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Survey of Factor structure and reliability Relationship Style Questionnaire (RSQ) in the students

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Abstract

The study of interpersonal relations from attachment point of view is a topic that has drawn the attention of researchers in the recent decades and various tools have been devised for its assessment. In this research, we study the psychometric characteristics of the Relational Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) as one of these tools. The studied sample consists of 368 female students of bachelor's program at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad in academic year 2012-2013. The sample was selected by quota sampling method from among all faculties of this university. The sample was tested by Relational Scales Questionnaire (RSQ). Internal consistency was used in order to study reliability of questionnaire. The exploratory factorial analysis method was used to assess its construct validity. The exploratory factorial analysis of the Relational Scales Questionnaire showed two different patterns. The Collins and Rid three-factor Model showed 40.16% of the total variance, and Simpson two-factor Model determined 35.36% of total variance. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.67 for two-factor model, and 0.57 for three-factor model. Both of the analyzed models showed a relatively average validity for the Iranian version of this questionnaire. Moreover, the three-factor model had a higher acceptable validity.

Keywords: Relational Scales Questionnaire, attachment style, psychometric characteristics

Introduction

Attachment theory which was introduced to explain the formation process of the relationship between an infant and his primary caregiver was developed by Bowlby and was expanded by Ainsworth through experimental observations (Rholes and Simpson, 2004). Bowlby who was a physician and a psychoanalyst formed the bases of his theory based on the information he obtained from children and

adolescents with trauma. His underlying assumption was that all humans have a common need to create a close emotional tie (Çelik, 2004). He called this important emotional bond, which is produced between a child and another person, "attachment" (Morsünbül, 2009). According to theories proposed by Bowlby and Ainsworth, an infant, through frequent interactions with his mother, gradually begins to anticipate his mother's behavior. These interactions make the infant form mental representations of self, others, and the relationships between these two that were called internal working model (Egeland, 2009; Hammond and Marmarosh, 2011; Daniel, 2006; Cassidy and Shaver, 2008). According to Bowlby work patterns are a set of cognitive-emotional structures including concrete memories of interaction with manifestations of attachment, beliefs and attitudes about self and others which provide general information about relationships and interactions of attachment and also practical information about the way of emotional discipline and behavior in close relationships (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007).

The starting point of attachment assessment is known to be the research conducted by Ainsworth et al. on infants. By designing strange situation experiment, Ainsworth figured out that a mother is considered as a secure base for infant who can explore the environment by relying on it. This sense of trust and confidence towards the mother depends on the rate of her accessibility and accountability. By observing infants responses to maternal separation and return, Ainsworth classified each one of the infants in one of three classifications of secure (B), insecure ambivalent (C), and insecure avoidant (A) (Fraley and Waller, 1998; Mikulincer and Shaver, 2000; Armbruster, 2008). These observations led to a large volume of researches. Some of those researches were conducted to investigate the similarity of different kinds of attachment in other cultures (like those carried out by Grossman, Huber, and Warner, 1981; Takahashi, 1986) and some others were carried out to investigate the stability or instability of attachment styles in different ages and situations Like (Takahashi, 1990; Main, Cassidy, 1988).

Bowlby believed that early attachment relationships are models for later relationships, so that they affect expectations and beliefs about oneself and others (working models of oneself and others) (Collins and Read, 1990). This matter resulted in conducting a lot of researches to investigate attachment relationships in different periods of life including the adulthood. In this regard, two kinds of common narratives were formed in research literature each one of which presents a particular conceptualization and methodology of attachment (Bartholomew and Shaver, 1998; Rietzschel, 2012). In the first narrative, Main et al. (1985) by designing adult attachment interview and conducting various studies on it showed that the type of parents' attachment (secure, autonomous, preoccupied, dismissing, and unresolved) can predict the quality of attachment relationship between parent-child. The second narrative was based on the application of attachment theory in understanding adult romantic relationships. This work which began with the research of Hazan and Shaver(1987) and with the polynomial description of each of Ainsworth three patterns, established the construction of self-reporting tools about attachment relationships (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2005; Rietzschel, 2012; Collin and Read, 1990; Fraley and Shaver, 2000; Fraley and Waller, 1998). Despite the widespread acceptance of classified view of Hazan and Shaver, some researchers discussed the limitations of this tool. That is why some researchers like Simpson (1990) and Collins and Read (1990) designed multi-item self report scales based on Likert and Read scale (1990).

Despite the creation of new tools, investigations on Ainsworth's et al research by Brennan, Clark and Shaver (1998) revealed remarkable points which affected the research process in this field. Considering the results of continuous gradation of infants behavioral observations in strange situation experiment, they argued that three attachment patterns are based on two dimensions of anxiety (crying, failure in restoring confidence in absence of mother and showing anger towards mother when she returns) and avoidance (discomfort with closeness and dependence). What is shown in Figure (1), confirms the expansion of Ainsworth's et al. diagram by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1998; Stein et al., 2002).

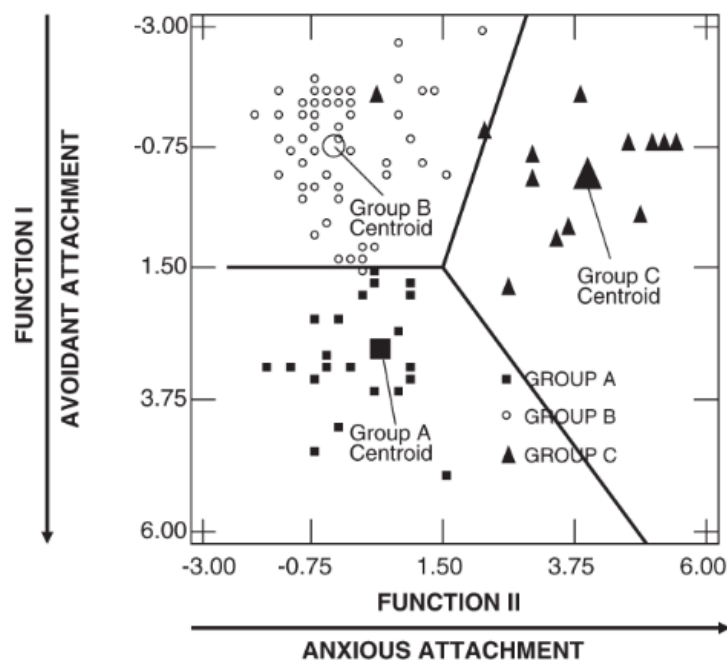


FIGURE 1. An adaptation of Figure 10 from Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978), with the names of the two attachment dimensions (quoted from Mikulincer and Shaver, 2007)

In the field of adult attachment research, Bartholomew (1990) reviewed the results of the studies conducted by Main et al. (1987) as well as those by Hazan and Shaver (1988) and figured out that in adult attachment interview, people with avoidance style (dismissing style) deny their mental attachment and distress needs, while in self-report method, avoidant individuals are those who raise their distress and discomfort of approaching others. Due to this difference, he concluded that there might be two types of avoidance style in adult attachment relationships. In order to justify this matter, he offered a new interpretation of two work patterns of self and others raised by Bowlby and also different dimensions of Ainsworth diagram. He defined four attachment styles according to two fundamental dimensions of self and others model. Self model is the rate of internalized self value of each person and thus is linked to the rate of anxiety and dependency in close relationships. Others model also shows the rate of others accessibility and support and thus is related to tendency towards approaching or avoiding others. Accordingly, four attachment styles are created: secure (two positive work models), preoccupied (negative self and positive others model), indifference (positive self and negative others model), and fearful (negative for both models) (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994; Bartholomew and Shaver, 1998; Çelik, 2004).

What was raised by Bartholomew caused the researchers perspective to change from pure classification of attachment models towards the dimensional approach. Unlike classification perspective which emphasized attachment styles as independent classes, in dimensional approach it is assumed that each individual owns different degrees of attachment styles. This shift led to designing tools based on dimensional approach among which self report scales questionnaire (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991), relationship scales questionnaire (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994), and revised version of close relationship experience (Fraley, Waller, Brennan, 2000) could be referred to. Among the mentioned questionnaires, psychometric characteristics of relationship scales questionnaires has been less analyzed. This questionnaire which is designed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) includes 30 items for measuring feeling about close relationships (Stein et al., 2002). The items of this questionnaire and Shaver's (1987) questionnaire, and also relationship questionnaire of Bartholomew are made based on

Hazan and Horowitz's scales (1991) and the revised scale of adult attachment style by Collins and Read (1990). Siegert, Ward, and Hudson (1995) examined the factor structure of this questionnaire on New Zealand students. First, they examined Four-factor model (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful), then three-factor model (anxiety, avoidance, secure) and finally two-factor model (anxiety and avoidance). The results indicated the lack of certain evidence to confirm the four-factor model, but factor loads could justify underlying two-factor structure (closeness / independence or avoidance and security / anxiety or anxiety) of this tool. Unfortunately, the results of the analysis of three-factor model were not mentioned in this article. Sumer and Gungor (1999) obtained similar results by testing the validity of Turkish version of this questionnaire on a sample of students. Unlike the findings of these two researches, Backstrom and Holmes (2001) obtained different results in examining the validity of its Swedish version. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis on the data of 515 students, they found that the infrastructure of relationship scales questionnaire could be justified by three-factor model. The calculation of the validity of subscales by Cronbach's alpha also indicated a low stability of secure and preoccupied subscales and acceptable validity of subscales of avoidance-fearful and avoidance-dismissing. Furthermore, the stability of dimensions of self work model (anxiety) and others work model (avoidance) was investigated and it was revealed that the validity of self work model was low, but the validity of others work model was acceptable (0.68). Similar results were obtained in factor analysis of the French version of relationship scales questionnaire by Guédeney, Fermanian, and Bifulco (2008). Heuristic factor analysis of data obtained from the patients who referred to social care center showed that three-factor structure (anxiety, avoidance, security) would explain 48% overall variance of questionnaire items. Moreover, the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha for subscales of secure, preoccupied, and avoidance-fearful was low and for the subscale of avoidance-dismissing it was medium (0.64). However, three obtained factors (avoidance, anxiety, and security) had medium validity. In addition, the internal consistency of original scales (four-factor) was relatively low (less than 0.70) which three factors resulting from factor analysis had high internal consistency.

Since the items of relationship scales questionnaire are made to investigate attachment styles of Hazan and Shaver (security, anxiety, avoidance), adult attachment scale of Collins and Read (closeness, dependency, and anxiety), anxiety and avoidance styles of Simpson, Roles, and Nelligan, and also four-factor styles of Bartholomew and Horowitz (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful), Kurdek (2002) investigated the confirmatory factor analysis of this questionnaire according to the questions compatible with above scales. For example, he considered those kinds of items which were similar to questions of adult dependency scale of Collins and Read as one model and analyzed their factors. Kurdek did the same thing for other scales separately. Finally he concluded that factor analyses based on adult dependency questionnaire of Simpson et al. (two-dimensional model of anxiety and avoidance) would justify underlying dimensions of relationship scales questionnaire more acceptably.

Relationship scales questionnaire is considered important since it cares for the totality of individual's relationships (not just romantic relationships). That is why it could be used in investigating individuals' attachment styles in different relationships. Since this questionnaire has not been used in Iran yet and with regard to its importance, this research aims to investigate psychometric properties of relationship scales questionnaire on a sample of Iranian population.

Method

The population of the research involved undergraduate students at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (population: 6733 students) and 375 students among them were selected as the sample via quota sampling. Since the relationship scales questionnaire had not been used in Iran yet, it was first translated to Persian and then to English again by specialists in English. After evaluating it by professors, its translated copy was sent to the questionnaire designer and at last, after removing the problems which were raised by the designer, the final copy was prepared. Afterwards, in order to select the sample, the

number of female students of each faculty of Ferdowsi University in academic year of 2012-2013 was obtained from center of statistics and computer; then, by considering the population ratio, the sample was selected from each faculty. It should be noted that due to altered responses or not answering all the questions, 7 questionnaires were discarded from the whole ones and finally the date of 368 questionnaires were statistically analyzed.

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ): This questionnaire which is designed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) includes 30 items for measuring the feelings about close relationships (Stein et al., 2002). The items of this questionnaire are made based on scales of Hazan and Shaver(1987), Relationship questionnaire of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) and the revised scale of adult attachment style of Collins and Read (1990). By evaluating two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance, RSQ examines attachment styles of secure (questions 3, 9, 10, 15, 28), preoccupied (6, 8, 16, 25), dismissing avoidance (2, 6, 19, 22, 28), and fearful avoidance (1, 5, 12, 24). (Questions 9, 28, and 6 have reversed grading). The answer to each item is ranged based on Likert scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). By calculating the means of the items of each style, the score of that style is obtained (Backstrom and Holmes, 2001). Of course with regard to dimensional perspective of Bartholomew, for determining individuals' attachment style the highest score should be considered if necessary. In researches conducted outside of Iran, the internal consistency of two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance is obtained ranging from 0.85 to 0.90. (Shvil, 2011). Retest reliability of the questionnaire ranged from 0.54 to 0.78 and correlation coefficients of RSQ and Relationships questionnaire (RQ) ranged from 0.41 to 0.61 (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; quoted from Dereli and Karakuş, 2001).

Results

Since this research aims to investigate psychometric properties of relationship scales questionnaire for Iranian students, all the models referred to in previous studies were noticed with an emphasis on Kurdek research (2002). Therefore, the validity of RSQ was evaluated considering two-factor models (anxiety and avoidance by Simpson), three-factor (dependence, closeness, and anxiety by Collins and Read) and for styles resulting from two dimensions of anxiety (self work model) and avoidance (others work model) by Bartholomew. To verify the validity of relationship scales questionnaire, the internal consistency method (Cronbach's alpha coefficient) was used. The results are presented in Table (2).

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha for two-factor and three-factor models

Models	Subscales	Cronbach's alpha	
		Subscales	total
two-factor	anxiety	0/72	0/67
	avoidance	0/61	
three-factor	dependence	0/57	0/57
	closeness	0/60	
	anxiety	0/68	

As it is observed in Table (2), the coefficients of Cronbach's alpha are generally more satisfactory for the two-factor model in terms of psychometric characteristics, but all three models have moderate validity. Furthermore, it could be said that the sub scales of three-factor model also have relatively acceptable validity.

To test the validity of relationship scales questionnaire the heuristic factor analysis was used analyzing the principle components with varimax rotation on the surface of material. Test results of Kaiser-Maier-Olkin sampling adequacy (two-factor model : 0.71, three-factor model : 0.76) and Bartlett's test of sphericity (for two-factor model; $p < 0.001$ and chi-square (153) = 739.25, for three-factor model $p < 0.001$ and chi-square (78) = 436.02) indicate the optimal sample size and operation ability of scales items for both models.

Table (3) shows the factor loads after varimax rotation. As it is seen a series of questions have a common factor. These factors in three-factor model include anxiety (factor 1), closeness (factor 2), and dependency (factor 3) and in two-factor model they include anxiety (factor 1) and avoidance (factor 2). It should be noted that factor loadings less than 0.3 have been ignored and consequently question 15 in three-factor model and questions 10 and 18 in two-factor model have been discarded.

Table 3. Rotated component matrices for two and three-factors

two-factor						three-factor			
questions	factor 1	questions	factor 2	questions	factor 1	questions	factor 2	questions	factor 3
11	0/75	12	0/43	4	0/44	13	0/72	1	0/65
21	0/72	13	0/71	1	0/75	20	0/71	7	0/40
23	0/72	15	0/36	18	0/51	24	0/63	10	0/72
25	0/61	20	0/63	21	0/71	29	0/43	12	0/48
		24	0/60	23	0/72	30	0/43	17	0/40
		29	0/37	25	0/69			27	0/45
		30	0/51						

According to Table (4), two-factor model and three factor model explain 35.39% and 40.16% of variance respectively. As a result, it could be said that three-factor model has greater explanatory power. The investigation of factor structure of Bartholomew four styles showed that would not be able to explain infrastructures of relationship scales questionnaire.

Table 4. Rotation sums of squared loadings for two and three-factors

Models	factors	total	% of variance	% of cumulative
two-factor	factor 1	2/38	18/30	18/30
	factor 2	2/21	17/05	35/36
three-factor	factor 1	2/88	16/05	16/05
	factor 2	2/24	12/46	28/51
	factor 3	2/09	11/65	40/16

Discussion

In the last few decades intensive studies have been done to evaluate individuals' attachment styles. One of the scales designed in this field is the relationship scales questionnaire. The present research was

also conducted to investigate the validity and factor structure of this questionnaire in a sample of Iranian students. The coefficients of Cronbach's alpha showed the relatively moderate validity of Iranian version of this questionnaire for all the models which were analyzed while the coefficients of Cronbach's alpha for most of subscales, in a few conducted studies such as Backstrom and Holmes (2001) and Guédénéy, et al. (2008) have been more than the present study. However, the validity of the subscales of relationship scales questionnaire is generally ranged from moderate to low due to the small number of items in each subscale.

In order to assess the validity of the structure of this questionnaire, its factor structure was examined using heuristic factor analysis with an emphasis on Kurdek study (2002). The results showed that the three-factor model of Collins and Read explained 40.16% of the total variance, while the two-factor model Simpson explained 35.36% of it. In three-factor model, the first factor indicates anxiety, the second one indicates closeness and the third one indicates dependency/dimension; however in two-factor model, the first factor represents anxiety (self work model) and the factors of closeness and dependency together represent avoidance dimension (others work sample). These results are consistent with the findings of Backstrom and Holmes (2001) and Guédénéy, et al. (2008). In order to investigate the factor structure of Swedish version, Backstrom and Holmes (2001) in their research found that even though both models are acceptable, three-factor model has more explanatory ability than the two-factor one. Besides, Guédénéy, et al. (2008) which investigated the French version of relationship scales questionnaire, stated that three-factor structure (anxiety, avoidance, secure ty) would explain 485 of the total variance of the questionnaire items and provides different explanations from the two-factor model. They believe that recent studies have shown that one factor is related two secure ty and two factors (anxiety and avoidance) are related to unsecure .

As mentioned in the results, the four-factor structure was not much supported. This result is consistent with the research of Siegret, Ward, and Hudson (1995) on New Zealand students. In other words, there was no evidence that certain items (questions) were related to a particular scale. Siegret, Ward, and Hudson (1995) concluded that two-factor structure explains the infrastructures of RSQ. Moreover, the factor analysis of Turkish version of this questionnaire by Sumer and Gungor (1999) provided similar results. In addition to these studies, Kurdek (2002) stated that two factors of anxiety and avoidance can more explain the factor structure of this questionnaire items.

As observed in this research and with regard to previous studies on relationship scales questionnaire, the four-factor model of Bartholomew (secure , preoccupied, dismissing , fearful) which are resulted from considering two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance, cannot be considered as a proper justifier of evaluating its underlying structures while the two-factor model (anxiety and avoidance) and three factor model (anxiety, avoidance, security) identify underlying dimensions of the Persian version of relationship scales questionnaire. As the present research has been conducted on a small sample of Iranian population, it seems like that doing more extensive studies on different Iranian samples and populations could be helpful in expanding the obtained results. Moreover, since the studied sample was selected from among the female students, using this questionnaire for male students and comparing the results could provide valuable information about the psychometric characteristics of relationship scales questionnaire.

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