Reviewer's report

Title: Standard values and relationship-specific validity of the Bielefeld Relationship Expectations Questionnaire (BFPE)

Version: 5 Date: 20 August 2010

Reviewer: Keith Widaman

Reviewer's report:

In assessing the ms., in accord with BMC guidelines, I considered the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   The questions now seem well defined.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   The methods are now appropriate and well described.

3. Are the data sound?
   The data do appear to be sound.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes it does.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The discussion and conclusions in the current version are stated in much better form.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   The limitations of the work are now described in a much improved form.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   This is improved in the current version of the ms.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
It is better in this version. I have some additional suggestions for improvements.

Major Compulsory Revisions

This ms. reports a study using the Bielefeld Relationship Expectations Questionnaire (BFPE), based on responses by a nationally representative sample of German participants. The current ms. is a resubmitted ms. that I reviewed during its first two rounds of submission. The authors responded to each of the points of criticism I offered on their second submission, and the ms. was improved in the revision process. I have some continuing issues with the current version.

1. Results, paragraph 5: I had asked for clarification of the statement that "whereby every further correlation between the BFPE scales is significant and positive, but low." I think the authors misunderstood the nature of my concern, which largely dealt with the use of the words "whereby every further ..." The authors reworded this to read "The other correlations between the BFPE scales are significant, but low and therefore meaningless." This wording is, in some ways, worse than the original – the low correlations are not meaningless. I suggest the following revised wording: "The remaining two correlations among BFPE scales were significant and positive, but of small magnitude."

2. Results, paragraph 6: I had asked for clarification of "conflict-hampering." The revised wording is not much better. For the start of this paragraph, I suggest something like the following: "The correlations between dimensions of marital quality from the PFB and the attachment dimensions were mostly in the moderate to large range. Low levels of Fear of Rejection and high levels of Readiness for Self Disclosure were associated with low levels of perceived partner Quarreling and thus with high levels of cooperativeness in seeking solutions to conflicts. Further, physical contact, shared activities, and the communication of positive affect within the relationship were moderately inversely related to Fear of Rejection, and moderately positively related to both Readiness for Self Disclosure and Conscious Need for Care. General relationship quality was negatively related to Fear of Rejection and, therefore, positively related to Readiness for Self Disclosure and Conscious Need for Care. Individuals who experienced their partner as socially supportive, as measured by the F-SozU (K-14), showed greater ability and willingness to speak about themselves and their needs than did persons with less supportive partners. The correlations of social support with Fear of Rejection and with Conscious Need for Care tended to be of smaller magnitude, although significant and in the predicted direction. ..."

3. Discussion, paragraph 8 (I think), currently on p. 14, line 5: Again the problem of discussing the partner as "less conflict-hampering." This wording is difficult to understand. "Conflict-hampering" sounds like a person is reducing conflict, which is a good think – but a person who has low levels of conflict-hampering is what? I suggest the following wording: "Higher levels of perceived social support (i.e., experiencing the partner as less prone to prolonging conflict) is associated with..."
lower levels of Fear of Rejection and higher levels of Readiness for Self Disclosure toward the partner.”

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests