

## Validation and Standardization of Relationship Quality (RQ) Questionnaire

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The quality of a marital relationship is one of the essential factors in assessing the quality and satisfaction of marriage. This study aimed to validate and standardize the Relationship Quality (RQ) questionnaire.

**Method:** The method of this research in terms of basic-applied purpose and type of cross-sectional-descriptive information collection and methodology is part of the test-making studies that have been done in a correlational research project. The statistical population of this study included all couples in Ardabil. The final sample consisted of 165 married individuals selected by available sampling. The research instruments included the Relationship Quality (RQ) of Chonodi et al. (2016), The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS), and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMS) by Schum, Nichols, Shachtman, and Grigsby (1983).

**Results:** The results showed that the Relationship Quality (RQ) has a goodness of fit in the Iranian population and highly correlates with marital satisfaction.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** The findings showed that the Relationship Quality (RQ) can powerfully identify the quality of couples' communication and can be used in research and clinical work to measure the quality of communication and interference in the relationship.

**Keywords:** Relationship Quality (RQ), Standardization, Satisfaction, Marital satisfaction.

## Introduction

Marriage is a fundamental relationship between a man and a woman and is a kind of commitment that provides the basis for adulthood (Abbas, Aqeel, Abbas, Shahir, Jafar, et al., 2019). According to the research, the purpose of marriage is to enjoy life with a partner and experience love, friendship, childbearing, physical happiness, and avoid loneliness (Cook and Dickens, 2009). What matters in marriage is a marital adjustment, and since the marital adjustment is the cause of chronic stress, it can cause psychological distress for couples (Whiseman and Baucom, 2012). Psychological disturbance can disrupt the family's routine, limit leisure and social activities, and emotional responses to the disturbed person's behavior (Benazon and Kevin, 2000). Thus, marital adjustment and psychological disturbances are interrelated.

In addition to adjustment, we can talk about the marital relationship quality (RQ), which includes various dimensions. One of the essential variables in marital adjustment is the RQ of marital relations, which has different dimensions. For example, Van der Murphy and Griff (2015) consider four dimensions to marital quality: the marital relationship quality exchanges, intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and overall marital compatibility.

Marital satisfaction is a psychological state in a person that reflects the perceived cost-benefit in marriage and the higher the cost, the lower the perceived satisfaction in marriage, and the higher the benefit, the higher the marriage satisfaction (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007).

Although divorce is so prevalent that many couples prefer to live together without marriage, a romantic relationship is a fixed and predictable pattern in adults. This type of marital relationship means beyond the association, including personal emotional well-being and physical health (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007). Therefore, understanding how couples build a lasting marital relationship is essential both from a research and practical point of view, and measuring the marital RQ is a fundamental aspect. The study of communication satisfaction has a long history in the relevant literature. Many scales in this area focus on the problem, and their validation has been done more by working with couples involved in the counseling and treatment process. Although these scales have a specific function, the creators of this questionnaire have sought to design an alternative: a competency-based approach to assessing communication quality.

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (MAT), the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS), the Quality of Marriage Index (QMI), the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), and Karney and Bradbury's (1997) semantic differential scale are the most commonly used relationship. The most salient issue across nearly all of the scales reviewed is that the item content is not specific to the domain of relationship satisfaction or quality. Most of these scales conflate a number of relationship constructs in that item content contains aspects of relationships that may pertain to quality, but are not a measure of quality, an issue that has been raised in the literature for many years (e.g., Sabatelli, 1988).

In the definition of relationship quality, the premise is not that the couple is "happy" or that the marital relationship is trouble-free; however, the questionnaire begins with the promise that the couple relationship is "sensible" at the practical or emotional level (Gab

and Fink, 2015b), in a way that meets the couple's needs and expectations. Thus, communication quality is defined so that the idea of emotional work and practical and path-breaking relationships is considered.

## Methods

The research method is basic-applied in terms of purpose and cross-sectional-descriptive in terms of the type of data collection. It is considered a part of test-making studies in terms of methodology, which has been done in a correlational research project. The confirmatory factor analysis was used to study the relationship and consistency between variables.

The statistical population of this study included all couples in Ardabil City. The final sample consisted of 165 married individuals selected by the available snowball sampling method. An online questionnaire was used to collect data. Social networks such as Telegram, WhatsApp, and Instagram were the leading platforms for distributing the questionnaire. First, by available sampling method, the link to the questionnaires was published in the information channels of universities, scientific groups, and friendly groups. Also, by snowball sampling method, the link of the questionnaires was sent to others by the main participants. Based on Stevens's suggestion, at least fifteen items for each variable were considered in factor analysis and modeling to determine the sample size (Hooman, 2014). In the link to the questionnaire, the purpose of the research and the confidentiality of the results were explained. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires if they wished. Also, it was explained that those who did not want to complete the questionnaire could return it to the examiner.

## The Study Tools

**Quality of Communication Questionnaire:** It was designed by Chonody et al. The initial version had 15 questions, and the final version consisted of 9 queries. The questions are scored on a 5-point Likert: (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). A higher score indicates a higher quality of communication. The final 9-question version had convergent construct validity and strong reliability. The creators of this tool stated that the initial assumption was not that the couple would be "happy" or that their relationship would be trouble-free. Instead, the goal was to examine whether the relationship was "workable" at the emotional or practical level (Gab and Fink, 2015a) so that they could meet the couple's needs and expectations.

In Chonody et.al Research (2016) a total RQ score was calculated by summing responses to the items identified from the EFA and CFA. The resulting measure demonstrated high internal consistency reliability with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .891 when analyzed over the total sample. The RQ scale was highly, positively correlated with these self-reports of happiness ( $r = .787$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and indicated evidence of convergent construct validity.

**Marital Satisfaction Scale:** A one-way scale is used to determine the overall level of happiness in a married relationship. Respondents were asked the question: "In general, how happy are you with your spouse?" Answer in a 5-point Likert scale (1=completely unhappy to 5=completely happy). It has been hypothesized that there is a positive

correlation between this one-item scale and the RQ scale. In addition, this question has been used to test the validity of the convergent construct (Conodi et al., 2016).

**Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS):**This scale was developed by Schum, Nichols, Shachtman, and Grigsby(1993) as a triangular index. These items ask respondents to "Measure their satisfaction with ... husband [wife] as either the wife or the [marriage], or assess their relationship with their husband. In a recent meta-analysis by Graham et al. (2011) to generalize reliability, researchers found that this scale was the most vigorous scale evaluated by Cronbach's alpha, with an average alpha of 0.95. Also, this scale has good face validity and has been related to other satisfaction scales (Graham et al., 2011). In Iran, Omrani-Samani et al. (2018) studied the psychometric properties of this instrument, and the results indicate the optimal reliability and validity of this instrument in the Iranian population.

### Execution Method

The available (open) translation method translated the communication quality scale (Brislin et al., 1986). In this method, two fluent Persian and English people translated the questionnaire. The first translator, a psychologist, translated the English version of the scale into Persian. And the second person - an English specialist, who did not know about the English scale and its sentences, translated the sentences into English. The original translated version was shared with experts, and bugs were fixed. Finally, the translated version was compared to the original version, and its bugs were fixed. Participants were then asked to understand the items' content and resolve any possible problems. The scale was widely distributed among 30 married individuals. There were five ambiguities in some words solved. SPSS version 24 and AMOS version 24 software were used to analyze the data and examine the psychometric properties of the Persian version of the Quality of Communication Questionnaire.

## Results

### Construct Validity

The construct validity of the marital satisfaction scale data was evaluated using confirmatory factor analysis using the maximum likelihood method. First, the factor loads of the questions were examined, and the questions that had a negative factor load or less than 0.4 were eliminated (Klein, 2015). As shown in Figure 1, one of the marital satisfaction scales was omitted. The mean and standard deviation of all questions measuring the marital satisfaction scale are presented in Table 2.

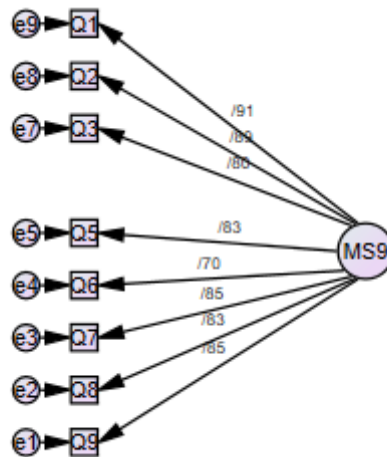
The validity of a model can be assessed using criteria called goodness-of-fit indicators. Limit of fitting indices: square chi on the degree of freedom (CMIN /DF < 5), the root mean square of the residual measurement error (RMSEA < 0/08),Incremental fit index(IFI) (IFI>0/9), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) (TLI >0/9), comparative fit index(CFI) (CFI >0/9) (Byrne, 2013).

**Table 1.** Confirmation indices of the confirmatory factor analysis model

Variable	Fitting	CMIN/df	GFI	RMSEA	NFI	CFA	P
Indexes							
Pattern		2.144	0.93	0.08	0.96	0.99	0.068

The measurement model fit indices showed that the model fit well with the marital satisfaction scale data (CMIN/DF=2/144, GFI=0/938, CFI=0/98, NFI=0/963, RMSEA=0/08 (NFI=0/963)).

Confirmatory factor analysis of marital satisfaction scale and factor loads shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis of marital satisfaction scale and factor loads

Mean, and standard deviation, item coefficients, and factors related to communication quality scale questions are shown in Table 1.

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviation, coefficients of items, and factors related to communication quality scale questions.

Component	number	Item	Mean	S.TD	standardized Coefficient	Unstandardized Coefficient	t-Value	P
Relationship Quality	1	I am content in our relationship	4.02	0.94	0.90	0.91	16.0	0.001
	2	This is the relationship I always dreamed of	3.56	1.13	0.89	1.09	15.71	0.001
	3	We have grown apart over time*	3.99	1.18	0.80	1.01	12.91	0.001
	4	We enjoy each other's company	4.04	1.00	0.82	0.89	13.63	0.001
	6	My partner is usually aware of my needs	3.48	1.06	0.70	0.80	10.55	0.001
	7	I think of my partner as my soul mate	3.79	1.08	0.85	0.99	14.34	0.001
	8	My partner makes me laugh	3.67	1.16	0.83	1.04	13.80	0.001
	9	We have shared values	3.72	1.09	0.85	1.00		0.001

Correlation table between Scale of Relationship Quality with Marital satisfaction and Marriage Satisfaction Scale

	Relationship Quality	Marital Satisfaction	Happiness
Relationship Quality	1		
Marital Satisfaction	0.922**	1	
Happiness	0.841**	0.22**	1

The correlation between the quality of relationship with marriage satisfaction ( $r=0.922$ ) and happiness ( $r=0.841$ ) is positive and significant, and between marriage satisfaction and happiness ( $r=0.822$ ) is positive and significant.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to evaluate the validation and standardization of the Couples' Relationship Quality (RQ) and estimate its correlation with marital satisfaction and Happiness. The results showed that the Quality of Communication Questionnaire is appropriate for the Iranian population. The research questions were whether the Quality of Communication Questionnaire was sufficiently valid and valid? The results showed the goodness of fit of the Quality of Communication Questionnaire in married people.

The results were consistent with Konudi et al. 'study (2016). Their research showed that version 9 of the final question of communication quality has convergent construct validity and desirable reliability. Thus, this scale is considered helpful in the study of marital relationships. This scale can also be used for different populations; for example, it can even be used during the engagement period. This scale avoids problematic dimensions.

Also, there was a significant relationship between communication quality, marital happiness, and marital satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings of Konudi et al. (2016). Their research concluded that the communication quality scale is positively and highly correlated with happiness self-report by married people ( $P<0.001$ ,  $r=0.922$ ).

The results of this study indicate the initial validation of the communication quality scale. The communication quality scale has had good reliability and validity based on this study. This research has several limitations: 1. Questionnaires were administered online; 2. The type of research was self-report, 3. The majority of the population in this study were women; 4. Due to the existing limitations, the divergent validity of this scale has not been investigated.

It is suggested in subsequent studies that the questionnaire with a broader sample and at a wider level be administered in-person and equally in both sexes. Its validity-divergence should also be examined using parallel questionnaires.

## Disclosure Statements

Authors declare no conflict of interest during this study period.

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