

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST (MAT)

Reference:

Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage and Family Living, 21*, 251–255.

Description of Measure:

A 15-item scale that measures marital satisfaction. It was initially used to differentiate well-adjusted couples from distressed (unsatisfied) couples. The 15 items are answered on a variety of response scales.

Abstracts of Selected Related Articles:

Funk, J. L. & Rogge, R. D. (2007). Testing the ruler with item response theory: Increasing precision of measurement for relationship satisfaction with the Couples Satisfaction Index. *Journal of Family Psychology, 21*, 572-583.

The present study took a critical look at a central construct in couples research: relationship satisfaction. Eight well-validated self-report measures of relationship satisfaction, including the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; H. J. Locke & K. M. Wallace, 1959), the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; G. B. Spanier, 1976), and an additional 75 potential satisfaction items, were given to 5,315 online participants. Using item response theory, the authors demonstrated that the MAT and DAS provided relatively poor levels of precision in assessing satisfaction, particularly given the length of those scales. Principal-components analysis and item response theory applied to the larger item pool were used to develop the Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) scales. Compared with the MAS and the DAS, the CSI scales were shown to have higher precision of measurement (less noise) and correspondingly greater power for detecting differences in levels of satisfaction. The CSI scales demonstrated strong convergent validity with other measures of satisfaction and excellent construct validity with anchor scales from the nomological net surrounding satisfaction, suggesting that they assess the same theoretical construct as do prior scales. Implications for research are discussed.

Kimmel, D. & Van Der Veen, F. (1974). Factors of marital adjustment in Locke's Marital Adjustment Test. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 36*, 57-62.

Principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotations of data for 149 wives and 157 husbands indicated that the instrument is an internally consistent measure of marital adjustment, and that this general aspect consists of two separate components--sexual congeniality and compatibility.

Kearns, J. N. & Leonard, K. E. (2004). Social networks, structural independence, and marital quality over the transition to marriage: A prospective analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology, 18*, 383-395.

This study examined the relationship between couples' network interdependence and marital quality in a sample of 347 couples that were recruited at the time of their first marriage. Husbands and wives completed separate, self-administered questionnaires at home. Analyses are based on data collected at the time of marriage, at the first anniversary, and at the second anniversary. Results indicated that after marriage, husbands' and wives' friend and family networks became increasingly interdependent. Moreover, the interdependence of the friend and family networks at marriage predicted wives' marital quality at the first anniversary, whereas wives' marital quality at the first anniversary predicted the interdependence of the friend network at the second anniversary. No significant longitudinal relations were observed for husbands.

Scale (also available at <http://www.familynow1.com/reviews/lockewallace.htm>):
(note: points for scoring are here included in the scale)

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

0	2	7	15	20	25	35
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Very Unhappy			Happy			Perfectly Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items.

	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
2. Handling Family Finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Matters of Recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstration of Affection	8	6	4	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0

Scoring:

The scoring rubric (points for each response) is included in the above scale, but should not be included when giving the scale to respondents. The scores for all 15 items should be added up together. Higher scores indicate greater satisfaction.