

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE VIETNAMESE TRANSLATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE SCALE

CONFIABILIDAD Y VALIDEZ DE LA TRADUCCIÓN AL VIETNAMITA DE LA ESCALA DE MATRIMONIO DEL MISMO SEXO

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam, in many ways, remains a Confucian nation. The Confucian heritage touches many aspects of people's lives. In this context, homosexuals do not face severe punishments, but face social stigma or public misunderstanding. Same-Sex Marriage is also not accepted because of limited legal support. Therefore, there is a need to study attitudes towards same-sex marriage in Vietnam. The purpose of this article was to validate a Vietnamese version of the Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM) designed by Pearl & Galupo (2007) in a Vietnamese population. The sample in this study was 570 students from six universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The data collection method used was face-to-face questionnaire. Students completed the Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale and other variables in the questionnaire. The respondent's characteristics also explored through the survey include: gender, what year students are from, religion of the students, what region students are from and their ethnicity. The study found the Vietnamese translation of the ATSM scale both reliable and valid and suitable for research use.

Keywords: Same-sex marriage; Homosexuality; Sexual orientation; Attitudes; Vietnam.

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RESUMEN

Vietnam, en muchos aspectos, sigue siendo una nación confuciana. La herencia confuciana afecta muchas áreas de la vida de las personas. En este contexto, las personas homosexuales no enfrentan castigos severos, pero sí estigmatización social o malentendidos públicos. El matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo tampoco es aceptado debido al limitado respaldo legal. Por lo tanto, existe la necesidad de estudiar las actitudes hacia el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo en Vietnam. El propósito de este artículo fue validar una versión en vietnamita de la Escala de Actitudes hacia el Matrimonio entre Personas del Mismo Sexo (ATSM) diseñada por Pearl & Galupo (2007) en una población vietnamita. La muestra en este estudio fue de 570 estudiantes de seis universidades en la ciudad de Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. El método de recopilación de datos utilizado fue un cuestionario cara a cara. Los estudiantes completaron la Escala de Actitudes hacia el Matrimonio entre Personas del Mismo Sexo y otras variables en el cuestionario. Las características de los encuestados también se exploraron a través de la encuesta e incluyeron: género, año académico de los estudiantes, religión de los estudiantes, región de origen de los estudiantes y su etnia. El estudio encontró que la traducción al vietnamita de la escala ATSM es confiable y válida, y adecuada para su uso en investigaciones.

Palabras clave: Matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo; Homosexualidad; Orientación sexual; Actitudes; Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the Western societies have gradually become more accepting of same-sex relationships over the last decade. However, people in Confucian countries are less tolerant than people in Europe and America. A stated reason for this difference is the emphasis on Confucian values in many Asian societies (Adamczyk & Cheng, 2015). Vietnam can be seen as a country heavily influenced by Confucianism together with many other countries in Asia such as Japan and South Korea. Indeed, the current Vietnamese legislation does not recognize homosexual marriage, although it is no longer punishable. According to the Vietnamese Law on Marriage and Family which takes effect from January 2015, the government no longer either ban same-sex marriage or harass them but will still not recognize such kind of marriage (The National Assembly Vietnam, 2014). As such, this article reports the reliability and validity of the Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM; Pearl & Galupo, 2007, 2008) in a Vietnamese population and examines the association between ATSM scores and relevant demographic and personality variables to assess the validity. To our knowledge, this paper is the first to apply the attitudes toward same-sex marriage scale (ATSM) in Vietnam.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Attitudes Towards Same-Sex Marriage were first validated for heterosexual individuals, followed by bisexual individuals. Researchers have identified several correlates of negative attitudes towards homosexual individuals that provide a theoretical framework for considering attitudes towards lesbian and gay issues, including same-sex marriage (Pearl & Galupo, 2007, 2008). On the other hand, Haider-Markel and Joslyn (2008) noted that friendships with homosexual people were associated with a respondent's belief that homosexual couples should have the same marital right as heterosexual couples. In the study of Jakobsson *et al.*, the results showed that gender, regular participation in religious activities, political ideology, education, whether the respondent lived in the capital city,

and attitudes toward gender equality were important for attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Age and income were not important for attitudes toward same-sex marriage (Jakobsson *et al.*, 2013). In addition, Moskowitz *et al.*, (2010) reported that homophobia was the best predictor of attitudes toward same-sex marriage, and this was equally true for both heterosexual men and women. However, the attitudinal difference between gay male and lesbian marriage was related to homophobia in men but not in women. The following table also provides a summary of relevant studies.

Table 1: Summary of some previous research findings.

AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	FINDINGS, CONTENTS
Pearl & Galupo	2007	This research details the development of a new instrument designed to measure attitudes toward same-sex marriage. Participants were 615 heterosexual women and men, drawn from both student and nonstudent adult populations. Four studies were conducted for the purpose of developing the scale and to establish its psychometric properties. The resulting Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM) consists of 17 items, has a one-dimensional factor structure, and exhibits a high degree of reliability.
Lannutti & Lachlan	2007	The results demonstrated strong reliability and validity for the Attitudes Towards Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ASSMS) and suggest that the ASSMS could be adapted to measure attitudes towards civil unions and other forms of relational recognition for same-sex couples. Gender comparisons using the validated scale showed that in college and non-college samples, women had a significant more positive attitudes towards same-sex marriage than did men.
Galupo & Pearl	2008	There were 237 men and women from sexual minorities who participated in two studies. The Attitudes Towards Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM) is a valid and accurate measure for sexual minority participants, according to Study 1 findings, the ATSM is a valid and reliable measure for sexual minority participants. Compared to bisexual men, bisexual women expressed more positive opinions. Nonetheless, lesbians and gay men's ATSM scores did not significantly differ from one another. According to Study 2 findings, political conservatism and religion had a negative correlation with ATSM scores for bisexual participants.
Haider-Markel & Joslyn	2008	The authors found that the attributions to be powerful predictors of people's affective orientations toward gays and a variety of policies relevant to gay civil rights. The biological attribution generated support for a variety of such policies and translated into more favorable feelings toward gays as a group. And distinct from prior research, our results indicate that attributions were by far the strongest predictors of attitudes toward gays and gay civil rights.
Moskowitz <i>et al.</i> ,	2010	The results of this study indicated that homophobia was the best predictor of attitudes toward gay male and lesbian marriage, and this was equally true for both heterosexual men and women. However, the attitudinal difference between gay male and lesbian marriage was related to homophobia in men but not in women.
Jakobsson <i>et al.</i> ,	2013	One of the main contributions of this study was that it looked at attitudes about same-sex marriage outside the United States. Although many of the findings from the United States are also observed in the Scandinavian context—most notably, that religiosity is clearly connected with negative attitudes toward same-sex marriage, and also that the more highly educated are more in favor of it—there are also some notable differences. One of these findings is that older Scandinavians are no more unfavorable to homosexual marriage than younger Scandinavians.
Oliveira <i>et al.</i> ,	2014	By using Pearl and Galupo's (2007) Attitudes toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM), the authors showed that individual differences in attitudes toward same-sex marriage that can be accounted by social belongings. It makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the dynamics of same-sex marriage attitudes in the context of various ideologies and positioning.

AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	FINDINGS, CONTENTS
Adameczyk & Cheng	2015	The study used data from 47 nations including five Confucian societies except Singapore. The authors discovered that people living in Confucian societies are less accepting of homosexuality than people living in other countries.
Iraklis & Kordoutis	2015	Overall, the preliminary goal of verifying the suitability of a translated version for use with a Greek population was achieved. The scale had good internal consistency and performed as expected, indicating reasonable psychometric properties in a variety of validity tests. This study found the Greek translation of ATSM to be reliable and valid for use, and it is a recommended instrument for measuring attitudes toward same-sex marriage. A reliable and valid scale is a first step in further understanding attitudes toward same-sex marriage, but much work remains as regards securing civil rights for families headed by same-sex partners.

(Source: Constructed by the author)

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using quantitative approach. The data were collected using questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts: the first part explores basic personal information included question on gender, year of study, ethnicity, religion and native places (northern, central and southern) of the participants. Participants were also asked to state if they have friend who were gay or lesbian; the second part to find out the Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage Scale (ATSM) that was translated from English into Vietnamese by the author. This ATSM scale was adapted from Pearl & Galupo (2007, 2008). According to Pearl & Galupo (2007), the ATSM scale was developed with the purpose of obtaining a psychometrically sound research instrument relevant to current attitudes toward same-sex marriage. All 17 attitudinal items of this scale were administered on a 5-point Likert scale ranged from “1” (strongly disagree) to “5” (strongly agree). Participants choose a number on a 5-point Likert scale to indicate how well they agree with each of the 17 items. The possible results ranged between 17 (highly negative attitudes) and 85 (highly positive attitudes). It should be noted that in this scale, eight items are reverse - scored.

The data were collected by convenience nonprobability sampling and based on survey questionnaire. To collect accurate data, the author went directly to sex universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to distribute and collect survey questionnaire in October 2022. The survey was conducted at locations around the university campus that were suitable for students. Students were told that the study was to explore their attitudes toward same-sex marriage, and were told that the study was voluntary and anonymous. The procedure lasted approximately fifteen minutes.

After receiving 570 valid questionnaires, the SPSS software version 25.0 was used to clean and analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first part of the questionnaire explored basic information of respondents. Table 2 presents respondents’ profile. Of the 570 respondents, 44.6% were male students and 55.4% were female students. For the year of study, there are 29.6% first year students, 30.2% second year students, 23.2% third year students and 17.0 fourth year students. About religion, 27.7% of respondents were

Buddhism, 12.3% were Ancestor worship, 14.4% were Catholic and 43.5% were no-religion. Majority of the students were Vietnamese (Kinh ethnic). Most of the respondents have homosexual friends.

Table 2: Respondents' profile.

		FREQUENCY	PERCENT
University	Ho Chi Minh City Open University	90	15.8
	Sai Gon University	91	16.0
	University of Food industry	86	15.1
	Industrial University	100	17.5
	University of Technology	102	17.9
	University of Science	101	17.7
Gender	Male	254	44.6
	Female	316	55.4
Year of study	First year	169	29.6
	Second year	172	30.2
	Third year	132	23.2
	Fourth year	97	17.0
Religion	Buddhism	158	27.7
	Ancestor worship	70	12.3
	Catholic	82	14.4
	No religion	248	43.5
	Other	12	2.1
Ethnicity	Vietnamese	532	93.3
	Chinese	27	4.7
	Other	11	2.0
Native place	Northern	99	17.4
	Central	138	24.2
	Southern	333	58.4
Homosexual friends	Yes	438	76.8
	No	132	23.2
Age	Mean	19.51	
	Std. deviation	1.492	

(Source: Survey results in 2022)

In order to achieve the purpose of the current research, the second section of the survey measured respondents' opinions toward same-sex marriage using a 5-point Likert scale based on the 17 items of the Attitudes toward Same-Sex Marriage scale (ATSM) developed by Pearl & Galupo (2007, 2008). In the ATSM scale, eight items are reverse-scored. Table 3 shows the attitudes toward same-sex marriage among Vietnamese students.

Table 3: Attitudes toward same-sex marriage (N=570)

QUESTIONS	ITEMS	MIN	MAX	MEAN	STD. DEVIATION	CRONBACH'S ALPHA
Q11.1	Same-sex marriage undermines the meaning of the traditional family.*	1	5	3.74	1.043	0.901
Q11.2	Two loving same-sex parents can provide the same quality of parenting and guidance as a man and a woman.	1	5	3.76	1.031	0.899
Q11.3	A primary purpose of marriage is to provide stability in a loving relationship. Same-sex partners should have this legal right available to them.	1	5	3.95	0.970	0.898
Q11.4	The recognition of same-sex marriage poses a threat to society because public schools will be forced to teach that homosexuality is normal.*	1	5	3.70	1.062	0.901
Q11.5	Marital protections, such as social security and health care benefits, should be available to same-sex partners.	1	5	4.02	0.984	0.900
Q11.6	Same-sex marriage will strengthen the morals of society by supporting equality.	1	5	3.67	0.993	0.898
Q11.7	I support individuals who are not heterosexual seeking marriage rights.	1	5	3.60	1.097	0.905
Q11.8	Because more people will have the benefits of marriage, family will be strengthened by the recognition of same-sex marriages.	1	5	3.53	0.936	0.901
Q11.9	Men and women naturally complement one another, therefore a union between two men or two women should not be recognized in marriage.*	1	5	3.95	1.038	0.898
Q11.10	The legalization of same-sex marriage is an important step toward the acceptance of individuals who are not heterosexual.	1	5	3.82	0.942	0.898
Q11.11	A primary purpose of marriage is to raise children, therefore only a man and a woman should be married.*	1	5	3.85	1.099	0.896
Q11.12	Same-sex marriage ensures equal rights for all relationships regardless of sexual orientation.	1	5	3.88	0.955	0.897
Q11.13	The legalization of same-sex marriage will lead to unnecessary financial burdens, such as social security and health care benefits.*	1	5	3.72	1.060	0.898
Q11.14	The legalization of same-sex marriage will jeopardize religious freedom.*	1	5	3.87	1.063	0.897
Q11.15	Individuals should be free to enter into marriage with another same-sex consenting adult because God created all people and does not make mistakes	1	5	3.59	1.076	0.904
Q11.16	Same-sex marriage will lead to the moral decay of society.*	1	5	4.11	1.008	0.897
Q11.17	I oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage.*	1	5	4.01	1.102	0.897

Note: Items with an asterisk require reverse scoring

(Source: Survey results in 2022)

In terms of the scale's reliability, previous studies have revealed that it has high internal consistency level ($\alpha = 0.96$ or 0.97). De Oliveira et al, (2014), in their sample of Portuguese heterosexual men and women, also found that the scale's reliability was above 0.95. Iraklis and Kordoutis (2016) reported the same internal consistency level. In this research, the reliability of the scale is $\alpha = 0.904$ and the Cronbach's alpha of all items ranges from 0.896 to 0.905 and the Corrected Item-Total Correlation of each item is higher than 0.9 (means, standard deviations and alphas (Table 3). Therefore, all variables' Cronbach's alpha values are satisfactory for testing reliability of the scale. After analyzing the reliability of scales by Cronbach's alpha, 17 items are used in the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The results for testing validity of scale by EFA were $KMO = 0.934 > 0.5$, Sig. Barlett's Test = 0.000 and initial eigenvalues = 54.428% > 50.0%. The result demonstrated the scale is appropriateness to perform deeper analysis.

In terms of gender, a *t*-test was used to explore the effects of gender on ATSM scale scores. There are no significant gender differences, $Mean_{male} = 50.97$, $SD = 6.240$; $Mean_{female} = 50.77$, $SD = 6.798$; $t(568) = 0.367$, $p = 0.714$. These findings were not consistent with previous studies indicating that men hold more negative attitudes towards same-sex marriage than women (Lannutti & Lachlan, 2008; Moskowitz *et al.*, 2010). ANOVA was used to examine the effects of religion on ATSM scores. The results showed that there are significant religious differences in attitudes towards same-sex marriage, Buddhists have lower scores than other religions.

CONCLUSION

This study tried to establish the reliability and validity of the ATSM scale in a Vietnamese population. As a result, a Vietnamese version of the ATSM scale with 17 items was developed. The main objective of confirming a translated version's suitability for use was accomplished. The scale was internally consistent and performed as intended, indicating reasonable psychometric properties in various validity tests. According to this study, the Vietnamese translation of the ATSM is reliable and valid, and it is a recommended tool for measuring attitudes toward same-sex marriage. A reliable and valid scale is a first step in further understanding attitudes towards same-sex marriage. However, much remains to be done to guarantee civil rights to same-sex families. The current study and its findings add to the growing literature about same-sex marriage rights in different countries and cultural settings. This study also has a number of limitations that should be considered. The results of this study reflect a specific sample found in universities and may not be readily generalized. The study was limited to an urban region of Vietnam. Such gap could be filled by data from national probabilistic samples. As a result, studies in other regions of Vietnam (for example, in rural regions) are necessary to provide sufficient information. Future research could further evaluate the validity of the ATSM scale in a rural population.

Appendix Supplementary data: Supplementary data to this paper can be found online at: <https://zenodo.org/record/7435803#.Y5lvJXZBzIU>

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