



RESEARCH PAPER

Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised: Urdu Translation and Validation for Pakistani Married Adults

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ABSTRACT

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised is well researched and validated tool for the investigation of adult attachment styles in romantic relationships based on two sub-domains: anxiety and avoidance. The current study aimed at the adaptation and validation of ECR-R for married adults in Pakistan. It is a self-report 36 item version. All items were translated and adapted in Urdu to achieve semantic, idiomatic, contextual, and linguistic adaptation. 298 married individuals from five provincial capitals participated in the current study. As per proposed factorial structure of original author the factorial structure for Pakistani population was first explored by exploratory factor analysis. Total of 10 items were dropped to achieve the shorter and representative factor model for Urdu version. After validation analysis, the same factorial structure of two factors as determined by English version was concluded for the Urdu version. Final version has 13 items in each factor with adequate factor loadings. Results indicated that 26 items Urdu-translated version of ECR-R is a valid and reliable tool for the investigation of married individuals' attachment styles in romantic relationships.

KEYWORDS Adult Attachment Styles, Attachment Anxiety, Attachment Avoidance, Factorial Structure, Married Individuals, Pakistan

Introduction

Researchers have always been intrigued to understand human interaction patterns. These interactions with the surrounding world provide conducive environment for individual growth. Since the time of birth, a child starts developing a pattern of behaviors that shape his/her adult personality. First and foremost, interaction with the outside world starts with the help of family and especially through the mother and immediate caregivers. These early years of interactions facilitate the child in developing into a fully functioning adult. Based on diverse growing environments these experiences can be positive or negative resulting in forming a similar pattern of interpersonal interactions that are later practiced in interpersonal relationships specially in romantic relationships. The way a person perceives his/her relationships with the intimate partner is based on the attachment pattern and associations formed in early years of life with caregivers. Thus, these patterns have long lasting impact on life and need understanding.

Literature Review

For the last many decades, researchers have been studying interpersonal functioning and pattern. They are investigating attachment security and insecurities based on biological, social, and psychological phenomena, such as stress, emotional regulation, cognitive states, and coping strategies to deal with such issues (Fonagy & Campbell, 2015; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2010). According to Hazen and Shaver (1987), adult romantic attachments share the same pattern in system of attachment and relationships as they have practiced and formed with their parents or caregivers in early years of life. Even though these attachment styles are inconsistent in early years but with the passing years they

become persistent and embed deeply in individuals' belief system (Simpson et al., 2007). It is vital to understand these relatively stable attachment patterns and systems that as adults can affect life interactions and relationships with romantic partners.

Many tools have been developed to investigate adult romantic attachments (Besharat, 2011). Among existing relationship measurement tools, the Experience in Close Relationships-R (ECR-R; Fraley et al., 2000) is the most cross-validated tool in many countries with the variation of equally reliable original, revised, as well as short versions (Ehrental et al., 2021; Fraley et al., 2000; Kasacakova et al., 2016; Wongpakaran et al., 2021). Researchers have used it for the investigation of adult romantic attachments for understanding its various antecedents in the context of childhood traumas, maladaptive beliefs, stress, personality traits, and relationship quality (Ehrental et al., 2007; MacDonald et al., 2015; Maunder et al., 2006; Nofle & Shaver, 2006; Pedersen et al., 2015; Stein et al., 2011).

Current research has been done to investigate the adult romantic attachment patterns of Pakistani Married individuals by first identifying the most suitable measuring tool and its cross-cultural adaptation to fit in the bit restrictive and culturally accepted definition of romantic relationship. That is only focusing on the married individuals as having romantic relationship with married partner considered acceptable in Pakistani society whereas other romantic relationships are prohibited and socially rejected (Bial & Rasool, 2020). However, the current study aimed at first cross-validation of the most widely used reliable tool of The Experience in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley et al., 2000) to investigate the adult romantic attachment styles. ECR-R focused on two systems of attachment, anxiety and avoidance as proposed by the authors of scale.

Attachment theory was first proposed by Bowlby (1979) for understanding childhood attachment system associated with the early years' distress experiences. Later, Hazen and Shaver (1987) investigated it in the context of adult romantic relationships. According to them, adult romantic relationships share the same attachment system as infants with their caregivers in early years of life. It was found that any kind of childhood experiences will form a defined pattern of thinking that is strengthened and retained over time and ultimately practiced as adult. Over the last many decades, researchers empirically supported the stability of attachment styles over time (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). This is supported by Ainsworth (1991) empirical work. According to him, people may form secure, anxious-resistant, or avoidant attachments based on their secure or insecure experiences with primary caregivers. Children develop the working model of self and others based on the pattern of parenting. Consistent parenting results in a positive, secure, and healthy model whereas inconsistent parenting results in at least one negative model, resulting in interpersonal difficulties, and insecure attachment. So, any problem or dysfunction in infant-caregiver attachment can affect adult romantic relationships (Fraley & Roisman, 2019).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) followed the four-category model where people were broadly divided into secure and insecure categories. People having positive model of self and others have a secure attachment, whereas preoccupied and dismissive have a negative model of self and other respectively. Fearful attachment pattern has both high levels of anxiety and avoidance, having an overall sense of unworthiness and rejection (Ravitz et al., 2010). Few revised versions of romantic attachment with better dimensional understanding were produced by Fraley and colleagues (Fraley et al., 2015) to understand the dimension of avoidance and anxiousness where the individual feels uncomfortable, avoid physical and emotional proximity, and fear the abandonment by the loved one. Among these the ECR-R was the most concise and appropriate to cover the desired dimensions.

Many studies have been conducted for cross-cultural validation of the ECR-R in English as well as the other languages (Ehrental et al., 2021; Fairchild & Finney, 2006;

Rotaru & Rusu, 2013; Rozvadsky Gugova et al., 2014; Tsagarakis et al., 2007; Wongpakaran et al., 2011). Although the research has proven the cross-cultural validation of ECR-R in many cultures, the empirical evidence in context of Urdu version from Pakistan was lacking. So current study aimed at covering this gap by considering various cultural aspects while considering translation and validation of ECR-R, such as romantic relationships that are specifically focused on married individuals as any other form of romantic relationships is inhibited and socially criticized (Bilal & Rasool, 2020; Gefland et al., 2011). This study added to the dearth of knowledge by providing the validated Urdu version for understanding the avoidant and anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships of Pakistani married men and women.

Materials and Methods

Procedure

This study was designed to translate and validate ECR-R for married individuals of Pakistan. For said purpose, individuals who had minimum education equivalent to matriculation/O level were considered for participation. Participants approached in the variant settings such as workplace, shopping malls, restaurants, and homes. Participants were briefed about the nature and importance of the study. Furthermore, informed about their rights such as right of refusal and withdrawal. They were ensured that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process. No financial benefit was provided to any participant. The email contact of the researcher was provided for further correspondence if needed.

The Experience in Close Relationship-Revised (ECR-R)

ECR-R is a 36-item self-report measure of adult attachment style designed by Fraley et al. (2000) was selected for the assessment of adult romantic attachment on two domains that are: Anxiety and Avoidance. This scale is the revised version of original questionnaire developed by Brenna et al. (1998). In ECR-R item 1 to 18 measures the attachment related anxiety whereas item 19 to 36 measures attachment related avoidance.

The reverse keyed items included item number 9, 11, 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36. For final use of instrument items were randomized to obtain better results. ECR-R was found to be highly reliable instrument to measure couple attachment as its reliability was reported above 0.80 in previous validation research (Shiota et al., 2006; Sibley et al., 2005). Response category ranges from 1 as 'Strongly Disagree' 7 as 'Strongly Agree' with 4 as 'Neutral' response for those who do not disagree and agree. For total score on avoidance and anxiety, item of each sub-scales was averaged.

Cultural Adaptation and Translation in Urdu

For the translation and adaptation of 36 items of the ECR-R, first and foremost step was to evaluate the cultural sensitivity by Subject Matter Experts. For said purpose, three experts from the field were engaged. The inclusion of odd number of experts in every step was based on the consensual agreement of the majority. The ECR-R was developed to investigate the experiences in romantic relationships with partner. Final translated versions should not just reflect linguistic translation but also focus on the original version so comprehension should remain the same (Hambleton & Li, 2005). Therefore, considering the cultural sensitivity and practices in Pakistani society, the term 'Partner' and 'Romantic Partner' were replaced with 'Spouse' before translation of final instrument for cultural appropriateness.

After scrutiny and adaptation of the ECR-R for any culturally sensitive term, it was then translated into Urdu by following Borsa et al. (2012) approach. In their approach

instrument need to be translated into a new language by synthesizing at least two versions based on semantic, idiomatic, experiential, as well as the conceptual equivalence of the translated items. After this, both versions were evaluated by experts and the first version of the final translated instrument was ready to be tested on the target population.

For the comprehension of translated version by the target population 5 couples were engaged in the process. The sole purpose is to evaluate the understanding and clarity of the items without administering any statistical analysis. The respondents were allowed to read the translated items and provided explanations if needed. In case of any ambiguity, at the end of reading the complete Urdu version, they were provided with original English items for conceptual clarity and better suggestion for replacements. Further, discussions were generated on the conceptual clarity of items to eradicate any possible changes and to achieve the best suitable version.

After this back translation of the final first version was done by three bilingual experts to follow the application of semantic and idiomatic adjustments (Sireci et al, 2006). These experts were not involved in any of the translation processes before (Gudmundsson, 2009). They were briefed to evaluate the conceptual equivalence of the translated instrument following Oliveira and Bandeira's (2011) approach. Five subject matter experts were again approached in a committee meeting, the final back translation was evaluated conceptually.

After approval of the Back translation from original author, pilot testing was done as the final and foremost step to get the translated version for validation. The Urdu-translated version was administered on 14 Urdu-speaking natives to assess the face validity. Further inclusion was based on a minimum one year of marriage. Both married men and women from varied socio-economic statuses were approached. Feedback from these participants was noted down for further clarity on the translated Urdu version. Response of these participants were not included in the later analysis of the study. The participants approved language adequacy of the Urdu-translated version and found it to be appropriately conveying desired meanings. When no further changes were required, the final version proceeded to the next step that was validation.

Participants for Factorial Structure

Following approach of Borsa et al. (2012), the next step was to determine the factorial structure. Data for the current validation study was collected from five provincial capitals of Pakistan including Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar, and Gilgit. Data was gathered from June 2022 to December 2022. For recruitment of participants, married individuals were approached in their work settings, academic institutes, shopping malls, restaurants, as well as homes. Participants were briefed about the nature of the study, importance of their contribution with the right to refuse and withdraw participation. They were further briefed on the anonymity and confidentiality measures to ensure the security of their provided information. No financial benefit was provided for participation. Among the targeted population, few people refused, and the majority agreed to participate voluntarily. It took 5 to 10 minutes to complete the provided form along with demographic details. In the end participants were thanked for participation. The email contact of researcher was provided for further correspondence if needed.

Sample Characteristics and Size

Adult married participants above the age of 18 years (N=298) participated in the current study. Any participant having marital years with the current partner below one-year, prior psychiatric illness history, severe chronic medical illness, and inability to understand the language of Urdu version were excluded from the sample. According to the approach of Lai et al. (2013), against each item, at least 7 responses should be present for

suitable analysis. The ECR has 36 items, so the proposed sample size was 252. However, almost 300 participants were recruited randomly and, in the end, 298 were retained after scrutiny of data for missing information.

Among these 152 were Men (51%) and 146 were Women (49%). The sample comprised participants from varied socio-economic statuses, professions, and educational backgrounds. Education level of participants and spouses ranged from Intermediate/A-levels to PhD, including few doctors and engineers. Further details of sample characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N =298)

Variables	f	%
Gender of Participant		
Men	152	51.0
Women	146	49.0
Age of Participant in years		
Young Adults (19-40)	236	79.2
Middle Adults (41-65)	60	20.1
Older Adults (65+)	2	0.7
Marital Decision		
Love Marriage	129	43.3
Arranged Marriage	169	56.7
Age at Marriage in years		
18-25	130	43.6
26-30	137	46.0
31-35	31	10.4
Marital Years		
0 to 5	97	32.6
6 to 10	97	32.6
11 to 15	42	14.1
16 to 20	40	13.4
21 and above	22	7.4
Family System		
Nuclear	137	46.0
Joint	161	54.0
Number of Children		
None	65	21.8
One	58	19.5
Two	86	28.9
Three	61	20.5
Four or More	28	9.4

Data Analysis

For analysis, IBM SPSS version 20 was used. For normality analysis skewness and kurtosis was performed. Results indicated that the values of both skewness and kurtosis were in acceptable range of ± 2 (George & Mallery, 2010) therefore parametric tests were performed. Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on data for model testing. Eigenvalues above 0.6 as proposed good by Awang (2012) were retained for the contribution of respective factor. Internal consistency of test scores was determined through Cronbach alpha. Alpha values above 0.7 were considered as acceptable, 0.8 and 0.9 as good and excellent respectively (George, 2003).

Results and Discussion

Married individuals participated in current study. The mean age of the male and female participants was 36.78 (SD = 9.85) and 34.00 (SD = 6.15) respectively. The sample comprised of participants from varied socio-economic status, professions, and educational background. Where education level of participants and spouse ranged from Intermediate/A-levels to PhD, even including doctor and engineers. Cronbach alpha values were calculated for all items as proposed by original author of English version without removal of any item. Results indicated high reliability when analyzed for the complete Urdu version of ECR-R ($\alpha = 0.72$) as well as its sub-scales that are attachment related anxiety ($\alpha = 0.81$), and attachment related avoidance ($\alpha = 0.86$). Furthermore, descriptive statistics of ECR-R is given in Table 2.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of ECR-R Urdu Version Sub-domains of Attachment (N =298)

Sub-Scales	k	M	SD	α	Range	
					Potential	Actual
Anxiety	13	32.41	17.21	0.93	13-91	13-74
Avoidance	13	32.58	14.93	0.89	13-91	14-69

Note. ECR-R = Experience in Close relationships, ECR-R has two sub-scales that are anxiety and avoidance

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis with Promax rotation was performed with 36 items to analyze the factorial structure that indicated that model came out as a bad fit as indices indicated ($\chi^2 = 3026.66$, $p = 0.001$, CFI = 0.72, RMSEA = 0.12, PCLOSE = 0.000). Item number 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 19, 21, 24, 25, and 32 had factor loadings less than 0.30 on all factors. CFA was performed on the 26 items of ECR-R Urdu with dropping of 10 items from the final factorial structure based on EFA performed in previous phase of this study. Details of analysis and results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Showing Indices of Model Fit for Investment Model Scale Urdu

Model	χ^2	Df	P	CMIN/df	CFI	Fit Indices		
						NFI	TLI	RMSEA
Model-1 Second Order CFA (26 Items-Without Error Covariances)								
	1864.27	298	.000	6.25	.78	.75	.76	.13
Model-1 Second Order CFA (26 Items-With Error Covariances)								
	1055.37	277	.000	3.81	.90	.89	.90	.07

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index, NFI = Non-Normed Fit Index, TLI = Tucker Lewis Index, RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The analysis indicated better fit model without any modification indices (Kim et al., 2022) as shown in Table 3. Further, model was again analyzed with modification indices, and it represented best fit model for 9 items of Urdu version with four factors as proposed for English version. by original author. RMSEA value is in acceptable range as per Kim et al. (2016). The goodness of fit indices and factor loadings of all the items obtained through CFA are given in Table 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 4
Factor Loadings (Standardized Regression Weights) for Two-Factor of ECR-R Urdu
Factors

Item No.	Attachment Related Anxiety	Attachment Related Avoidance
1	.73	
2	.80	
3	.84	
4	.83	
5	.86	
6	.83	
7	.71	
8	.85	
12	.86	
13	.80	
16	.75	
17	.47	
18	.62	
20		.68
22		.78
23		.74
26		.81
27		.83
28		.86
29		.83
30		.87
31		.84
33		.65
34		.69
35		.86
36		.85
	0.93	0.89
Cronbach's Alpha		

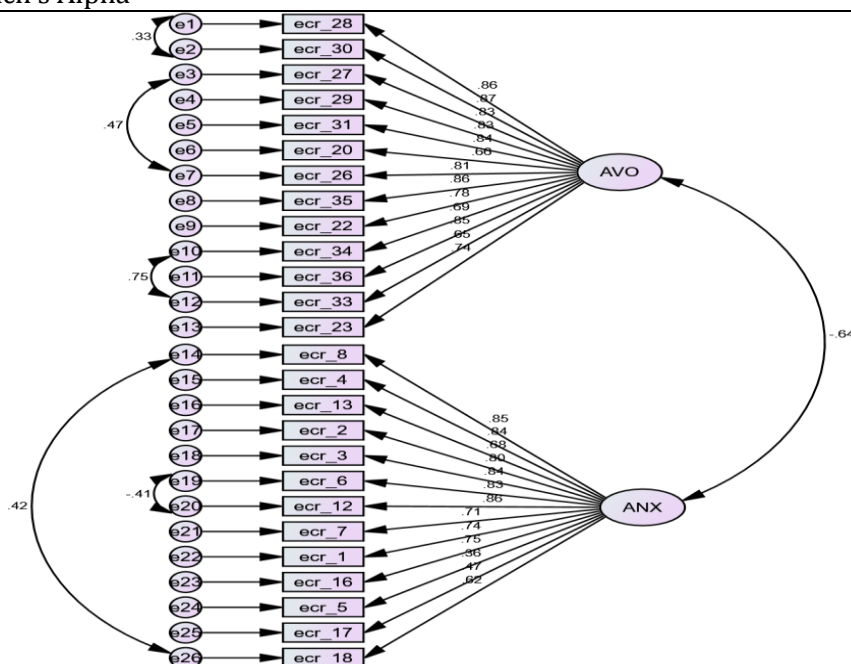


Figure 1. Measurement Model of Experience in Close Relationship – Revised Urdu (26 Items)

For established instruments the acceptable factor loadings should be above .60 (Awang, 2012). The Figure 1 and Table 4 shows that all factor loadings are greater than the desired value except item number 17 which in minimum acceptable value of .40 as per original author of scale (Fraley et al., 2011). Figure 1 show the model along with the factor loadings.

Discussion

The current study translated and adapted the ECR-R in Urdu to be used with the married individuals from Pakistan. The researcher followed the cross-cultural validation criteria of Borsa et al. (2012) for establishing an equivalent version that caters to all cultural, idiomatic, linguistic, as well as contextual aspects related to the translation. During the subject matter expert evaluation, it was suggested to replace the term 'Partner' and 'Romantic Partner' with 'Spouse' keeping in mind that Pakistan is a patriarchal society with strong religious ties, where it is strictly prohibited and disapproved by society to have a cohabiting relationship (Hayee & Kamal, 2022; Qadir et al, 2013). Such behaviors are not only inhibited but are socially disapproved. The backlash associated with it stop the individuals from publicly accepting such relations and therefore it could have affected the responses against the translated items of ECR-R.

The current study is the first one to validate the ECR-R in Urdu version for married individuals from Pakistan. Like other versions of ECR-R (Ehrental et al., 2021; Fairchild & Finney, 2006; Rotaru & Rusu, 2013; Rozvadsky Gugova et al., 2014; Tsagarakis et al, 2007; Wongpakaran et al., 2011), the Urdu version has shown good reliability (Ursachi et al., 2015), and same factorial structure as proposed in the original version that are: anxiety and avoidance (Fraley et al., 2000). Furthermore, this research facilitated filling the research and literature gap from an important segment of the world. Therefore, adding to the empirical validation literature of ECR-R.

It was proposed by previous authors that there should be culturally devised factorial structure (Brennan et al., 1998; Kascakova et al, 2016). Previous researchers (Busonera et al., 2014; Hanak & Dimitrijevic, 2013; Kascakova et al., 2016; Moreira et al., 2015; Wei et al., 2007) have developed the factorial structure as per the cultural requirements to achieve shorter versions of scale. Current study factorial structure supported the original version (Fraley et al, 2000) as well as the previous literature of devising factorial structure for each new version. Results revealed the two-dimensional factorial structure by dropping 10 items. As per original author there are many repetitive items that can be easily dropped to achieve the more reliable and good fit model. Moreover, that dropping of items will not affect the dimension measure of the tool, that is also evident from current validation study.

Despite having economic crises and hardships of life, and the lack of facilities available to families and partners in Pakistan unlike Western societies; families and partners still have feelings of connectedness and contentment in their relationship. ECR-R and its validations studies for shorter version supported high internal consistency and two factor structure that is avoidance and anxiety with different number of items (Fraley et al., 2000; 2011). Both the sub-domains had 13 items each. Current study supported and added to the literature by providing empirical evidence for two-dimension model with 26 items, shorter than the original ECR-R.

Conclusion

The Urdu version of Experience in Close Relationships-Revised was found to be valid and reliable measure for assessing the romantic relationship attachment system focusing on secure and insecure attachment in form of avoidance and anxiety subscales. Further, results revealed that factorial structure of Urdu version is similar to original English version.

Therefore, it supports the use for investigation of relationship investment in context of married individuals.

Recommendations

Apart from foremost strength of study that is providing a validated tool in Urdu language for Pakistani population by addressing the limitation in this domain, one of the limitations is geographical aspect, as data was only collected from five provincial capitals. Moreover, educated people those who have education above matriculation/O levels participated in the study. People that are below this level and can easily understand and read Urdu language were excluded. Future researchers can include such participants to have more diverse responses. Current study focused on cross-sectional design for investigation of married couples' attachment system with the partner. As its evident that marriage institute needs the long-term binding and flourishing of relationship by sacrificing and putting efforts for its success on part of both partners and sometimes more from one partner, therefore, future studies should follow the longitudinal to cater such issues that can limit the outcome providing more concrete claims for validity.

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