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Measuring Couples and Family Dynamics in India

Cultural Adaptations and Validations

 Springer

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*This book is dedicated to Almighty and all
our parents.*

Foreword

It is an honor and a privilege to introduce this book, “Measuring Couples and Family Dynamics in India: Cultural Adaptations and Validations.” I had the pleasure of working with Dr. Barani Kanth, one of the authors of this text, when I was the action editor assigned to the manuscript “Psychometric validation and cross-cultural comparison of the Romantic Inclination Scale” (Kanth et al., 2021; see Chap. 12) which became the inaugural publication in the International Section of *Personal Relationships*. The International Section initiative was developed by Ashley Randall, the editor of *PR*, to promote and publish international research about the study of personal relationships that either reports on research with international samples collected outside of North America and/or is a cross-cultural investigation. This text demonstrates these very goals, serving to advance cross-cultural relationship science, illuminating the need to examine measurement instruments used in relationship and family research, particularly given variations in how relationships are experienced and enacted in different cultural contexts.

This text addresses a significant gap in the extant research, demonstrating the importance of considering non-Western cultural contexts within the predominantly Western milieu of relationship and family research. Bridging the West and the non-West, this book provides a valuable contribution by validating measures developed in Western cultural contexts specifically tailored for the unique dynamics of Indian relationship and familial structures. In doing so, it not only advances our understanding of relationship dynamics in Indian cultures, but it also calls into question the prevailing practice of applying Western-developed measures to diverse cultural samples that are unique in terms of structure and functioning.

As the authors of this book indicate, most psychological research includes samples from WEIRD (Westernized, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) countries, comprising slightly over one-tenth of the world’s population. And in the case of Indian culture, there are unique relational processes that diverge from the West, yet relationship research in India often uses Western-developed measures. For instance dating-related measures, that are designed for contexts where dating is prevalent, cannot be seamlessly applied in India, where the cultural dynamics around dating are markedly divergent. The insights offered in this text answer the call made by

Henrich et al. (2010) to move beyond WEIRD (Westernized, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) samples, acknowledging the diversity in fundamental human processes across cultures.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of this book is its focus on complete validation, which is often overlooked. While many resources introduce modified measurement instruments, they fall short of providing a comprehensive validation using indigenous datasets. In this regard, this text not only introduces 18 measurement instruments validated in the Indian context, but also elucidates the processes used to achieve cross-cultural validity.

There is an increased need for measurement instrument equivalence to more accurately measure diverse populations. The inclusion of the “Practical Considerations for Translation and Cross-cultural Validation of Measurement Instruments” section serves as a guide, offering researchers a step-by-step approach to navigate the intricate process of ensuring the cultural adaptation and validation of measurement. The authors advocate for a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural methodology, demonstrating the shortcomings of the “transport and test” approach of simply applying Western measures to a non-Western population. This invaluable resource equips scholars with the knowledge and tools necessary to enhance the rigor of cross-cultural research.

Thank you to the authors of this text for this compilation of expertise and insight. “Measuring Couples and Family Dynamics in India: Cultural Adaptations and Validations” serves not only as a comprehensive guide for researchers delving into the complexities of cross-cultural research, but also as a testament to the commitment to inclusivity in relationship and family science. This book should serve as an inspiration for further exploration, dialogue, and collaboration at the intersection of cultural diversity and relationship dynamics.

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Preface

Following rigorous procedures in validating measurement instruments is one of the strengths of psychological research and the literature. The psychometric principles are applied in many fields, such as management, sociology, and education. Of late, there is a rising skepticism about using measures across different countries and settings, as many studies showed that the measures developed and validated in one cultural context might not work similarly across all other cultural settings. Experts in cross-cultural research demonstrated that bias is inherent in cross-cultural research and needs to be handled beforehand.

Cross-cultural psychology has grown rapidly in the last two generations, and cross-cultural measurement has received special attention. When it comes to psychological measurement, the world is divided into two unequal parts: measures are developed in Euro-American (Western) cultural contexts and transported to the rest of the world (mostly non-Western). The original study's measurement scores and norms are simply used as standards for the local cultural context. This is due, in part, to a lack of awareness among researchers about the importance of empirical cultural validation of measures prior to using them to draw conclusions.

This book tries to address this problem in two ways. First, we provide cross-cultural validation for 18 measurement instruments—most of them were developed in Western cultural contexts—using our own indigenous dataset. Second, we also demonstrate the nuances of achieving cross-cultural validity. The very need for this book emerged from our struggle to find measures for our own research that can be used in the Indian cultural contexts. Indian family systems and the dynamics of relationships among family members are unique in terms of structure and functioning. However, research in India on parenting couple and family relationships is conducted quite frequently using the measures developed in the Western cultural context. Given the need for culturally validated measures in the Indian context, we hope this book will address the needs of the researchers in India to some extent.

The book is divided into three sections. In Part I, we deal with four measures of couple relationships. The validations of two measures (Dyadic Coping Inventory and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Scale) have already been published in international

outlets (we have provided citations for those publications for detailed information). Together, these measures will help in research involving married couples and spouses.

In Part II, we deal with six measures of family dynamics. These scales measure interpersonal interaction between parents and children in terms of parenting styles, attachment orientations, family connectedness and cohesion, communication patterns, self-disclosure, and transparency in family relationships. The family connectedness scale was developed by the authors (Indumathy & Barani Kanth), and the validation and psychometric properties are presented in Chap. 8.

Part III outlines validation for five measures in premarital romantic and sexual relationships. The authors (Barani Kanth & Kadiravan) developed three of these scales (Romantic Inclination Scale, Peer influence on romantic relationship scale and Media influence on romantic relationship scale) in the Indian cultural context. The cross-cultural validation of the Romantic Inclination Scale was published separately as a comparative study on Indian and American Young adults, including data from American participants.

In Part IV, we present three measurements related to interpersonal relationship functioning. These scales deal with networking in relationships, rejection concerns, and identifying relationship orientation in terms of individualism versus collectivism.

To make these measures more accessible to readers, we have included the items in the appendix of each chapter, for which we have received written permission to produce the items. We have provided the citation and details of the source for accessing the items for measures for which we do not have permission to reproduce.

We are happy to see this book has become a reality. We hope this book will be useful for relationship researchers focusing on culture. In addition, beyond the boundaries of family and relationship research, this book would help scholars look for a practical sourcebook on measure validation techniques, especially across cultural contexts.

Kalapat, India
Sriperumbudur, India
Salem, India
Tiruchirappalli, India
Bengaluru, India

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