

Research Paper

Interpersonal Commitment Scale

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ABSTRACT

The Interpersonal Commitment Scale was constructed to measure the degree of committed behaviors of an individual with their interpersonal relationships; Friendship, Family, and Relationship. The Scale observes three dimensions for the same. The scale is intended for use among the age group of 18-25 years of age. The items were constructed keeping in mind the nature of the young and emerging adults, and statistical procedures were undertaken to establish the Reliability of the scale. The Scale was administered to the above age group (N = 200). The validity of the scale was established through subject expert objective ratings, and the items were adjusted accordingly. The reliability of the scale was established through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The Reliability scores for each of the dimensions – friendship, family, and romantic relationships – were calculated separately and they are .708, .924, and .904 respectively. The inter-item correlation for all items falls in the range of .4 to .7. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the entire scale stands as .823. The scale aims to understand and measure the commitment, as psychology construct, of an individual and his/her relationship with their friends or family, or significant other. The Scale aims to help clinicians and counselors better formulate and personalize the required care and assistance for the individual.

Keywords: *Interpersonal commitment, Friendship, Family, Relationship, Special Someone, Commitment behavior, Maintenance behavior.*

In everyday life, commitment as a term is used in many different contexts and ways that imply how much attention and effort is one willing to give for a particular job, a project, a relationship, personal life, etc. Hence, Commitment is the basic construct in psychology, which aims to understand the intention of continuing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Commitment can be defined as “Intending to continue in a line of action. Thus, relationship commitment may be viewed as intending to continue in a relationship with a given person”.

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Throughout the evolution of humankind, human wants have taken new looks, at a new time, on a new day. But something that has persisted, throughout the tale of time, is human wants; want for social interactions through the structure of relationships. Interpersonal relationships stand at the core of social interactions owing to their characteristic of 'shared' that is significant. Establishing that relationships are universal and the very essence of being human, it is evident that relationships are demanding from individuals in any relationship – Communication, respect, trust, significance, and everything they entail. However, the basis and management of any relationship rely on commitment. Commitment is centric to interpersonal relationships of all kinds, as they are inextricable. Colloquially understood that commitment is the way to make and maintain a relationship. This paper aims to scientifically observe the dynamics of commitment in interpersonal relationships and its relevant significance.

Relationships dependent on commitment and its allied behavior patterns have unitarily sustained the socialness of the human race; holding high the virtue of commitment since ancient times through folklore, literature, story-telling, oral history, and religious texts - adopting the role of a precursor to behavior patterns and expectations that persisted and continues to persist till the end of time. Recent times witnessed a dramatic change in the dynamics of human interactions thereby impacting the nature and significance attributed to interpersonal relationships. The internet reforms; accessibility and availability of an alternative social world through social media platforms, broadened the social interaction space. Yet, what remains consistent is the need for commitment in relationships.

Despite the generation gaps, cultural differences (collectivistic-individualistic cultures), ideology shifts, globalization of phenomena, global connectivity, rising individualism, equity- equality, inclusivity-exclusivity, evolving expectations, emphasizing mental health significance, demanding independence, shifting opinionated views on monogamy, and on social institutions; marriage, family, child-bearing, and such that mark the 'recent times' holds commitment as the need of the recent times.

Colloquially, the meaning of commitment is understood by all; although the meaning is prone to differ from each individual. Everyone expects commitment and tends to show behavior distinct from commitment, however, it is somewhat difficult to detail the scope, aspects, and nuances of commitment. A simple search on a digital search engine would quote commitment as "the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause, activity, etc." Commitment as detailed by American Psychological Association (APA) is the "obligation or devotion to a person, relationship, task, cause, or other entity or action. Commitments make individuals' behavior predictable in the face of fluctuations in their desires and interests, thereby facilitating the planning and coordination of joint actions involving multiple agents (Michael and Pacherie, 2014). Commitment is a part of interpersonal behavior in action. Synonymized as dedication, loyalty, faithfulness, adherence, attentiveness, vow/promise, resolution, assurance, undertaking, responsibility, obligation, liability, and such across timelines, cultures, social settings, and interpersonal relationships. Commitment can take the form of a value, belief, attitude, behavior, experience, skill, motivation, goal-directed behavior, and action. Commitment hence attributed significance to establishing, and maintaining a relationship, has been the subject matter for inquisitive inquiry, and research through the millenniums among writers, researchers, scholars, and the torchbearers of wisdom in communities worldwide. Among informal inquiry of non-academic related, commitment is often 'questioned' or 'checked twice' during a crisis or conflict, as a factor to maintain or discard significance to the persons in the interpersonal relationship.

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Interpersonal as an adjective implies 'relating to relationships or communication between people'(Oxford Languages). The American Psychological Association defines Interpersonal relationships as "the connections and interactions, especially ones that are socially and emotionally significant, between two or more people", and also "the pattern or patterns observable in an individual's dealings with other people".

Interpersonal relationships constitute a significant aspect of human life. It is the socialness attributed to human existence, evolution, and development. 'Interpersonal relationships' is the crux of the aphorism stated by Aristotle - 'Man is a social animal'. The scope of interpersonal relationships entails domains of friendship, family, romantic relationship, and professional space. Commitment is extensively studied and scientifically observed specific to one's commitment in professional spaces. Commitment to organizations has been the focus of research in the decades of recent past. This is also indicative of the priorities of the society at the time, reflecting the times after the industrial revolution, world wars, and its consequential sequences of globalization, industrialization, growth, and demand for the private sector, increased competence, and competition for employment. Since the boom of the employment sector and varied opportunities, and numerous alternatives, employers were screening candidates who would potentially show attachment and utmost commitment to their organization. Psychology and its research upholders intervened to scientifically observe and assess the dimensions and aspects of commitment, develop theories, and psychometric-based scales as a screening method, establish statistical procedures, set standardized scores, and bring correlations with Intelligence Quotient (IQ), Emotional Intelligence/ Quotient (EQ) to workspace, maintain work-life balance, and in the whole creating a dedicated branch of psychology to the cause – Organizational or Industrial Psychology. This unequal determination toward one type of interpersonal relationship focused on a workspace is justified since it is characterized by higher liabilities and higher stakes in both monetary terms and survival terms. A prominent theory was developed in 1984 and 1990 by Allen and Meyer- Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment (TCM) published in the year 1991 under "Human Resource Management Review." TCM includes the affective commitment scale (ACS), continuance commitment scale (CCS), and normative commitment scale (NCS).

Another scale was the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday et al. (1979). Cook and Wall's (1980) nine-item version scale, and Porter et al. (1974) also developed a 15-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. However, Allen and Meyers TCM remain the most prominent and most accepted tool. These were some of the prominent theories, models, and scales developed to understand, assess, and measure commitment to organizations.

We look at literature, typologies, and theories to understand commitment in interpersonal relationships.

Jennifer Wiesel Quist (2007). This research aimed to determine whether interpersonal trust serves as a gauge of partners' commitment within young adults' friendships. The study hypothesized that 'Individuals trust their friends to the degree that their friends are committed to their relationship, and that individual's perceptions of their friend's commitment mediate this association. The population used for this study was 60 same-sex friendship breaths of air. The method used was a multilevel modeling approach to perform the analysis of the variables. The results revealed that the hypotheses were valid and that

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friends demonstrate a moderate degree of mutual commitment in their relationships (Wieselquist, 2007).

Hassan Mahmood Aziz, baban jabbar Othman, Bayar Gardi, Shala Ali Ahmed, Bawan Yassin Sabir, Burhan Ismael, Hamza, Sorguli, Ali, Anwar. (2021). This study aimed to examine the relationship between employee commitment and job satisfaction. The population taken was from certain private universities in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. the method used to gather the data was quantitative. And the results revealed that job satisfaction had a positive relationship with employee commitment, if employees were satisfied, they were committed to their jobs (Aziz et al., 2021).

Ellen Schecter, Konjit V, Allison J Tracy, Gloria Luong BA (2008). The goal of this study was to find out how the legalization of same-sex marriage impacted same-sex partners' commitment to one another, their presentation to others as a couple, and treatment as a couple by others. the method used to gather the data was quantitative, a few same-sex couples were asked a few questions. And the results revealed that one-quarter of the couples studied chose not to show their commitment to any kind of ceremony, and three fourth of the couples in the study chose to go through legal and non-legal ceremonies to show their commitment to one another (Schecter et al., 2008).

Kristin Bernard, Mary Dozier (2011). This study aimed to show the association between foster parents' commitment to their young foster children and the delight they expressed in their interactions with the children. The population taken for this study were foster children (between 9 to 28 months) and 70 parent-child dyads. The techniques used to gather the required data were videotaping and watching the dyads interact, which helped in measuring the delight the parents expressed with their foster babies. And, Interviewing the foster parents with the "This is my Baby" interview (B.Bates and M.Dozier, 1998) helped in measuring the commitment and the extent to which they thought that the child was theirs. The results revealed that the foster parents who were highly committed to their foster children showed greater delight than the foster parents who showed less commitment towards their foster children, the results also suggested that the foster parent commitment could be transmitted from foster parents to foster children (Bernard & Dozier, 2011).

Gonzaga, Gian C, Keltner, Dacher, Londahl, Esme A. Smith, Michael D (2001). The goal of this study was to find out whether love would motivate an approach, which would act as a signal, and correlate with a commitment-increasing process when relationships are threatened. The population selected for this study were Romantic partners and adolescent opposite-sex friends. interactions that elicited love and threatened their bond were given to them. The study concluded that the experience of love correlated with approach and the experience and display of love correlated to commitment increasing processes when the relationship was threatened (Gonzaga et al., 2001).

Terri A. Scandura & Melenie J. Lankau (1998). A study was conducted by Terri A. Scandura & Melanie J. Lankau on the topic "Relationships of gender, family responsibility and flexible work hours to organizational commitment and job satisfaction". According to Rousseau's (1995) psychological contract theory, women and others with family obligations may be able to negotiate new psychological contracts that incorporate family-responsive perks like flexible work hours. The finding of the study with 160 samples showed that those who thought their workplaces offered flexible work hours reported greater levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than women who did not. For individuals

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with family commitments, flexible work hours were also linked to increased organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

Philipp Sieger, Fabian Bernhard & Urs Frey (2011). A study was conducted by Philipp Sieger, Fabian Bernhard & Urs Frey on the topic “Affective commitment and job satisfaction among non-family employees: Investigating the roles of justice perceptions and psychological ownership”. Due to a variety of traits commonly linked to family businesses, they provide a unique setting for non-family employees' opinions of justice. These are connected to pro-organizational attitudes and actions among non-family personnel, which are critical for the success of family businesses. Psychological ownership influences the links between distributive justice, emotional commitment, and job happiness, according to the study of 310 non-family employees from Germany and German-speaking Switzerland. This makes a significant addition to the fields of family business research, organizational justice, and psychological ownership, as well as practice (Sieger et al., 2011).

Christine E. Rittenour, Scott A. Myers & Maria Brann (2007). A study was conducted by Christine E. Rittenour, Scott A. Myers & Maria Brann on the topic “Commitment and Emotional Closeness in the Sibling Relationship”. This study looked at whether sibling commitment (a) varies over time and (b) is linked to siblings' use of loving communication and communication-based emotional support. Sibling commitment (a) is steady over time and is linked to communication-based emotional support, the supportive communication dimension of loving communication, and sibling birth order, according to the findings (Rittenour et al., 2007).

Scott A. Myers & Leah E. Bryant (2008). A study was conducted by Scott A. Myers & Leah E. Bryant on the topic “The Use of Behavioral Indicators of Sibling Commitment Among Emerging Adults”. The goal of this study was to look at the function of commitment in developing adult sibling relationships. The findings show that (a) siblings express their commitment through 11 behaviors: tangible support, emotional support, informational support, esteem support, network support, everyday talk, shared activities, verbal expressions, nonverbal expressions, protection, and intimate play; (b) protection was the most frequently used behavioral indicator of commitment; and (c) behavioral indicators of sibling commitment are generally related to relational antagonism (Myers & Bryant, 2008).

Irene H. A. De Goede, Susan Branje, Jet van Duin, Inge E. VanderValk & Wim Meeus (2012). A study was conducted by Irene H. A. De Goede, Susan Branje, Jet van Duin, Inge E. VanderValk & Wim Meeus on the topic “Romantic Relationship Commitment and its linkages with a commitment to Parents and Friends during Adolescence”. This five-wave longitudinal study looks at the association between teenage romantic relationship commitment and the development of adolescent commitment to parents and friends. A total of 218 early-to-middle adolescents (30.9%) and 185 middle-to-late adolescents (30.8%) took part in the study. early-to-middle adolescence and middle-to-late adolescence both had large effects. In addition, dedication to parents and friends was found to be similarly important predictors of romantic relationship commitment. There are no gender differences in these relationships. Overall, this study demonstrates the relevance of parents and friends in serious romantic relationships for both boys and girls. The findings support the concept of a single, stable, and generic working model that can be used in a variety of partnerships (de Goede et al., 2011).

Chris Brown & Changming Duan (2007). A study was conducted by Chris Brown & Changming Duan on the topic “Counselling psychologists in academia: Life satisfaction and

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work and family role commitment". The study looked at the life satisfaction of men and women in counseling psychology who were members of the American Psychological Association's Division 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology) (American Psychological Association). The researchers discovered that spouse/partner self-efficacy and problem-solving coping were important predictors of men's and women's life happiness, accounting for 31% of the variation (Brown & Duan, 2007).

Kuile, Finkenauer, Lippe and Kluwer (2021). A study was conducted by Kuile, Finkenauer, Lippe, and Kluwer on the topic of Changes in Relationship Commitment Across the Transition to Parenthood: Pre-pregnancy Happiness as a Protective Resource. The study predicted that parents who are happy before pregnancy fare better in terms of relationship commitment after childbirth than unhappy parents. It was found that the relationship commitment of fathers with higher pre-pregnancy happiness and fathers with a partner with higher pre-pregnancy happiness increased slightly in the years after childbirth, whereas the relationship commitment of fathers with lower pre-pregnancy happiness and fathers with a partner with lower pre-pregnancy happiness decreased. In addition, the relationship commitment of mothers with a happier partner before pregnancy decreased only slightly across the transition to parenthood but showed a steeper decline for mothers with a partner with average or lower pre-pregnancy happiness. In line with the idea that happiness acts as a resource when partners have to deal with relationship challenges, individual happiness predicted changes in relationship commitment for parents, but not for partners who remained childless ter Kuile et al. (2021) (ter Kuile et al., 2021).

Yamaguchi, Smith, and Ohtsubo (2015). A study was conducted by Yamaguchi, Smith, and Ohtsubo on the topic of Commitment signals in friendship and romantic relationships. The study investigated how people in mutually committed relationships face a commitment problem (i.e., uncertainty about partner fidelity). This problem exists in both friendship and romantic relationships. The results revealed that the same types of pro-relationship acts (e.g., throwing a surprise party) were used to communicate the commitment to one's partner in both types of relationships. The results also showed that costly commitment signals were more effective than non-costly commitment signals. In addition, the absence of situationally appropriate commitment signals (e.g., forgetting a special occasion) was substantially more damaging to romantic relationships than to friendship(Yamaguchi et al., 2015).

Johnson, Becker, Craig, and Gilchrist (2009). A study was conducted by Johnson, Becker, Craig, and Gilchrist on the topic of Changes in Friendship Commitment: Comparing Geographically Close and Long-Distance Young-Adult Friendships. In this study, an analysis of turning points comparing commitment changes in young-adult geographically close and long-distance same-sex friendships revealed high and fluctuating levels of commitment over the history of the friendships for both types. Over 80% of those having long-distance friends reported their levels of commitment were currently increasing, rather than decreasing. Women were more likely than men to report nonlinear trajectories for their friendships, more downturns in commitment to their friendships, and more turning points related to changes in commitment to their friendships (Johnson et al., 2009).

Ruth Harding Weaver (2010). A study was conducted by Weaver on the topic of Predictors of Quality and Commitment in Family Child Care: Provider Education, Personal Resources, and Support. This study examined the personal characteristics and resources in family childcare providers' lives that influence developmentally enhancing caregiving and professional commitment to childcare. It was found that the factors in providers' lives that

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uniquely contributed to higher levels of quality care were higher levels of formal education and training, college coursework in ECE, higher levels of psychological well-being, and higher family incomes. Common factors in providers' lives that predicted higher levels of professional commitment to childcare were helpful and supportive resources for childcare and higher levels of psychological well-being (Harding Weaver, 2002b).

Michele Acker, Mark H Davis (1992). A study was conducted by Acker and Davis on the topic of Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment in Adult Romantic Relationships: A Test of the Triangular Theory of Love. In this study, predictions derived from Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love were tested. Participants were assessed on several constructs, including each of the three components of the theory: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Results indicated mixed support for the Triangular Theory. As expected, self-reported levels of commitment were higher for the respondents in more serious (i.e., married vs unmarried) relationships. The predicted decline over time in passion emerged only for females, and intimacy levels did not generally display the predicted decline for longer relationships. Commitment was the most powerful and consistent predictor of relationship satisfaction, especially for the longest relationships (Acker & Davis, 1992).

Theoretical Background

The growing global awareness of mental health has taken our attention to the fact that our mental health is, directly and indirectly, dependent on the quality of our interpersonal relationships, even exclusive of professional space - friends, family, and relationship domains characterized through our everyday or frequent interactions and the significance we attach to these interpersonal relationships.

Since personal life influences the organizational effectiveness of an individual, the next scientific focus was the commitment to relationships and marriage, again, entailing extensive research, and the development of typologies, theories, models, and scales.

Being the most basic construct, in terms of understanding human relationships with others, with their organizations and so much more, there are a couple of theories that have been proposed by various theorists, and each of them defines "Commitment" in their sense. The major theories constructed to conceptualize commitment to a relationship have been put forth by social and behavioral scientists over the past few decades. The common intention in the research was to understand the role of commitment in the continuity of relationships.

The concept of commitment in the theories differs from its conceptualization.

A. George Levinger's Cohesiveness Theory

Rooted in Kurt Lewin's Field theory, this model focuses on the process of keeping relationships together (Attraction forces) and breaking them apart (Barrier forces). The role of these two social forces is dynamic and reflected in commitment.

1. *Attraction forces* are those forces that keep the relationship together. It is further specified to two forces
 - a. Present attraction: commitment-promoting attractions when they are present in a current relationship.
 - b. Alternative attractions: refer to forces that pull a person away from a current relationship.
2. *Barrier forces* are those forces that keep partners from leaving their relationship.

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They are further classified to

- a. *Internal forces*: are feelings of obligation toward a partner, hence leaving would produce negative effects as it breaches the obligation. For instance, children in marriage keep the partners from separation.
- b. *External forces*: are forces that operate outside of the person, prohibition from dissolution such as stringent marriage laws and societal pressure to keep a marriage from falling apart.

B. Caryl Rusbult's Investment Model

Rooted in interdependence theory proposed by John Thibaut and Harold Kelley in the late 1950s. According to Rusbult, commitment is the subjective experience of dependence and is a function of three independent variables that influence commitment

1. *Satisfaction level*: relative positivity of outcomes obtained in interactions with a partner. Outcomes are compared with past relationships to current relationships. Past experiences serve to create expectations that are used to evaluate satisfaction levels from the current relationship.
2. *Quality of Alternatives*: refers to the satisfaction envisioned as attainable beyond the current relationship. Alternatives could be romantic or non-romantic (spend time with friends). The attractive and compelling nature of the alternatives determines commitment to the current partner.
3. *Investment Size*: refers to those resources (both tangible and intangible) that one has put into a relationship that one would lose or have diminished in value if one were to leave the relationship. A person remains committed to a relationship to not incur the costs associated with a breakup.

The three factors collectively determine the level of commitment and committed behavior. Simply put, commitment is several relationship maintenance behaviors.

C. Michael Johnson's Tripartite Typology of Commitment

Adopts a multi-dimensional conceptualization of commitment, consisting of three different types of commitment. In his own words:

- a. *Structural Commitment*: feelings that one must remain in a relationship. It has four components
 - Potential alternatives to the current relationship
 - Perceived social pressure to remain with a current partner
 - Irrecoverable investments accrued throughout a relationship
 - Perceived difficulty in terminating the relationship.
- b. *Moral Commitment*: feeling that one ought to remain in a relationship. It contains three components.
 - The moral obligation to not divorce one's partner
 - i. Personal obligation to one's partner
 - ii. Need to maintain consistency in general views and beliefs.
- c. *Personal Commitment*: is characteristic of three components.
 - i. Overall attraction to a partner
 - ii. Attraction to the relationship itself
 - iii. An individual's relational identity or the extent to which one's relationship is part of one's self-concept.

The theories discussed here are understood in the light of monogamous relationships.

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Much research and scientific observation are needed to understand the dynamics of commitment in polygamous relationships, casual relationships, dating relationships, situations (to not label a relationship), polyamory, open relationships, and homosexual relationships that are resultant of the changing times and evolving modernity of the times. Commitment containing motivational, affect, and cognition factors have been a significant matter of research. The quality of interpersonal relationships can determine the disturbances, and shortcomings in one's life, as well as, indicate one's level of success with philosophical evaluation. Commitment behavior is manifested through one's expectations, perceived commitment from members of the interpersonal relationship that determines one's willingness to commit, and show committed behavior. Committed behavior is simply understood in terms of the language used in inclusive ways – using 'we' and 'us' over I, Me, and You. Commitment is componential of relationship maintenance behaviors, such as adjustment, forgiveness, sacrifice, accommodation, and sustenance, thus indicating the stability of a relationship.

Family and Friendships are other interpersonal relationships that take up a significant part of one's developmental years and throughout the life span, and have critical levels of influence on one's identity and self-concept. The APA defines Friendships as "a voluntary relationship between two or more people that is relatively long-lasting and in which those involved tend to be concerned with meeting the others' needs and interests as well as satisfying their desires. Friendships frequently develop through shared experiences in which the people involved learn that their association with one another is mutually gratifying."

There is a dearth of research on a commitment to friendships that focuses on the evaluation of one's commitment levels and expressed commitment behavior that is independent of evaluating one's friend rather than themselves in the friendship bond. Simply put, it is to see what one has done to maintain a friendship rather than what has a friend done to an individual that maintains the friendship i.e. to assess one's commitment in a friendship rather than a friend's commitment in a friendship, especially in the young adulthood. This is understood as opposed to the Friendship Qualities Scale (FQS) developed by Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin. With the changing times, and changing dynamics of interpersonal relationships; especially that of friendship impacting the nature of friendships in the physical social world and on the internet, commitment expected in a friendship remains irrespective of the platform. With the ratio of casual friendships to close and personal friendships increasing by the day, the significance and impact friendships hold in maintaining our mental health and happiness, are dependent on our 'maintenance' behavior expressed through commitment behavior, maintaining the other aspects of one's life- academic performance, maintain healthy social connections with family, exploring oneself, and establishing competence to excel in professional space.

Family, as defined by the American Psychological Association, is "a kinship unit consisting of a group of individuals united by blood or by marital, adoptive, or other intimate ties." The conceptualization of family has seen dramatic shifts that are evident as a result of the conceptualization of relationships. Independent of the structure of a family is the collective roles that are expected of parents/ guardians – children dynamics, and sibling dynamics. Research in the area of one's commitment to one's family is often understood in the context of the parent's commitment to their children. Extensive is the amount of research in this context. As it is the parent's role to provide for their children, a quality socialization process that will shape the individual self-concept, expectations, perception of commitment, instill value and belief systems and maintain behavior patterns that serve as a precursor to the

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future relationship with a significant other. Much less if research on the commitment of adult children to their parents and siblings. The onset of adulthood will call for the independence of the 'child' and there begins the "child's" contribution to maintaining healthy relationships with parents (and siblings, in the presence of one). The family unit is understood subjectively, but the expectations and commitment behavior are universal to family units of all typologies.

The times of the recent past have been through a global connection, but also a sense of disconnect with one's surroundings. The social space primarily affected, is that of a family, directly impacting the parent-child dynamics. Therefore, the contribution of an adult child to maintaining family relationships should be critically observed as it impacts both the parent and the adult 'child'. Any disturbance in the quality of the relationship is given the analogy of a 'dual-edged knife'.

The evolving trends and shifts in the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, whose degree of significance is culture-dependent (higher significance in collectivistic cultures over individualistic cultures) are intervening factors to completely understand commitment in a unitary definition. With pop-culture-driven trends of practicing non-attachment (deranged attributed meaning to not associate much importance to others), questioning the very existence and principles of social institutions (family, marriage, monogamy, childbearing), preference for online friendships, and relationships over interpersonal relationships in the physical world, are some of the challenges that we face to give a global definition, criteria, and analysis of commitment. Research in the domains of commitment would take into account the changing dynamics of interpersonal relationships.

Despite the changing trends, what remains consistent is our need for interpersonal relationships, the significance we attribute to them, and the commitment that one expects and is expected to maintain any interpersonal relationship. The significance is glorified in the fact that the mental health of an individual is largely occupied by the presence-absence and the quality of the interpersonal relationship. Much of the mental disturbances, and disorders are centric on the concept and dynamics of the interpersonal relationship of family and friendship. The treatment and management of the same are centric on interpersonal relationships. Gamophobia is the fear of commitment that is clinically diagnosable. This implies that interpersonal relationships and commitment are universal, and a significant aspect of the essence of one's being. Howard and Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence published in 1983 in his book "Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligence" included interpersonal intelligence among eight forms of intelligence. Interpersonal Intelligence is the ability of a person to understand and interact with other people effectively. This is suggestive of the significance of interpersonal relationships that begin and continue with commitment.

While different theoretical frameworks propose what and how commitment is and works, there aren't clinical scales that measure the construct. While the construct itself is very broad, the subdomains of commitment towards job and organization have a clinical scale measuring the same, there is no scale measuring the interpersonal commitment between individuals such as friends, family, or a special someone.

Interpersonal Commitment Scale (I.C.S)

Understanding the vital role of interpersonal relationships, and their impact - causing a significant part of mental distress globally has been the focus of the development of this

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scale. The I.C.S is a Likert scale that may include positive and negative scoring items. The Interpersonal Scale aims to measure the commitment of an individual towards his/her friends, family, and significant other in the Indian Population among the age group of 18-24-year-old young adults population. It is a questionnaire with 71 questions measuring the commitment levels of the individual to their Friends (20 items), Family (28 items), and Relationship (23 items), which are the sub-domains of interpersonal commitment. Commitment to friendship includes an individual's behavior, contribution, and efforts to maintain and continue the friendship. Commitment to Family is the efforts of the young adult to continue/maintain an interactive and healthy bond with their parents and siblings. Commitment to a relationship is one's efforts to continue and maintain committed behaviors in one's relationship that are characteristic of monogamy and shared long-term goals. The dimensions of the I.C.S categorized under Friendship, Family and Relationship (with a special someone) are observed under three different subscales for each – Friendship Scale, Family Scale, and Relationship Scale. The decision was thus made on empirical evidence that does not mention if commitment remains the same for the three dimensions. Commitment to interpersonal relationships is not similar. A high score on the Friendship Scale does not imply a high commitment to the family aspect of an individual. Hence the I.C.S does not have a cumulative score on a commitment to interpersonal relationships as it would possess a paradoxical stance, and would defeat the purpose of the scale.

The clinical implications of the scale can be hypothesized as

- A. Aiding in identifying the commitment of the individual; thereby providing clarity, and positioning the individual on a parameter.
- B. In understanding the dynamics of the relationship in terms of efforts one is putting in to maintain a relationship.
- C. By measuring Interpersonal Commitment, the counselor can lay a path and navigate through the social relationships of individuals.
- D. This Scale is intended to bring subsequent clarity, and perceived contribution and effort to resolve issues in interpersonal relationships by primarily understanding one's commitment to the relationship.

METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The objectives of the ICS are as follows:

- It aims to understand and measure the commitment, as a psychological construct, of an individual and his/her relationship with their friends, family, and/or special someone.
- The Scale aims to help clinicians and counselors better formulate and personalize the required care and assistance for the individual.

Participant Sample

The ICS scale was developed keeping in mind the sample of young and emerging adults, specifically the age group of 18 – 25 years of age. It was done so considering, it is this period in life where one tries to find stability in and around themselves in terms of social and intimate relationships. The Scale was administered to the above age group (N = 200). The participant sample consisted of students as well as working professionals hailing from all over India.

Materials

The materials required for the administration of the scale include:

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- The Interpersonal Commitment Scale (I.C.S) Copy
- Writing Materials.

Administration

The participant is to be seated in a well-ventilated room and a rapport should be established. A copy of the Interpersonal Commitment Scale is presented to the participant, and they are given instructions regarding the Scale. They are to be assured of confidentiality and encouraged to answer all questions truthfully, and not to leave out any questions. The Scale would take approximately 15 minutes to be completed, though there is no restriction on time. Upon completion of the Scale, the booklet is to be taken back, and the responses are to be scored accordingly as given below. It is unwise for the participant to know the aim of the scale, rather they can be informed that the scale consists of questions regarding their attitudes and beliefs about certain life situations.

Precautions

The following precautions are to be taken by the experimenter when administering the scale

- The doubts are to be clarified by the participant before they start responding to the items.
- The ICS may give rise to some emotional uncomfortably of participants and psychological aid to be kept handy.
- Debriefing of the interpretation is to be done after the administration of ICS.
- Debriefing should also emphasize that the scale provides scope for improvement in committed attitudes and behavior.

Scoring

The ICS Scale measures the commitment of an individual to his/her friends, family, and special someone. The items in the ICS are both positive and negative, in assessing the construct of commitment.

The Positively worded items are to be scored in the following manner –

- A score of 1 is given for Strongly Disagree
- A score of 2 is given for Disagree
- A score of 3 is given for Neutral
- A score of 4 is given for Agree
- A score of 5 is given for Strongly Agree

Positive items under three dimensions of the scale are listed below

Friendship Scale – Item numbers {4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20}

Family Scale – Item numbers {1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28}

Relationship Scale- Item numbers {1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23}

The Negatively worded items are to be stored in a reverse manner –

- A score of 5 for Strongly Disagree
- A score of 4 for Disagree
- A score of 3 for Neutral
- A score of 2 for Agree
- A score of 1 for Strongly Agree

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Negative items under three dimensions of the scale are listed below

Friendship Scale- Item numbers {1, 3, 9}

Family Scale – Item numbers {3}

Relationship Scale – Item numbers {22}

Items not scored under three dimensions are listed below

Friendship Scale – Item numbers {2, 6, 10}

Family Scale – Item number {17}

Relationship Scale- all items under the dimension are scored.

Items not scored are intended to keep the momentum of the responses, and as a discussion outliner during the debriefing sessions.

Note: The Scale can be administered to every individual, and if the individual does not have a Significant other, they can be exempted from answering the questions regarding the same.

Analysis

Certain trends in the responses are observed during the administration of the test as a part of our efforts to establish Reliability. The responses were strongly ‘dichotomic’, and skewed for a few items that question directly their commitment- “I have a strong bond with my siblings”, “I help my friend who is in crisis”, “Always there for special someone in times of need and joy”, “I give my best efforts for a lasting relationship”, and “I will respect someone special’s emotions”.

Most people chose the uncertain option or the middle ground for certain items that observe specific committed behaviors/ relationship maintenance behaviors - “I share details of my life with my parents”, “I sustain my parent’s assertiveness towards me”, “My relationship is my necessity as much as my desire”, “I will not be in a disagreeing mode with a special someone”, and “Private matters shouldn’t be discussed with friends”.

This implies that commitment is understood in mere terms associated with the behavior, and not necessarily understood as specific commitment behaviors that are expected and establish a healthy interpersonal relationship.

We also observed that commitment levels differ in each dimension, and hence are scored and interpreted independently of each other. Individuals who show high scores on the Relationship scale, do not show high scores on Family Scale.

Scale Items

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Friendship Scale

1. Private matters shouldn’t be discussed with friends.
2. I do not feel emotionally connected to my friends.
3. Friends can only be depended on during good times than in bad times.
4. I help my friend who is in crisis.
5. I feel proud of my friends’ achievements.
6. I tend to have casual friends rather than very close friends.
7. I am afraid to share my deepest thoughts and feelings with friends.
8. I share most of my feelings and emotions with my friends.
9. I am not comfortable with long-distance friendships.
10. I don’t feel obliged to share the responsibilities of a friend.

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11. I treasure the memories with my friends.
12. I believe that friends help us see our flaws and strengths without passing judgment.
13. I find time to communicate with my friends.
14. Compromises and adjustments are a necessary part of friendships
15. I know what my friends want.
16. I do not allow my friends to feel lonely.
17. I give my friends more time and attention than what I receive.
18. I am emotionally attached to my friendships.
19. I usually wait for my friends.
20. I never encourage/ support friends in undesirable activities.

Family Scale

1. I have a strong bond with my Siblings.
2. I'm always open to taking my family's advice regarding any issue.
3. My family does not have my back when I need them.
4. I don't have any issues with sharing my concerns with my family.
5. I have always been there for my family in their time of need.
6. I feel proud that I am a part of my family.
7. I enjoy spending quality time with my family.
8. I am on good terms with my parents.
9. Will take efforts not to disconnect from family.
10. I try to correct mistakes put forth by my family.
11. I care for my parents' intentions.
12. I ensure to spend enough time listening/ conversing with my parents.
13. I make efforts to say my viewpoint and convince my parents.
14. I will remember the smallest details of my parents.
15. My family can recognize my friends.
16. I try to fulfill my parent's needs without them asking me.
17. I don't make my parents remind me of my daily chores.
18. I balance my communication with parents/ family and my time on the internet.
19. I accept my parent's efforts to correct me.
20. I regularly communicate with my parents.
21. I share many details of my life with my parents.
22. I engage in conversations on many topics with my parents/family.
23. I'm comfortable discussing my point of view with my family.
24. I often make efforts to convince my parents before I make an opinion of their statement.
25. I sustain my parent's assertiveness toward me.
26. My family is a major part of my identity today.
27. I would not do anything that puts my family in an embarrassing situation.
28. I behave as if my every move impacts my family.

Relationship Scale

1. I share an emotional attachment with a special someone.
2. I take time out of my schedule to spend dedicated time with a special someone.
3. I am always there for my special someone when in time of need and joy.
4. When I am unable to make it to an event with a special someone, I make it a priority to reschedule very soon.
5. I assure I'm there for my special someone in a time of need and joy.
6. I am comfortable appreciating and praising a special someone in public.

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7. I find it difficult to enjoy time with a special someone.
8. I plan out outings and events, keeping in mind a special someone's interests and likings.
9. I communicate my feelings and emotions to a special someone every day.
10. I emphasize addressing misunderstandings and arguments with special someone.
11. I ensure that planned events with a special someone takes priority.
12. Important decisions are taken after discussing them with a special someone.
13. I can be emotionally vulnerable with a special someone.
14. I constantly question the special someone's dedication, investment, and feelings towards me.
15. I celebrate a special someone's victories and aid them through their failure.
16. I will give my best efforts for a lasting relationship.
17. I will not be in a disagreeing mode with a special someone.
18. I'm open to a desirable amount of communication between myself and a special someone.
19. My special someone is part of my vision for the future.
20. The special someone and I always agree in the end.
21. My life will be disturbed if I leave my special someone.
22. My relationship is by necessity as much as my desire.
23. I will respect the special someone's emotions.

Psychometric Properties

Validity

The validity of a scale is the ability of the scale to measure what it intends to measure. The ICS has been validated through Content Validity by 3 subject experts. On a scale of 5, where 5 indicates that an item strongly measures what it intends to measure and 1 indicates that the item does not measure what it intends to measure, most of the items used in the scale have been ranked above 3, with most of them standing at 4.

Reliability

The reliability of the scale was established through Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The Reliability scores for each of the dimensions – friendship, family, and romantic relationships – were calculated separately and they are .708, .924, and .904 respectively and with inter-item correlation for all items falling in the range of .4 to .7. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient for the entire scale stands as .823.

Interpretations

The summed scores for each dimension are representative of the strength of commitment to their friends, family, and special someone respectively. The higher the scores, the stronger the commitment to each of the relationships and lower scores indicate a tendency for weaker commitment.

Weaker commitment can be seen as a tendency of individuals to see their relationships on basis of gains and losses, rather than having a significant attachment and putting effort into the relationship. It can be also indicative of individuals being cunning and manipulative etc.

Stronger commitment can be seen as a tendency of the individuals to see their relationships as a form of connection between themselves and others (as a two-way relation). They tend to be more dependent, helpful, caring, etc. High scores on the respective commitment scale are only interpreted as positive commitment behaviors, they may also indicate an individual's

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excessive commitment to an interpersonal relationship that is negative, maladaptive, dependent, or excessive maintenance behaviors.

The dimensions are kept independent of each other in the scoring and analysis of the scale, as high commitment in one interpersonal relationship does not imply high commitment in the other. Commitment behaviors, expectations, and the degree of commitments are unique to each interpersonal relationship.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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Appendix

Further Directions

The Interpersonal Commitment Scale is a primary model of our intentions to create a Scale to position an individual on commitment levels. This scale is presented to understand our

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present limitations. We intended to further create dimensions of commitment behaviors, dividing the Scale Items into Commitment Expected by an individual from their interpersonal relationships, and The Commitment Expressed by an individual in their interpersonal relationships. This categorization could statistically indicate the difference in commitment expected and commitment expressed to explain a gap that could imply strain in their interpersonal relationships. We intended to standardize and create norms, sten scores, and percentile scores for comprehensive interpretations, and also aid in group administrations. We also intend to create a Lie Scale, with items that measure a person's tendency to fake good, and show behaviors that are not true of them in social settings- especially in the light of clinical setting administrations and neurotics.