

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale: Utility for Rural Marital Assessment

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Learning Objectives

- To learn why health care providers should assess marital/couple functioning
 - To learn how the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) can be used to assess a dyad's level of relationship adjustment
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Outline

- Review of rural couples literature
 - Why study marriages
 - The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)
 - Current Study
 - Purpose and hypotheses
 - Methods
 - Results-CFA and EFA
 - Summary and Recommendations
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Review of Rural Couples Literature

- Rural residents have been found to be characteristically different from their urban counterparts^{1,2}
 - Value self-reliance and tend to have a distrust of those not from their community²
 - Higher poverty rates²
 - High rates of farm stress and depression and anxiety in females³
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Review of Rural Couples Literature

- Rural/Urban differences with regard to marital adjustment^{4,5,6,7}
 - Age at marriage⁴
 - Education⁸
 - Religion^{9,10}
 - Family Size^{6,7}
 - Gender^{11,12,13}
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Why study marital adjustment?

- Couple distress has been linked to physical and psychological problems^{13,14}
 - Heart disease and reduced immune system functioning¹⁴
 - Decreased coping ability³
 - Risk factor for depression, anxiety and substance use¹³
 - Negative impact on children¹³
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Review of Marital Adjustment Literature

- Marital Adjustment¹⁵
 - An ever changing process
 - Can be viewed at any point during a marriage
 - Provides a view of how the individual believes the relationship is functioning
 - Four components
 - Dyadic satisfaction, consensus, cohesion and affectional expression (also the subscales of the DAS)
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Review of Marital Adjustment Literature

- Marital Satisfaction¹⁶
 - Defined as a person's attitude toward their partner and relationship
 - Current debate regarding marital adjustment¹⁷
 - Unidimensional vs multidimensional hypotheses
 - Current study utilizes a multidimensional approach
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The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)¹⁵

- Normed over 30 years ago
 - 32-item, paper and pencil measure
 - Written at 8th grade level
 - Completed in just minutes
 - Used with nontraditional couples
 - Raw scores range from 0 to 151
 - Cutoff suggested at 100
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Purpose and Hypotheses

- Purpose:** To ascertain if the DAS is an acceptable measure to assess marital adjustment for rural residents
- Hypothesis 1:** The rural sample data will adequately fit the factor structure proposed by Spanier¹
- Hypothesis 2:** The current sample's means will significantly differ from those found by Spanier¹⁵

Methods

- Followed APA's ethical guidelines¹⁸ and gained IRB approval
- 800 rural households, 1600 surveys
- Informed consent, demographic questionnaire, DAS
 - Follow-up postcard one week later
- Lottery for one of four \$50 prizes

Results-Demographics

- 194 useable surveys (12% response)
- 92(47.4%) male /102(52.6%) female
- Average age: 52.50 (SD = 11.33)
- 100% Caucasian
- 69.1% Some higher education
- 92.8% More than 20 years rural
- 85.1% Farmers
- 4.1% Below poverty line

Results-Marriage Characteristics

- Average years married
27.6(SD=13.30)
- 91.2% First marriage
- Total number of children
3.07(SD=1.61)
 - 47.3% No children residing in home
- All but 5 reported following a religion
 - 77.3% felt their religion taught conservative beliefs

Results-DAS

	Males	Females
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
D Consensus	45.85 (6.25)	46.31 (7.43)
D Satisfaction	39.86 (5.02)	38.32 (7.05)
D Cohesion	15.91 (3.83)	16.35 (4.37)
Affect Express	8.38 (2.10)	7.87 (2.30)
DAS Total	110.00 (14.48)	108.85 (18.74)

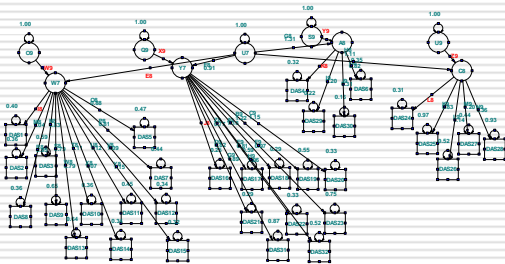
Results-CFA

- Computed a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with Mx¹⁹
 - Missing data was dealt with through Maximum Likelihood Estimation²⁰
- One factor Model
 - Significantly better fit than the null model $\chi^2(31) = 2339.22, p < .001$
- Four factor model
 - Significantly better fit than the one-factor model $\chi^2(5) = 262.35, p < .001$

Results-CFA

	X2	AIC	REMSEA
Null	3566.44 df = 496	2574.44	.179 (.00, .091)
One	1227.22 df = 465	297.22	.092 (.086, .098)
Four	964.87 df = 460	44.87	.075 (.069, .082)

Results-CFA Model



Comparison of Means

	Spanier1	Current
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
D Consensus	57.9 (8.5)	46.09 (6.88)
D Satisfaction	40.5 (7.2)	39.05 (6.21)
D Cohesion	13.4 (4.2)	16.14 (4.12)
Affect Express	9.0 (2.3)	8.11 (2.22)
DAS Total	114.8 (17.8)	109.40 (16.82)

Results-EFA

- Computed an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with SPSS²¹
 - Combined-gender, male and female
 - Null, one, two, three and four factor models computed

Results-EFA

- Combined-gender Sample
 - One factor model accounted for 37.68% of the variance
 - Four factor model accounted for 53.03% of the variance
 - All four subscales were able to be extracted with little movement of items

Results-EFA

- Male Sample
 - With the addition of each factor more variance was accounted for
 - Four factor model accounted for 51.98% of the variance
 - Subscales could be extracted though not as clear as the combined sample

Results-EFA

- Female Sample
 - Variance accounted for increased with each additional factor
 - Four factor model accounted for 57.17% of the total variance
 - Spanier's four factors were not easily recognized in the four factor model
 - Dyadic Cohesion was extracted but the remaining loadings did not group as hypothesized

Limitations

- Self-report measure
 - There is indication that participants took the survey seriously
 - The DAS is a self-report measure
- Small number of participants
 - Could only compute the CFA with a combined-gender sample

Summary

- Overall, this sample was a rural, older, religious, farming sample
 - Satisfied with their marriages
- Important to remember the DAS will not be changed
 - Study was only trying to support the use of the DAS as an adequate instrument for this rural sample

Summary

- Combined-gender sample
 - Support for the four factor model was seen
 - Clinicians may wish to utilize means specific to rural residents in South Dakota
 - Future research should continue to examine specific populations and develop appropriate norms
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Thank you for your time.

Any additional questions?

References located on attached page
