

Development and Validation of the Autonomy-Connection Conciliation Questionnaire (CACQ)

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1. Introduction

- Finding a **balance** between the psychological needs of autonomy and connection is an important challenge when one is **involved in a romantic relationship** (La Guardia et al., 2000).
- **Autonomy** is a psychological need to **feel free** to take decisions and **to be coherent** with one's values, interests, and personality (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
- **Connection** is a psychological need to be **in relation** with someone.
- To date, the only measure assessing psychological needs, the Need Fulfillment (La Guardia et al., 2000), only assesses the degree to which participants feel *supported* by close ones (including the partner) regarding their psychological needs.

The current study aimed to:

- 1) Develop a new scale measuring one's need for autonomy and connection, and the conciliation of these needs;
- 2) Examine the scale's psychometric properties.

3. Results

Exploratory factorial analyses revealed a five-factor structure (connection, autonomy, conciliation, prioritize autonomy, prioritize connection).

- Sampling quality: KMO = .871
- Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(210) = 4141.456, p < .0001$

The final version of the ACCQ comprises 35 items, divided into 5 subscales (see Table 1).

- The ACCQ presents adequate internal consistency (see Table 1) and good convergent and divergent validity (see Table 2).

Table 1

Five dimensions of the ACCQ

Dimension	Internal Consistency (α)	Items
Autonomy	.80	A. Even though my partner gives me his(her) opinion, I feel free to make my decisions based on what's important to me. B. I feel uncomfortable when I must tell my preferences to my partner. ® C. I feel good when I assert myself to my partner. D. I act according to who I really am when I'm with my partner. E. I feel like I respect myself when I make a decision in my relationship. F. It's important to me to pursue my personal activities even though I'm in a relationship. G. I keep time for myself, without my partner. H. Sometimes I engage in recreational activities (hobbies, sport, going out) without my partner. I. It's important for me to have a social life outside of my partner's social life. J. Sometimes I do different recreational activities (hobbies, sport, going out) than my partner's recreational activities. A. I love doing activities with my partner.
Conciliation	.78	A. It is not acceptable for me to compromise about what I personally want to prioritize my relationship. B. I prioritize my self-interest over the interest of my relationship. C. It is more important for me to choose according to who I am over acting to keep my relationship. D. I think that it is more important to prioritize my relationship over my self-interest. ® E. More often, my decisions are based on my couple relationship. ®
Connection	.87	B. I do activities with my partner. C. I keep some time to take care of my relationship. D. I like hanging out with my partner when I have some time off. E. It's important to me to feel that I am connected to my partner. F. I try to be with my partner every time that I can. G. I feel comfortable in my routine with my partner. H. When I'm not with my partner, I think of him(her). I. My feelings for my partner remain the same even when we are apart.
Prioritize Autonomy	.60	A. I seek balance between what is important for my relationship with my partner and what is important for myself. B. I want to respect my own desires and at the same time, taking care of my relationship. C. I think that being truly myself with my partner can contribute to maintaining the bonding that we have together. D. When I'm truly myself with my partner, I feel a better connection with him(her).
Prioritize Connection	.74	E. To feel good in a relationship, it is important to take decisions according to what's important for ourselves and for the relationship. A. I tend to drop out my dreams and my personal projects to maintain the bond between me and my partner. B. It's difficult for me to put my couple relationship aside in order to focus on my personal desires. C. Sometimes, I neglect my friends or family to prioritize my relationship. D. I hesitate before engaging in activities without my partner because it might limit my couple time. E. It's difficult for me to maintain my relationship with my friends and family while being in a couple relationship.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scale development

- Based on a literature review on Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), we developed a new model "Motivations-Response-Consequences" based on the psychological needs and their conciliation to reach a well-being state, which served as the basic structure to create a large pool of items for the new **Autonomy-Connection Conciliation Questionnaire (ACCQ)**.
- A total of 108 items were evaluated by an expert panel: 62 items were modified, 25 items were removed and 7 items were added, resulting in a preliminary scale of 90 items.

2.2 Participants and Procedure

- A sample of **477 French-Canadian adults** was recruited using social medias.
- Participants completed online questionnaires on a secured web platform (Qualtrics Research Suite).

	n	%	M	S	
Sex	Men	85	17.9	28.5	10.2
	Women	392	82.1	26.5	7.0
Relationship type	Married	45	9.4	4.3	4.7
	Living together	257	53.8		
	Dating	176	36.8		

Couple satisfaction	Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976)
Personal well-being	Three indicators (Braut-Labbé & Dubé, 2008; Jodoin, 2000; Dubé, Jodoin, & Kairouz, 1997)
Demand-withdraw communication pattern	Communication Pattern Questionnaire-Short Form (CPQ-SF; Christensen & Heavy, 1990)
Proximity and distance	Three items (Dewitte & De Houwer, 2008)
Inclusion of the partner in the Self	Inclusion of the Other in the Self (IOS; Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992)
Social desirability	Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR; Paulhus, 1988)

2.3 Analytic strategy

- The 90 items of the ACCQ were submitted to an Exploratory Factor Analysis with orthogonal rotation (varimax) to maximize independence in the factors.
- The number of factors was determined using eigenvalues > 1
- Items were attributed to a factor when saturating over .30 and removed in case of cross-loading.

4. Discussion

- The EFA resulted in a 5-factor model: Connection, Autonomy, Conciliation, Prioritize autonomy, and Prioritize connection, supporting construct validity.

Factors definitions

Autonomy: Psychological need to feel free to take decisions and to be coherent with one's values, interests, and personality.
 Connection: Psychological need to be in relation with someone.
 Conciliation: Ability to balance the need to be coherent with the self and the need to be in relation with someone to reach well-being.
 Prioritize autonomy: perception of overinvesting the autonomy needs in a romantic relationship.
 Prioritize connection: perception of overinvesting the connection needs in a romantic relationship.

Table 2
Correlations with convergent and divergent validity measures

Factors	Autonomy	Connection	Conciliation	Prioritize autonomy	Prioritize connection
Couple satisfaction	.369**	.654**	.444**	-.109*	-.308**
Well-being	.428**	.358**	.389**		-.401**
Demand-withdraw communication pattern	-.249**	-.295**	-.202**		.239**
Prefer proximity	.161**	.487**	.296**	-.185**	
Prefer distance	-.144**	-.492**	-.197**	.236**	.130**
Inclusion of the partner in the self	-.094*	.374**	-.379**	-.272**	-.308**
Social desirability	-.069	-.055	-.086	-.104*	.019

Limitations

Additional research is needed to further validate the scale (e.g., CFA, gender invariance, stability). The sample for this study was primarily female.

Implications

These results support the use of the ACCQ for research purposes

Future research

Our ongoing project aims to further the validation of the ACCQ (French and English versions). We are now recruiting both partners of mix-sex couples that have been together for at least 5 years.

- This poster presents the English version of the ACCQ. This validation study used the **French version of the ACCQ**.