconventionality. This six-factor model resembles to a great extent the Big Five model, the main difference being the presence of the fifth factor which is called Morality, which factor also includes semantics of Honesty of the HEXACO model. The six-factor structure indeed corresponds reasonably well with the

Table 10
Standardized regression coefficients resulted from SEM analysis.

	β coefficients		
	Social Adaptation	Risky social behaviors	Status striving and social affirmation
BFI-Big Five	-0.25***	-0.11	0.22***
HEXACO	0.13	0.32**	0.22***
Emic factors	-0.06	-0.19**	0.01

** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Fig. 1. Path diagram for SEM results. Note: BFI = Big Five personality model; hxc = HEXACO personality model; EMC: emic personality; E_t = Big Five Extraversion; A_t = Big Five Agreeableness; C_t = Big Five Conscientiousness; ES_t = Big Five Emotional Stability; O_t = Big Five Openness; Hns = HEXACO Honesty; Emt = HEXACO Emotionality; Ext = HEXACO Extraversion; Agr = HEXACO Agreeableness; Cns = HEXACO Conscientiousness; Opn = HEXACO Openness; C_m = Emic Conscientiousness; E_m = Emic Extraversion; A_m = Emic Agreeableness; ES_m = Emic Emotional Stability; Mr_m = Emic Morality; U_m = Emic Unconventionality; STA = Status striving and social affirmation; RIS = Risky social behaviors; SOC = Social adaptation; Red lines – negative values; green lines – positive values. The thickness of lines represents the intensity between variables. (For interpretation of the references to colour in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

six-factors of the HEXACO model, with the weakest link observed between lexical Morality and HEXACO-Honesty.

The use of the HEXACO measure next to the Big Five may generally lead to certain complications. As had been argued before (Ashton et al, 2004), the use of the HEXACO model may involve a shift of semantics between Agreeableness and Emotional Stability, in comparison to the Big Five structure. An explanation would be that the HEXACO model contains rotated versions of Big Five Agreeableness and Emotional Stability: individual differences referring to patience and impulsivity are included in Agreeableness instead of in the Emotional Stability corresponding Emotionality factor, as was the case with the Big Five. In the case of Romanian emic factors, however, individual differences specific to patience and impulsivity are included in the factor Emotional stability, at this point agreeing with the Big Five model. We do not discuss the lexical structure of the Romanian personality lexicon in further detail because this was not the main aim of this research. We conducted a lexical approach to obtain an indigenous personality structure in order to test its predictive power, not its resemblance with the Big Five or HEXACO models.

Regarding the first aim of the research, we developed a 120-item measure to assess the six factors of the Romanian personality lexicon. The factor-structure using these 120 items showed a strong overlap with the initial factorial conceptualization, and with adequate internal consistencies for each factor scale. The convergence between the semantically corresponding scales of the Romanian instrument and those of the BFI-Big Five and the HEXACO were acceptable.

As regards the second and most important aim of this research, testing to what extent an emic-etic approach in assessing personality is superior to an etic or emic approach, we obtained interesting findings. When using multiple regression, the emic personality measure brought incremental validity in predicting all the three broad behavioral criteria: Social adaptation, Risky social behaviors, and Status striving and social affirmation, over and beyond the Big five and the HEXACO. After testing the relative predictor weights, the emic Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Unconventionality were significant predictors of Social adaptation, and emic Unconventionality predicted Risky social behaviors.

After controlling for the effects of measurement (un)reliability by using a SEM approach, however, the emic personality measure only predicted Risky social behaviors, over and beyond the BFI and HEXACO factors. Such a change in prediction had already been submitted by Westfall and Yarkoni (2016) because of the chances of Type 1 error. These differences in findings may be explained by the fact that in the case of the linear regression, the findings obtained at the level of observed measures are generalized to the level of the latent construct by ignoring the imperfect reliability of the predictors (Westfall & Yarkoni, 2016). These findings suggest that a SEM approach may be a more proper way of testing incremental validity.

The findings mentioned above are partially congruent with those of Cheung et al. (2008) showing that an emic-etic approach brought incremental validity in clinical settings specific to the Chinese context. Also partially similar findings were obtained by Ion et al. (2016), who showed an emic-etic approach to have incremental validity in predicting job performance in the case of Chinese workers. Those studies used, however, more singular or narrow criteria. The results of the present research extend the findings of those previous studies by showing the utility of the emic-etic approach in predicting broad behavioral criteria; restricted to Risky social behaviors, four different outcome variables were comprised (see Table 6). Therefore, the findings of this research demonstrated the significance of a combined emic-etic approach. The approach can potentially play an important and relevant role in the prediction of a wide range of behaviors specific to various

domains of life. Moreover, taking into account that emic-etic studies mentioned above had been conducted in Asian cultures, these findings bring empirical evidence regarding the utility of the emic-etic approach of personality assessment in a European cultural context, and so the present research can be considered as an interesting show-case to support the cross-cultural relevance of the emic-etic approach.

A possible explanation of the fact that the emic-etic approach to personality assessment brings incremental validity in predicting various outcomes can be found in a stronger conceptual overlap between the predictors and the criteria due to the contextualization of the assessment. As has been shown, when contextualizing a personality measure by adding a frame of reference to the items (e.g. “at work”, “at school”), depending on the predicted criteria (organizational, academic), the predictive power is superior compared to a non-contextualized (traditional) personality assessment because of the reduction of between-person variability and within-person inconsistency (Lievens, De Corte, & Schollaert, 2008).

More generally, if personality-related cultural aspects are reflected in an emic measure, this can be understood as another form of contextualization, one that takes into account a more general context (culture) than just the situation. Culture includes what has worked in the experience of a society, and what was worth transmitting to future generations (Triandis, 2001). It has been shown (Triandis & Suh, 2002), for example, that people in individualist cultures such as those of Western Europe sample with high probability elements of the personal self (e.g. I am ruthless, I am cynical). When it comes to people from collectivist cultures (South America, Asia, Eastern Europe), they sample elements of the collective self (my co-workers think I am ruthless, my friends think I am cynical). The above-mentioned findings are likely to apply to many general life outcomes, such as the ones considered in this study. For example, a criterion such as Short-term mating orientation may be perceived differently in various cultural contexts (e.g. individualist vs. collectivist). Because the emic personality factors contain the cultural influence on personality, when they are used to predict general life outcomes, the conceptual overlap between the predictor and the considered criteria should be higher than in the case of the etic personality factors, which should lead to a higher criterion-related validity.

These findings have important practical implications. By applying combined etic-emic personality assessment, researchers can obtain richer and more relevant information about personality useful in predicting various behaviors. This approach may prove useful in diverse psychological assessments as in selection settings, clinical and social settings (e.g. in predicting outcomes such as job performance, self-esteem, mating strategies, etc.).

This research had a number of limitations. The emic measure contains only broad personality factors; no facets have yet been specified in the Romanian trait taxonomy, nor in the emic measure that was used in this research. As a consequence, relevant individual differences may have been left untouched. Another restriction of this research is that the research sample consisted mostly of women. It is known that relying on unbalanced samples may lead to construct-irrelevant variance (Haladyna & Downing, 2004). However, in the majority of psycho-lexically based personality studies, the number of female participants has been larger. In the case of the Greek and the French studies, for example, there were even up to three times more females than males (Boies, Lee, Ashton, Pascal, & Nicol, 2001; Saucier, Georgiades, Tsousis, & Goldberg, 2005); in some other cases (e.g., Hungarian; Korean) the number of males was just a little larger (De Raad & Szirmák, 1994; Hahn, Lee, & Ashton, 1999). There have been no clear signs that those sample differences had an effect on the structure. Therefore, gender is not expected to have had drastic effects on the study findings. In conclusion, this study offers new important empirical

evidence sustaining the utility of a combined emic-etic approach of personality assessment by showing that this approach brings incremental validity in the prediction of a range of behavioral criteria such as those grouped under the category of Risky social behaviors.

Appendix

Six-factor model markers identified in the Romanian trait list

- F1 – Extraversion: silent, shy, dynamic, expressive, energetic, taciturn, frank
 F2 – Agreeableness: kind, provoking, hot-tempered, tolerant, benevolent, authoritarian, irritable
 F3 – Conscientiousness: prompt, organized, dutiful, precise, undisciplined, irresponsible, absent-minded
 F4 – Emotionality: sentimental, self-doubting, anxious, hypersensitive, steady, doubtful, moody
 F5 – Honesty: impolite, disloyal, cunning, corrupt, pretending, dishonest, crafty
 F6 – Intellect/Imagination: conservative, eccentric, critical, ironic, rebellious, versatile, original

The 120 lexically based Romanian trait words (those with an * form the 72-item measure)

Extraversion: bold*, quiet*, energetic*, pessimistic*, unselfconscious*, taciturn*, dynamic*, unsociable*, joyful*, lonely*, sociable*, unsure*, cheerful, hesitant, breezy, shy, talkative, anxious, happy, inhibited

Agreeableness: sentimental*, grim*, sensitive*, arrogant*, generous*, sly*, loving*, machiavellian*, altruistic*, impassive*, magnanimous*, oppressing*, shielding, selfish, forgiving, indifferent, patronal, deceptive, gentle, cynical

Conscientiousness: organized*, reckless*, perfectionist*, careless*, precise*, rigorous*, concentrated*, dis-temperate*, diligent*, irresponsible*, disciplined*, unorganized*, efficient, thoughtless, strict, persevering, negligent, performing, imprudent, methodical;

Emotional stability: calm*, nervous*, tempered*, choleric*, patient*, quarrelsome*, non-aggressive*, irritable*, flexible*, peevish*, moderate*, untroubled*, angry, nonviolent, impulsive, tetchy, agitated, mouthy, conflicting, jumpy

Morality: honest*, lascivious*, ethical*, provocative*, fair*, enticing*, correct*, jolly*, steadfast*, theatrical*, sincere*, histrionic*, jealous, dissolute, perverted, intriguing, licentious, servile, ostentatious, perverted

Unconventionality: unconventional*, submissive*, rebellious*, conventional*, disobedient*, docile*, innovative*, obedient*, ingenious*, conservative*, unpredictable*, ordinary*, original, sarcastic, inspired, authentic, talented, creative, curious, banal

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