

Reliability and Equivalence of the Spanish Translation of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory—Revised (MSI–R)

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This study examined the reliability and linguistic equivalence of the Spanish translation of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory—Revised (MSI–R) in a sample of 86 bilingual Mexican American couples. Overall, findings provided preliminary support for using this translation of the MSI–R with respondents whose preferred language is Spanish. Coefficients of internal consistency and temporal stability for scales constituting the Spanish MSI–R averaged .72 and .75, respectively. Linguistic equivalence coefficients for respondents completing the MSI–R in both languages averaged .69. Multivariate analyses of variance indicated no significant effect for language of administration on MSI–R scale scores. Discussion emphasizes caveats in using the Spanish MSI–R and directions for further research.

Hispanics currently constitute the second largest ethnic minority group in the United States and are projected to become the largest ethnic minority by 2005 (U.S. Census Bureau, 1999).¹ Appropriate assessment of Hispanic Americans is an important challenge in this age of increasing multiculturalism (Cuéllar, 1998). However, because of historical and recent trends in emigration from Latin American countries, as many as 40% of Hispanic adults living in the United States are either monolingual Spanish speakers or have limited English proficiency (Garcia-Preto, 1996). Consequently, for mental health professionals to adequately provide services to Spanish-dominant Hispanics, psychological measures available in Spanish and having evidence of reliability and validity will become increasingly important.

Marriage and family relationships constitute an integral facet of many Hispanics' lives (Becerra, 1988; Falicov, 1996; Garcia-Preto, 1996; Vega, 1990). Despite growing interest in assessment strategies specific to couples and families (Kashy & Snyder, 1995; Snyder, Cavell, Heffer, & Mangrum, 1995), few studies have investigated the relationships of Hispanic couples (Bean & Crane, 1996). Even fewer studies have addressed the appropriateness of standardized marital and family assessment techniques with the growing Hispanic population (Negy & Snyder, 1997). Although several measures have been translated into Spanish for use with Hispanic couples—including the Conflict Tactics Scales (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), Family Environment Scale (Moos & Moos, 1986), and Styles of Conflict Inventory (Metz, 1993)—rarely have adaptations of measures originally developed in English been examined for their reliability, validity, and linguistic (alternate

language) equivalence to their original version. The lack of normative data on Hispanic marriages precludes incorporating a culture-specific context necessary for evaluating and intervening with distressed couples within this ethnic group. A primary factor limiting both the clinical and research literature has been the failure to examine standardized measures of marital functioning with Hispanic American couples (Knight, Tein, & Shell, 1992; Vega, 1990).

This study examined the reliability and linguistic equivalence of the Spanish translation of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory—Revised (MSI–R; Snyder, 1997). The MSI–R is a 150-item, true-false, self-report measure of relationship functioning designed to identify both the nature and intensity of distress in distinct areas of partners' interaction. The MSI–R includes 2 validity scales, 1 global distress scale, and 10 additional scales assessing specific dimensions of the relationship. Previous studies have supported the internal consistency and temporal stability of MSI–R scales, as well as their convergent and discriminant validity (see Snyder & Aikman, 1999, for a review). Specifically, coefficients of internal consistency for the MSI–R scales derived from a combined sample of 2,040 persons from the community and 100 persons in couple therapy ranged from .70 to .93 ($M = .82$); temporal stability coefficients derived from 210 persons from the community retested after 6 weeks ranged from .74 to .88 ($M = .79$). In a comparison of 50 clinic couples and 77 community couples matched on demographic indexes, each of the MSI–R scales discriminated between the community and clinic couples at $p < .001$, with moderate-to-large effect sizes (Cohen's d) ranging from 0.43 to 2.35 ($M = 1.07$). Actuarial tables linking scale scores to descriptors of the relationship provided by clinicians and both spouses showed the MSI–R scales to relate to a broad range of

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¹ The term *Hispanic* is not preferred by all members of this ethnic group. However, to eliminate potential confusion by using other terms interchangeably (e.g., *Latino*), *Hispanic* will be used throughout this article when referring to persons who trace their heritage to Spanish origins. The exception to this is persons of Mexican descent living in the United States, to whom we refer as *Mexican Americans*.