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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Presentation of the Multidimensional Couple: Socioemotional Impact Scale

Presentación de la Pareja Multidimensional: Escala de Impacto Socioemocional

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: A systemic instrument is presented to measure the socioemotional network in relation to the partner and the person's perception of the impact of this intimate network on his or her partner for his or her classification. It is based on the idea that a nurtured social network brings positive benefits to one's nuclear partner. In order to verify this assumption both in research and in clinical practice, it is necessary to construct a complex instrument that allows reaching different dimensions within and outside the couple. **Objective:** The study seeks the construction and validation of the Multidimensional Couple scale to measure seven dimensions in the couple: emotional, cognitive, physical interest, protection, trust, respect and power, as well as an additional dimension to classify the type of couple. **Method:** An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Exploratory Factor Analysis (CFA) were carried out to test the psychometric properties and the adequacy to the theoretical model. A total of 1149 people (71.5% women and 28% men) living in Mexico participated. **Result:** The presence of a scale formed by 7 dimensions in the couple and a second order factor is confirmed, which can be applied both by adjusting the answers to the couple itself and to other people different from the couple. The goodness-of-fit and reliability indices are satisfactory. **Conclusion:** This scale provides a psychometric instrument that allows the study of the relationship between the couple.

Keywords: One-dimensional couple, Multidimensional couple, Relationship nutrition, Validation, Couple relationship.

RESUMEN

Introducción: Se presenta un instrumento de origen sistémico para medir la red socioemocional en relación con la pareja y la percepción de la persona sobre el impacto de esta red íntima en su pareja para su clasificación. Se parte de la idea de que una red social nutrida aporta beneficios positivos en la propia pareja nuclear. Para la comprobación de este supuesto tanto investigación como en la práctica clínica, se hace necesaria la construcción de un instrumento complejo que permita alcanzar diferentes dimensiones dentro y fuera de la pareja. **Objetivo:** El estudio busca la construcción y validación de la escala La Pareja Multidimensional para medir siete dimensiones en la pareja: emocional, cognitiva, interés físico, protección confianza, respeto y poder, así como una dimensión adicional que permita clasificar el tipo de pareja. **Método:** Se ha llevado a cabo un Análisis Factorial Exploratorio (EFA) y Análisis Factorial Exploratorio

(CFA) para comprobar las propiedades psicométricas y la adecuación al modelo teórico. Participó un total de 1149 personas (71.5% mujeres y 28% hombres) residentes en México. **Resultados:** Se confirma la presencia de una escala formada por 7 dimensiones en la pareja y un factor de segundo orden, que se puede aplicar tanto adecuando las respuestas a la propia pareja como a otras personas diferentes a esta. Los índices de bondad de ajuste y de fiabilidad son satisfactorios. **Conclusión:** Con esta escala se aporta un instrumento psicométrico que permite estudiar las diferentes dimensiones de la pareja y cómo estas se alimentan en base al establecimiento de relaciones con personas ajenas a la misma.

Palabras claves: Pareja unidimensional, Pareja multidimensional, Nutrición relacional, Validación, Relación de pareja.

INTRODUCTION

The couple entails a semantic and meaning complexity that makes it impossible to define it with syntactic brevity. However, the couple is multi-determined by psychological, interactional, social, political, historical, religious, cultural, material and emotional factors (Mora et. al, 2017; Stange et. al, 2017).

The concept of couple has been the subject of study and interest by social and human disciplines (Benavides, et al. 2021), it can be said to be a complex system in constant change (Stange et al., 2017). They all agree that, in each culture and historical period, there are different ways and forms of being and establishing relationships as a couple (Castañeda, 2016; Mora et. al, 2017; Stange et. al, 2017, Rodríguez, 2019).

Despite the fact that the couple is recognised as a complex and multi-determined system, it is notable that it is not approached, understood and measured, considering the different actors, systems and cultural elements that impact, determine and configure it. In short, it seems that at a theoretical level the couple or marriage is thought of as a system produced in relation to the context, but methodologically and operationally, it continues to be measured and approached as a closed and isolated system. In this sense, it is relevant, as Jondec (2020) points out, that experts on the subject conceive, measure and approach the couple considering the changing and uncertain context in which it exists. Also, their network of links, since the couple's surrounding world has a bearing on their values scales, levels of satisfaction, desires and expectations, even frustrations and conflicts.

The title of this instrument is inspired by Marcuse's (1964) concept of the one-dimensional man is taken here as a conceptual metaphor to refer to the couple, in particular the traditional heterosexual couple as the only one that provides well-being and security to its members.

With the above, the need arises to create an instrument to measure relational complexity, from an ecological approach (Bateson, 1973). This instrument is not aimed at a particular type of couple or gender. as the analysis focuses on the socio-emotional relationship however, the way of being or existing in a couple.

This instrument makes visible and shows that today, even in traditional societies, the one-dimensional couple is a myth. Contemporary couples are multidimensional. The general thesis that is defended is that this multidimensional-emotional universe of the person - beyond the couple and family - contributes qualitatively to personal well-being and in a triangular way to the couple's relationship (Scheinkman, 2019). Thus, building what is here called the multidimensional couple: those non-family members who make up a significant and intimate relational system that influences the couple's relationship.

Measuring the multidimensional couple

Among all the instruments, multidimensional or not, few make reference to the non-familial relational context of the partners as part of couple satisfaction and adjustment (Arias-Galicia, 2003; Barón, 2002; Díaz-Loving & Armenta, 2008; Flores, 2011; González et al, 2004; Hendrick, 1988; Ibáñez et al., 2012; Iraurgi et al., 2009; Larson & Bahr, 1980; Lauer et al., 1999; Locke & Wallace, 1959; Olson & Wilson, 1982; Pick and Andrade, 1988; Pozos et al., 2013; Roach, et al., 1981). None of them consider it a fundamental factor for the transformation and recognition of their satisfaction. In this breadth of instruments, the lack of approaches that consider the social environment of the couple stands out. Of the few that exist, Graham (2000) stands out as a reference by including the social support variable in the conception of couple satisfaction. Also, Kaufman and Taniguchi (2006), who showed a positive relationship between the network of friends and partners and marital satisfaction. On the other hand, in a research study, Antonucci, et al. (2001) describe the positive and negative impacts of the friendship network on the couple's relationship, without explaining what these impacts are due to.

The multidimensional couple focuses on measuring the non-familial personal socio-emotional network of people who live as a couple, especially those with whom a certain intimacy has been generated, understood as: "any form of close association in which the person [...] acquires a shared detailed knowledge... a privileged knowledge of one that no one else has [...] a degree [of] emotional understanding that implies a deep look inside the self" (Tenorio, 2010. p.65). In other words, intimate relationships have to do with affective support, supportive dialogue, the ability to talk about personal and profound things, trust and security felt with the other (Maureira, 2011). The Multidimensional Couple bases its logic on the belief that one plus one equals three (Caillé, 1992). In other words, triangular, non-familial relationships are a significant socio-emotional referent that directly influences the couple's relationship and allows us to recognise the specific relational patterns that are classified.

The couple as a triangular relational system: the socio-emotional dimensions of measurement

This instrument is based on the systemic-ecological model, especially the perspective proposed by Bateson (1973), that incorporates culture and nature from an ecological dimension. Thought, feelings, and rationality are rooted in the ecosystem, so the couple; it is seen as a recurrent system that is constructed in their circular relationship with each other and other systems where they coexist.

This instrument focuses on positive relational triangulation, the

couple seen as a triangle as an alliance are a path of growth to become emotionally or cognitively closer to a third person, establish bonds, redefine or re-signify relationships, influencing the identity and well-being of the person (Haley, 1980). In this respect, Caillé mentions that “from a systemic perspective, every human system [in our case the couple] appears as a set of individuals plus a symbolic «third party», which represents the organisational model of the system more or less consciously shared by these individuals” (1992, p.88).

Linares, following the systemic tradition who focused on the family as a primarily emotional system, proposes the concept of relational nourishment. He speaks of socio-emotional nourishment as the subjective experience of being loved and supported, that is, of being the object of loving thoughts, feelings and actions (Linares, 1996; Linares, 2012).

Linares’ model breaks down seven conceptual dimensions that we consider basic to recognise the triangular socio-emotional relationships of the couple. Each of them takes up a dimension of the relationship that will be studied in detail, by means of specific questions that qualify the relational pragmatics of everyday life:

- **Emotional dimension:** This is divided into two concepts: Feeling accepted: Admitting the other person’s individuality, their being, and validating it in a genuine way. This full acceptance implies living with it without wanting to change it, without doing anything to modify it (Higuera, 2006). In Maturana’s terms (1997), making the other feel legitimate, just like oneself. And, on the other hand, feeling loved is the subjective experience of feeling loved, that we have affection, will or inclination (Quees.la, 2013, Linares, 2012).
- **Cognitive dimension.** This block is divided into feeling recognised, which is the confirmation of the existence of the other at a relational level. In other words, the existence of the other entails full autonomy, with his/her own needs that are different from my own (Linares, 2010; Linares, 2012). And feeling valued, which means appreciating the qualities of the other, even if (or precisely because) they are different from one’s own (Linares, 2010; Linares, 2012).
- **Physical attraction dimension.** On the physical dimension, it refers to feeling attractive in the eyes of the other person and, on the other hand, feeling seduced and attracted by the one who provokes desire.
- **Support dimension.** Support and protection are the experience where the other person participates closely in our life. It is to be under their care and interest. The counterpart is attentive to our needs and provides us with what is necessary for us to be well (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016; Real Academia Española, n.d.).
- **Respect dimension.** This dimension identifies whether the person feels that he/she is treated with consideration, taking care at all times of the limits that lead him/her to feel safe (Real Academia Española, n.d.).
- **Power dimension.** The power dimension, which we translate into feeling admired, means appreciating that the other values us in a very positive way for our qualities (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016; Real Academia Española, n.d.). This is an everyday act where the gaze and recognition of the other for

my qualities annihilates any power play that destroys love.

- **Trust dimension.** This is considered to be the foundation of the relationship, the cement that holds the couple together and allows differences and discrepancies to be tolerated (Núñez, et al., 2015). It is defined in general terms as the firm certainty or absolute belief that I or my partner act and will act appropriately, in accordance with the implicit or explicit commitments that define the relationship. Acting contrary to this is considered betrayal.

In summary, each of these dimensions is analysed from the perception and feelings of the person who applies the questionnaire in relation to their own partner and their intimate (non-family) network, with the aim of making visible the significant socio-emotional network by dimension and in its totality; which forms part of their own and their partner’s well-being. At the end, another ten questions are organised transversally to the seven dimensions, from a triangular logic that will allow us to measure the impact of this significant socio-emotional network that the person believes has on his/her partner. With this, the type of partner they currently have is categorised.

Classification and contemporary studies of the couple

- **The flexible complementary traditional couple:** Its distinction lies in the fact that the traditional distribution of roles takes place within a framework of mutual respect and recognition, but can alternate with symmetrical patterns in the distribution of roles (Watzlawick et al. 1976).
- **The rigid traditional couple:** In this couple, the roles are traditional, but there is an explicit dominance over the spouse assumed as weak (Watzlawick, et al., 1985). Linked to the imaginary of the patriarchal family (Benavides, et al. 2021; Mora et. al, 2017, Medina, 2013, Medina, 2018, Medina, 2022a), in this couple the psychological or physical abuse by the man towards the woman stays within the home. These couples have become more complex due to the incorporation of women into the labour market. This led to an increase in working hours for these women, working inside and outside the home. Generating what is now known as “double shift “ (Hochschild and Machung, 1989; Menéndez-Espina, et al., 2020) or double presence (Balbo, 1994), carrying an excessive burden. It is noticeable that women have a reduced social support network.
- **The couple in symmetric transition:** the traditional couple began to falter in the mid-20th century due to the crisis of positivism (Kuhn, 1962), along with the advances of feminism and the recognition of gender diversity (Bernard, 1972; Marshall, 2018; Rodríguez-Pizarro and Rivera-Crespo, 2020). In some communities they fail to adapt to the changes (Medina, et al. 2013), men remain peripheral to parenting and household responsibilities while maintaining their traditional role. On the other hand, women gain empowerment by having university studies, a well-paid job and a considerable external support network beyond the family, although they continue to perform the role of carers within the household. They discredit each other in the presence of third parties, and include them in fights. These couples continue to be governed by the patriarchal cultural imaginary

(Medina, 2022a).

- The symmetric supportive post-traditional couple: This one recognises gender equality and the diversity of types of couples (Ariza, et al., 2021; Arreola, 2021; Bravo and Sanchez 2022; Sabbagh and Golden, 2021; García, 2020; Qian, and Hu, 2021; Scheinkman, 2019),). Research reports a different narrative of what a woman and a man should be (Butler, 2020), as well as new masculinities (Endara, 2018). They are post-romantic couples; the relationship is constituted from confluent love; they do not see themselves together for life nor do they refer to the other as the only one, but rather love is expanded in relational co-responsibility (Giddens, 2008). Beck-Gernsheim (2003), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2001) point out that this style of partnership empowers autonomy and personal projects, while still paying special emotional attention to each other's needs. They recognise and encourage each other's friendships, their socio-emotional and work spaces, and even consider them as a stabiliser for the couple itself.
- The fragile complementary post-traditional couple. Its main feature is that giving more power to the personal project than to supportiveness could dissolve the couple in a short time. They are highly volatile couples, constantly changing agreements, but have little tolerance for dissent. They are distinguished by the fact that one of them, with a certain narcissistic profile, dominates the relationship in fundamental aspects such as residence, having or not having children, time, etc. And he/she is intolerant of criticism. Both are financially autonomous and have a wide network of friends, so the bond quickly unravels in the face of any dissent. It is related to Bauman's (2003) idea of liquid love, which is based on an ephemeral fragile bond (Benavides, et al. 2021).

METHOD

Design

The present study has an instrumental design, as it focuses on examining the psychometric properties of a measurement instrument (Ato et al., 2013).

Participants

A quota and convenience type of sampling were used. The selection criteria were that the person surveyed is in a formal or informal relationship, that is dating, married, living together or not, regardless of the gender and length of the relationship. This application was carried out by students and teachers from Centro Universitario de la Ciénega, University of Guadalajara and from Instituto Tzapopan (Jalisco, Mexico).

For the pre-test phase, 61 people resident in Mexico participated: 88.1% resident in the state of Jalisco, mainly Guadalajara and Zapopan, and 11.1% in other states in the country. The sample is comprised by 44.4% men and 49.2% women, with ages ranging from 20 to 71, (M=38.5; DT=11.2). Of these, 36.5% were, at the time of carrying out the questionnaire, in an engagement relationship, 44.4% were married, and 15.9% cohabited as a couple. For the final evaluation, 1291 people resident in the states of Jalisco and Michoacán, Mexico, were contacted. The final sample is comprised of 1149 people. 71.5% identify

with the female gender, 28% with male, and 0.5% did not indicate their gender, with ages ranging from 13 to 73 (M=30.08; DT=10.6). The general characteristics of the sample can be seen in Table 1.

According to Arifin (2024), for the test characteristics and to achieve adequate fit indices with at least an 80% statistical power, it would be necessary to have a minimum of 378 subjects to conduct only the CFA, therefore, this condition is met.

Instruments

The Multidimensional Couple. The Multidimensional Couple is a test comprising a total of 40 items, divided into 8 scales, which make up two parts.

Part 1, called Couple analysis. It starts with a table that the person must fill in with qualitative information, where they place the names of 5 people, the type of relationship they have with them and the location where the relationship usually takes place. The first person must be the partner, the other four individuals from the subject's close circle.

Later, the 7 first scales must be filled in. These refer to the different emotional, cognitive, physical interest, support and protection, respect, trust and power dimensions. Each scale was initially comprised of 8 items, in order to choose among the most adequate. They all have a Likert-style response format of five points, with the options: 1 never, 2 almost never, 3 sometimes, 4 almost always, 5 always. The response must be applied both to the partner and for each one of the people chosen, writing the number corresponding to the answer under each column, forming a 5x5 matrix (4x5 in the case of the power dimension). Part 2. The second part is formed by the eighth scale, called Classification of the couple. It is answered only taking into account the couple, formed by 12 items with a Likert-style response option of five points, similar to the above (from 1 never, to 5 always).

In the 8 scales there is an additional row and column in which to add the total of the scores for each item and each person, with which to obtain the total for each dimension and each person. With this we obtain the mean response in each dimension and each person in the 7 dimensions of part 1. With the couple Classification scale, a sum of the total is carried out.

Survey with socio-economic questions. A series of survey-type questions were asked relating to the sociodemographic and occupational data of the people surveyed, as well as to their sentimental situation. These were obtained from the survey models carried out for statistical and census studies of the National Statistics and Geography Institute (INEGI) of Mexico. They are asked what gender they identify with, their age, city and country of residence, occupational situation, housing conditions, type of relationship with their partner, the duration of the relationship up until the moment of responding to the survey.

Procedure

The people who decided to participate in the study received access to the test via an online platform. The test was self-administered, filled in on the same platform. First, they were informed in writing about the objectives of the research, about the application of the Law on Personal Data Protection, informed consent

and the purposes which the information received will be used for. Once that information was provided, individuals signed the informed consent, indicating that they were participating in the study voluntarily. Next, they were given the instructions to respond to each one of the blocks of the questionnaire. This work follows the recommendations established by the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association regarding research involving human subjects. Likewise, it was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology of the University of Oviedo (Spain) and the Ethics Committee of the University of Guadalajara (Mexico).

Data analysis

A random division of the sample into two halves has been carried out, performing the EFA with the first half and the CFA with the second. First, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out of the data using Kaiser’s K1 criterion, as well as the scree plot, with all the items, forcing the extraction of 7 factors. In order to test the adequacy of the data matrix that enabled carrying out the EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test for sampling adequacy was studied, as well as Bartlett’s test of sphericity. The Principal Axis Factorization method was used for parameter estimation, robust against univariate and multivariate violation of the variables analysed, as well as the direct Oblimin rotation method.

Next, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out with those same scales by means of Structural Equation Modelling. The DWLS method was used, suitable for samples larger than 200 subjects (Martínez-Mesa et al., 2016) and the fit of the models was checked with the RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index), CFI (Comparative Fix Index) and SMRM (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) tests. A second order Confirmatory Factor Analysis was also carried out with all the items, both for the answers corresponding to the couple and to those corresponding to one of the other people, to see if they worked as a one-dimensional test to obtain a global score. The following values of the indexes used have been taken as a reference of goodness of fit of the models: $RMSEA \leq .10$, $TLI > .95$ and $CFI \geq .95$ (Schreiber et al., 2006).

Throughout this process, the items that finally comprised each scale were fine-tuned, discarding those that did not allow a good fit of the model. Initially, the scales had a total of 8 items, and they were reduced to 5 in all of them, except in one where there were 4 items. Once these steps were completed, the reliability of each one of the scales was studied individually, and globally by means of calculating McDonald’s Omega index and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Finally, an invariance test was performed between the male and female groups to determine the appropriateness of the instrument to gender and to test the internal validity of the instrument. The configural, metric, scalar

Table 1. Gender, situation, duration of the relationship and occupational situation of the sample.

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	821	71,5%
Male	322	28,0%
Others	6	0,5%
Relationship situation		
Engagement	555	48,3%
Married	414	36,0%
Cohabiting as a couple	180	15,7%
Duration of the relationship		
1 to 6 months	171	14,9%
6 months to 1 year	113	9,8%
1 to 3 years	240	20,9%
3 to 5 years	197	17,1%
5 to 10 years	187	16,3%
10 years or more	241	21,0%
Occupational situation		
Unemployed	44	3,8%
Pensioner or retired	13	1,1%
Student	307	26,7%
Working at home with or without children	86	7,5%
Employee	664	57,8%
Others	35	3,0%

and strict models were compared in the Multidimensional Scale (for the partner and for other people) and in the Classification of the couple scale. The criterion to conclude that there is invariance between the groups is that the change in the goodness of fit indices between models (CFI, TLI and SRMR) is $\Delta \leq .01$ and in the RMSEA $\Delta \leq .015$. The software used to carry out the analyses was IBM SPSS version 25 for the EFA and JASP version 0.18.3 for the CFA.

Ethics Aspects

This study was part of a larger research project "Suitability, Clinical Utility and Acceptability of an Online Transdiagnostic Intervention for Emotional Disorders and Stress-related Disorders in Mexican Sample: A Randomized Clinical Trial" which was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Higher Studies Iztacala UNAM (CE/FESI/ 082020/1363). All participants read and agreed to an electronic consent before completing the self-report questionnaires online.

RESULTS

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 2 contains the descriptive analysis of the items from the 7 dimensions for the answers given with respect to the partner, and the Couple Classification scale. The correlation indexes of each one with its dimension are also added, and the weight in the factor. The asymmetry and kurtosis indicate that the items do not meet the assumption of normality. Thus, Table 3 shows the results of the EFA. The KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test indicate a good fit of the 8 scales, with reliability indexes above .84 and positive correlation among all of them. For the scale of the 39 items, the goodness of fit assumptions is met again, and the general reliability is .97.

Tables 2 and 3 show the same results for the answers offered to people other than the partner, taking as a reference the one chosen as "person 1". Again, the assumption of normality is not met, the goodness of fit indexes confirms the fit of the analysis, the reliability indexes are adequate, above 0.72, and there is a positive correlation between all the scales, including here also the Classification of the Couple.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The results of the confirmatory factor analysis for the scales in the measurement of the partner and the people who are not the partner can be observed in Table 4. Adequate fit indices are observed for the seven-factor model and for the model with a second-order latent factor, in which the Classification of the couple scale is not included. This allows us to obtain a total scale score of the seven dimensions with a higher explanatory level. Figures 1 to 2 show the diagram of the CFA for the main scale for the partner and other people, and the classification of the couple scale, respectively. The factor loadings for each scale are shown in Table 5.

Invariance analysis

The factorial invariance analysis, shown in Table 6, indicates that the scale performs similarly in men and women, both for the main scale and for the Classification of the couple scale. This

means that comparisons can be made between men and women with both scales for both partners and other people.

Validity of the instrument

The goodness of fit indexes of the models are adequate for all the scales. Likewise, a positive and significant correlation is observed between all the scales, for the dimensions of the couple and of the other people, among each other and with the Couple Classification scale, as can be seen in Table 3.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the seven dimensions between the partner and up to four people with whom one is intimate shows that the socio-emotional burden is distributed among all of them. Therefore, the partner is not the only and exclusive factor of intimacy and emotional and social well-being, refuting the unidimensional couple, to give way to the multidimensional one (Caillé, 1992, Sluzki, 2010, Speck and Attneave, 1973, Antonucci, et al., 2001).

This new landscape of multiple dimensions of the couple is linked to the current material and cultural conditions of individuals, especially women, which have expanded affections beyond the heterosexual couple (Yela, 2000; Stange et al., 2017; Beck-Gernsheim, 2003; Minuchin and Nichols, 2010, Tamarit, et al., 2021).

The instrument could test the hypothesis that mutual recognition of the personal socio-emotional network beyond the family is a positive resource for emotional support and well-being in some types of couples (Graham, 2000, Kaufman and Taniguchi, 2006, Reina, 2020), which we will call post-traditional. On the other hand, in traditional couples such support networks are smaller and become a source of relational tension. That is, the external network intensifies the control and abuse of the partner (Plazaola-Castaño et al., 2008; Estrada et al., 2012; Alencar and Cantera, 2017; Rodríguez-Fernández and Ortiz-Aguilar, 2018).

The instrument shows that there is a positive relationship between the different dimensions when the information refers to people in their immediate surroundings and the couple itself. The more the couple's external intimate network is nourished, the better nourished it is (relationally). In other words, people who take more care of these areas also score higher in the Couple Typification, being able to build one of a post-traditional type, with the benefits that this entails (Watzlawick, et al., 1985; Minuchin and Nichols, 2010; Endara, 2018).

On the other hand, the multidimensional couple is a support network for the couple itself, or the person, to face multiple daily problems, strengthening resilience, identity well-being and the health of people (Cyrułnik, 2016, Han et al., 2019) This disrupts individuality, to redefine it as a person who is constituted and evolves from the significant network. Particularly for couples, the recognition of the non-familial socio-emotional support network has an impact on the person's awareness and self, empowering them and giving them the freedom to decide with whom to share their life as a couple (Medina et al., 2018). Given these findings, the instrument allows us to recognise a second (Watzlawick et al., 1976) and third (McDowell et al.,

Table 2. Averages, typical deviations, asymmetry indexes and kurtosis, corrected item-test correlation and factor weights of each item in their factor.

Item	Partner						Other people					
	M	SD	g ¹	g ²	r _{it}	λ	M	SD	g ¹	g ²	r _{it}	λ
EMO1. They accept you as you are without trying to change you	4,20	0,99	-1,35	1,50	0,50	0,64	4,43	1,00	-2,16	4,33	0,29	0,45
EMO2. You feel comfortable in their presence	4,60	0,71	-2,19	5,89	0,74	0,85	4,64	0,66	-2,48	8,23	0,55	0,74
EMO3. You feel loved thanks to their kind gestures	4,52	0,84	-1,86	3,08	0,69	0,81	4,28	0,98	-1,33	1,17	0,47	0,69
EMO4. Their presence makes you happy	4,64	0,65	-2,10	5,00	0,77	0,88	4,60	0,68	-1,77	3,08	0,65	0,84
EMO5. I have fun with them	4,48	0,79	-1,57	2,35	0,74	0,86	4,54	0,69	-1,62	2,81	0,60	0,81
COG1. They acknowledge that one can have different preferences to theirs	4,14	1,00	-1,06	0,58	0,36	0,49	4,22	0,97	-1,26	1,18	0,36	0,50
COG2. They celebrate your small achievements	4,52	0,88	-2,05	3,80	0,74	0,86	4,32	0,93	-1,34	1,28	0,70	0,84
COG3. They support you when you fail	4,60	0,82	-2,32	5,19	0,76	0,88	4,36	0,90	-1,34	1,23	0,70	0,84
COG4. They make me feel important	4,44	0,87	-1,67	2,47	0,75	0,86	4,25	0,89	-1,02	0,47	0,67	0,81
COG5. They motivate me to continue despite failures or problems	4,60	0,80	-2,39	5,89	0,74	0,86	4,49	0,80	-1,69	2,62	0,70	0,84
PI1. They make positive comments about your appearance	4,15	1,04	-1,11	0,50	0,80	0,88	3,43	1,28	-0,37	-0,83	0,69	0,81
PI2. I like their hugs	4,77	0,65	-3,39	12,40	0,49	0,62	3,83	1,44	-0,90	-0,60	0,51	0,65
PI3. They try to be attractive to you	4,35	0,96	-1,49	1,56	0,86	0,92	3,09	1,44	-0,13	-1,24	0,80	0,89
PI4. Their constant comments make me feel very happy	4,12	1,06	-1,03	0,25	0,81	0,88	3,09	1,37	-0,15	-1,13	0,76	0,86
PI5. They make me feel good-looking	4,21	1,06	-1,27	0,91	0,83	0,90	2,88	1,47	0,04	-1,35	0,75	0,86
PRO1. You feel safe with them	4,56	0,82	-2,12	4,36	0,77	0,86	4,15	1,05	-1,20	0,81	0,74	0,84
PRO2. They take into account your needs	4,27	0,94	-1,24	0,96	0,78	0,86	3,77	1,10	-0,64	-0,23	0,73	0,83
PRO3. They make sure nothing bad happens to you	4,64	0,74	-2,29	5,24	0,73	0,83	4,11	1,06	-1,04	0,34	0,75	0,85
PRO4. Their comments make me feel calm	4,26	0,92	-1,14	0,72	0,77	0,85	4,13	0,94	-1,05	0,84	0,73	0,83
PRO5. They are available for me in situations of distress	4,43	0,89	-1,72	2,63	0,79	0,87	4,07	1,03	-1,01	0,51	0,71	0,82
RES1. They listen carefully to your opinions without becoming agitated when they are different to theirs	4,01	1,02	-0,89	0,22	0,71	0,83	4,13	0,92	-0,93	0,39	0,65	0,79
RES2. Even though they have different points of view to mine about a situation in particular, we talk, discuss and negotiate in order to reach a satisfactory consensus for both of us	4,18	1,00	-1,20	0,93	0,74	0,85	4,11	0,97	-1,08	0,84	0,68	0,81
RES3. They respect your decisions even if they disagree	4,18	0,96	-1,06	0,54	0,72	0,83	4,21	0,95	-1,19	1,05	0,68	0,81
RES4. They avoid doing things they know bother me	3,74	1,03	-0,69	0,19	0,66	0,79	3,85	1,00	-0,68	0,08	0,61	0,75
RES5. They avoid comparing me in front of and with other people	4,34	1,06	-1,74	2,38	0,54	0,68	4,31	1,02	-1,63	2,21	0,57	0,71
TRU1. They support me financially if I need it	4,65	0,78	-2,52	6,20	0,56	0,70	4,02	1,17	-1,05	0,25	0,46	0,63
TRU2. I am not afraid to show vulnerability when there is a problem	4,36	1,01	-1,60	1,84	0,64	0,77	4,20	1,08	-1,30	0,90	0,62	0,77
TRU3. I am not afraid to tell them secrets, personal and intimate things	4,40	0,97	-1,71	2,36	0,71	0,83	4,24	1,07	-1,39	1,19	0,61	0,78
TRU4. They always believe in me	4,51	0,86	-1,95	3,56	0,73	0,84	4,50	0,77	-1,64	2,51	0,66	0,80
TRU5. They are discreet with things I confide in them	4,63	0,75	-2,40	6,01	0,61	0,75	4,46	0,85	-1,77	3,11	0,56	0,73
POW1. They express admiration for me	4,31	0,94	-1,36	1,34	0,71	0,85	4,06	0,96	-0,82	0,17	0,63	0,81
POW2. They like my personal style (clothes, hairstyle, etc.)	4,32	0,87	-1,22	1,11	0,67	0,82	4,04	0,95	-0,73	0,03	0,60	0,80
POW3. They take my opinions into account	4,28	0,89	-1,20	1,09	0,72	0,85	3,93	0,96	-0,53	-0,32	0,57	0,77
POW4. They respect my personal space and time	4,34	0,95	-1,48	1,71	0,58	0,75	4,61	0,74	-2,19	5,16	0,44	0,65
CLAS1. Your partner accepts displays of affection towards you from your friends	4,02	1,07	-1,06	0,56	0,74	0,79	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS2. Your partner considers the support you receive from your friends to be important	4,19	1,05	-1,24	0,78	0,81	0,86	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS3. Your partner accepts that your friends express how attractive you are	3,81	1,24	-0,82	-0,32	0,74	0,80	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS4. Your partner accepts the time you spend with your friends	4,10	1,13	-1,15	0,43	0,84	0,88	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS5. Your partner values the advice your friends give you	3,90	1,07	-0,75	-0,10	0,74	0,79	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS6. Your partner likes it when your friends admire you	4,03	1,17	-1,08	0,23	0,78	0,83	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS7. Your partner accepts without difficulty that you go out alone to have fun with your friends	3,91	1,25	-0,92	-0,26	0,78	0,83	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS8. Your partner is glad that you have friends beyond your family and your partner	4,08	1,15	-1,10	0,20	0,83	0,87	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS9. Your partner knows the significant people and the type of relationship you have with them	4,38	1,00	-1,65	1,94	0,63	0,69	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLAS10. Your partner considers that your professional project is a strength for your shared project	4,50	0,94	-2,02	3,47	0,55	0,61	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. M= Mean; SD= Standard deviation; EMO= Emotion; COG= Cognitive; PI= Physical interest; PRO= Support and Protection; RES=Respect; TRU= Trust; POW=Power; CLAS= Classification of the couple. g¹ = Skewness; g² = Kurtosis; r_{it} = item-test correlation; λ = Rotated factor loading.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett goodness of fit tests, reliability index, mean, standard deviation and correlation between the dimensions.

	Factor	α	ω	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD
Partner	Total scales 1-7 (a)	0,97	0,97									
	1.Emotional	0,85	0,85	.757**	.725**	.763**	.724**	.713**	.738**	.490**	22,46	3,22
	2. Cognitive	0,84	0,85		.713**	.821**	.781**	.764**	.780**	.559**	22,33	7,48
	3.Physical interest	0,90	0,92			.756**	.675**	.685**	.779**	.434**	21,62	4,13
	4.Protection	0,91	0,91				.798**	.760**	.800**	.508**	2,18	3,75
	5.Respect	0,85	0,85					.751**	.783**	.617**	22,57	3,46
	6.Trust	0,84	0,85						.814**	.599**	20,47	4,06
	7.Power	0,84	0,84							.625**	17,27	3,01
	8.Classification of the couple (b)	0,93	0,94								40,97	8,94
Other people	Total scales 1-7 (c)	0,95	0,95									
	1.Emotional	0,72	0,73	.649**	.411**	.568**	.549**	.557**	.549**	.274**	22,51	2,83
	2. Cognitive	0,82	0,83		.499**	.695**	.643**	.650**	.653**	.301**	21,67	3,47
	3.Physical interest	0,87	0,88			.593**	.480**	.433**	.548**	.151**	16,34	5,73
	4.Protection	0,89	0,89				.707**	.642**	.694**	.238**	20,30	4,34
	5.Respect	0,83	0,83					.687**	.706**	.280**	21,44	3,72
	6.Trust	0,79	0,79						.672**	.279**	20,63	3,82
	7.Power	0,76	0,77							.313**	16,65	2,79

Note. α = Cronbach's Alpha Index; M= Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; *p= <.001. (a) KMO=0.98; (b) KMO=0.94; (c) KMO=0.96.

Table 4. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of the models for the partner and for the people other than the partner

	Partner				Other people			
	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Seven-Factor model	0,998	0,998	0,038	0,037	0,993	0,993	0,048	0,051
Seven-Factor with second-order latent factor	0,998	0,998	0,042	0,039	0,991	0,992	0,052	0,055
Classification of the couple	0,997	0,998	0,063	0,035				

Note. CFI = comparative fit index. TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. SRMR = standardized root mean square

2019, Medina, 2022a, Medina, 2022b) order systemic multidimensional complexity in the couple.

Second order, because the awareness of the intimate network implies a new view of each other and a meta-learning that can contribute to rethinking rules and agreements for change in the relationship. In other words, the impacts of the intimate network translate into self-critical reflections that enable the couple to evolve and, paradoxically, feel conjugal satisfaction. Regarding the third order, an awareness of the importance of the intimate network in conjugal well-being demystifies patriarchal and romantic dogmas, in particular by broadening the critical view of the multidimensionality of emotional exclusivity.

Limitations and strengths

The instrument can become a resource for psychosocial research to correlational more variables depending on the objective being sought. For example, among gender-diverse couples, couples without children or with children, couples with minor children and older children. Between, boyfriends or married couples, whether they live together or not, those who have been together longer than those who are starting, those who come from a divorce or not, or because of their status or social classes, etc. Regarding the classification of couples, work could be done to include other types of couples and expand the range

of indicators and questions in order to have greater empirical certainty in the classification of couples.

Clinical implications

This instrument is a great resource for a couple of psychotherapy, it could be applied before the clinical process, yielding a series of indicators and topics that will raise awareness of deficiencies in some socio-emotional dimensions. On the other hand, typification could be of great help in recognizing the symbolism and relational patterns linked to the reason for consultation. In other words, the symptom or problem that brought the couple to therapy can be connected with an inter-systemic contextualization, which will facilitate working on structural changes of the second and third order: roles, hierarchy, rules, mythologies, and injustices.

Conclusion

With this, it is concluded that the multidimensional couple is the socio-emotional network of choice - including the non-familial partner - that provides solidarity, understanding, affective support, recognition, feeling valued, trust, support, admiration, respect and safety (Caillé, 1992, Sluzki, 2010, Speck and Atneave, 1973, Denborough, 2008, Medina 2022).

Table 5. Factorial loads standardized for second-order model and Classification of the couple scale.

	Factor	Item	λ Partner	λ Other People
First order factors	Emotional	EMO1	0,296	0,299
		EMO2	0,373	0,442
		EMO3	0,384	0,486
		EMO4	0,385	0,505
		EMO5	0,384	0,472
	Cognitive	COG1	0,152	0,248
		COG2	0,237	0,373
		COG3	0,247	0,372
		COG4	0,254	0,385
		COG5	0,251	0,392
	Physical Interest	PI1	0,403	0,613
		PI2	0,389	0,576
		PI3	0,436	0,638
		PI4	0,427	0,632
		PI5	0,424	0,636
	Support and Protection	PRO1	0,242	0,337
		PRO2	0,246	0,331
		PRO3	0,238	0,336
		PRO4	0,250	0,347
		PRO5	0,237	0,331
	Respect	RES1	0,314	0,415
		RES2	0,320	0,434
		RES3	0,302	0,423
		RES4	0,290	0,381
		RES5	0,262	0,376
	Trust	TRU1	0,234	0,239
		TRU2	0,247	0,270
		TRU3	0,266	0,275
TRU4		0,294	0,325	
TRU5		0,252	0,272	
Power	POW1	0,129	0,260	
	POW2	0,115	0,239	
	POW3	0,129	0,248	
	POW4	0,115	0,236	
Second Order Factor	Emotional		0,910	0,810
	Cognitive		0,960	0,890
	Physical Interest		0,890	0,680
	Support and Protection		0,960	0,920
	Respect		0,930	0,850
	Trust		0,950	0,930
	Power		0,990	0,940
Classification of the couple	CLAS1		0,820	-
	CLAS2		0,890	-
	CLAS3		0,834	-
	CLAS4		0,915	-
	CLAS5		0,818	-
	CLAS6		0,851	-
	CLAS7		0,878	-
	CLAS8		0,918	-
	CLAS9		0,743	-
	CLAS10		0,677	-

Notes. All values were significant ($p < 0.05$). λ = Factorial loads standardized

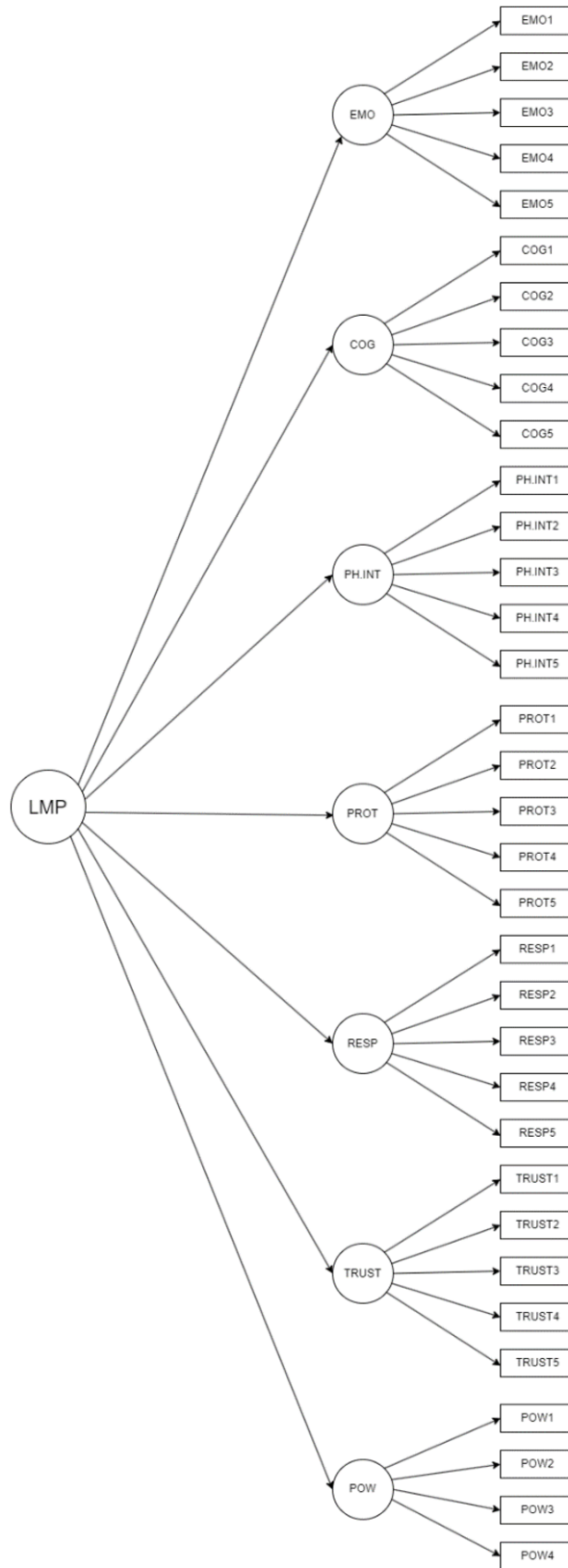


Figure 1. CFA of the Emotional dimension for the partner and for other people.

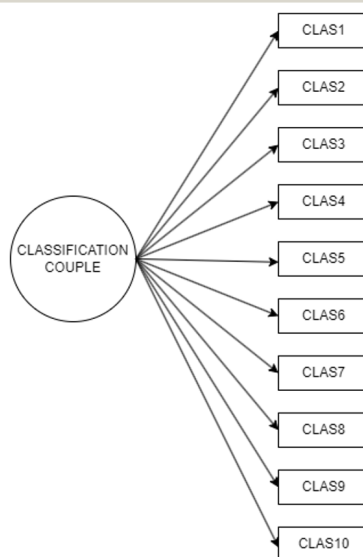


Figure 2. CFA of the Cognitive dimension for the partner and for other people.

Table 6. Metric invariance of multigroup comparisons by sex.

	Partner				Other people			
	TLI (Δ TLI)	CFI (Δ CFI)	RMSEA (Δ RMSEA)	SRMR(Δ SRMR)	TLI (Δ TLI)	CFI (Δ CFI)	RMSEA (Δ RMSEA)	SRMR(Δ SRMR)
Second-order model scale								
Configural	0,999	0,999	0,035	0,042	0,991	0,991	0,052	0,063
Metric	0.998 (0.001)	0.998 (0.001)	0.043 (0.008)	0.047 (0.000)	0.990 (0.001)	0.990 (0.001)	0.054 (0.002)	0.065 (0.002)
Scalar	0.999 (0.001)	0.998 (0.000)	0.035 (0.008)	0.044 (0.003)	0.991 (0.000)	0.991 (0.001)	0.050 (0.004)	0.063 (0.002)
Strict	0.999 (0.000)	0.998 (0.000)	0.035 (0.000)	0.044 (0.001)	0.991 (0.000)	0.991(0.000)	0.050 (0.000)	0.063 (0.000)
Classification of the couple scale								
Configural	0,997	0,998	0,062	0,039	-	-	-	-
Metric	0.997 (0.000)	0.998 (0.000)	0.063 (0.001)	0.043 (0.004)	-	-	-	-
Scalar	0.998 (0.001)	0.998 (0.000)	0.054 (0.009)	0.040 (0.001)	-	-	-	-
Strict	0.998 (0.000)	0.998 (0.000)	0.054 (0.000)	0.040 (0.001)	-	-	-	-

Note. CFI = comparative fit index. TLI = Tucker-Lewis Index. RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation. SRMR = standardized root mean square. Δ = Increase in the index between models.

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The authors are responsible for all statements made in this article.

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