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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Adaptation of the Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale to Turkish: Its Associations With Family Communication, Dyadic Trust, and Relationship Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

This study validated the Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale (CCSS) in Türkiye through two studies with distinct samples. Study I ($N = 371$, mean age = 27.56) examined factorial validity, reliability, item response theory, and measurement invariance, confirming an 11-item, five-factor structure via confirmatory factor analysis with acceptable internal consistency. Study II ($N = 482$, mean age = 29.24) tested structural relations among family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction using structural equation modeling, revealing that family communication positively predicted dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction, which in turn predicted higher relationship satisfaction. Overall, findings indicate that the CCSS is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing couple communication satisfaction in the Turkish cultural context.

1 | Introduction

Structural Family Theory (Minuchin 2018) posits that families function through organized subsystems, primarily the spousal, parental, and sibling subsystems. The boundaries and interactions between these subsystems are critical for the overall functionality of the family unit. Within this theoretical framework, the spousal subsystem serves as a foundational component, influencing the emotional climate of the entire system (Lindblom et al. 2024). Accordingly, family and couple counseling has emerged as a mental health discipline aimed at understanding and strengthening the relational dynamics between couples (Bradbury and Bodenmann 2020). Theories and intervention models of couple functioning offer different emphases by focusing on certain aspects of couple relationships and make important contributions in this context (Lebow and Snyder 2022). Lavner et al. (2020) state that interventions for couples are effective in increasing relational functionality.

Couples' relationships are affected by various dynamics, and these dynamics are of great importance for the sustainability of the relationship. In this context, effective communication is considered one of the basic components of healthy couple relationships (Karney 2021). Couple communication involves not only exchanging information but also expressing emotions and expectations. Effective communication enhances relationship stability and satisfaction by fostering mutual trust, a key factor in partners' adjustment throughout the family life cycle (Timmons et al. 2015). The process of relational adjustment requires individuals to bring together their different expectations, values, and experiences on a common ground. It has been shown that couples who adopt an open, honest, and satisfying communication style in this process achieve more positive

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results in terms of both short-term relationship satisfaction and long-term relationship stability (Lavner et al. 2016). Communication processes are closely linked to couples' emotional experiences and the overall emotional climate of their relationships. Evidence suggests that effective communication is associated with more positive emotional experiences and higher relationship quality (Cloonan et al. 2024). Within this framework, couple communication extends beyond information exchange and represents a core element of relationship quality and long-term stability.

Moreover, the interactions occurring in the spousal subsystem not only determine the nature of couple relationships but also directly influence the dynamics of the parent–child subsystem. As Olson et al. (2019) emphasize, emotional processes between couples and the functioning of these processes are strongly related to the overall level of communication within the family. Family communication refers to how family members interact, express emotions, manage conflicts, and make decisions. Understanding these processes requires analyzing the deeper structural and systemic dynamics within the family (Galvin et al. 2015). Family interaction processes are influenced by various psychosocial and structural factors. Problem-solving, feedback, and decision-making mechanisms shape the family system through communication channels that encompass not only verbal exchanges but also emotional and indirect cues (Madanes 2014; Rusli 2025). Maintaining a healthy family structure requires ongoing efforts to enhance communication quality.

The family system operates dynamically, with interaction patterns shaped by relationship quality. Examining family communication and its key determinants clarifies how trust, commitment, satisfaction, and well-being emerge within families (Wiebe and Johnson 2016). Such analyses are essential for both research and family counseling practice. Trust is recognized as a fundamental element for healthy and satisfying interactions between couples within the spousal subsystem. Trust dynamics between couples are influenced by various structural factors, such as roles, power balance, and hierarchical structures (Korsgaard et al. 2015). However, the formation and maintenance of trust is a unique process for each relationship; therefore, the way each couple develops trust is shaped by the dynamics specific to their relationship. Ensuring and maintaining trust increases the emotional closeness between couples, increases the satisfaction of individuals from the relationship and improves the overall relationship quality (Kleinert et al. 2020). These findings suggest that trust is not only associated with higher relational satisfaction but also relates to greater resilience against relationship stressors. In romantic relationships, higher trust levels are linked to lower anxiety and more secure attachment patterns between partners (Fitzpatrick and Lafontaine 2017). The association between trust and relational processes extends beyond momentary emotional experiences to include individuals' broader perceptions and evaluations of their relationships. As a matter of fact, trust serves as a key determinant of long-term relational health by fostering openness and enabling couples to evaluate their relationship more objectively and manage interactions consciously (Jenson et al. 2021). Sustaining trust is therefore vital for the long-term health of couple relationships.

Communication and trust are among the fundamental elements for maintaining a healthy and satisfying relationship dynamic between couples. These elements are important factors that support couples to understand each other, to adapt mutually and to establish a stable bond in their relationship. The development and maintenance of effective communication and trust are directly linked to couples' relationship satisfaction (Falconier et al. 2015). The quality of the relationship between couples is not only shaped by the mutual interactions of individuals but is also influenced by various demographic and psychosocial factors. Longitudinal evidence shows that relationship satisfaction is associated with demographic variables, such as country of residence, ethnicity, gender, housing conditions, and marital status (Bühler et al. 2021). Beyond demographics, partners' personality traits, individual values, and relational attitudes are also linked to variations in relationship satisfaction (Leikas et al. 2018). Moreover, factors such as attachment style, self-efficacy, and conflict resolution tendencies are related to how couples interact and experience their relationships. Relationship satisfaction is also directly affected by relational processes between couples (Godbout et al. 2017). According to the findings of Kappen et al. (2018), the healthy functioning of relational processes enables couples to approach each other with a more accepting attitude and thus increase their relationship satisfaction. Empathy, emotional closeness, and mutual understanding strengthen relational processes and enhance relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, interventions should adopt a holistic perspective that integrates individual factors with couples' interactional, communicative, and trust dynamics to promote lasting relationship satisfaction.

The adaptation of psychometric instruments necessitates more than linguistic translation; it requires a rigorous theoretical justification. Cross-cultural validation acquires significance when situated within a nomological framework that explicates the anticipated associations between the construct of interest and theoretically relevant variables (Strauss 2005). Within this framework, couple communication satisfaction is expected to exhibit robust associations with family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction, as delineated in systemic perspectives such as Bowen's and Minuchin's family therapy approach. Accordingly, validating the Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale (CCSS) in the Turkish context constitutes not merely a methodological undertaking but also a theoretically informed contribution that advances the understanding of couple dynamics within a non-Western sociocultural ecology.

Validating the applicability of this tool in the Turkish context is particularly important due to Türkiye's unique position as a bridge between Western individualism and Eastern collectivism. While Western models typically emphasize individual autonomy in communication, Turkish culture places great importance on family bonds and intergenerational approval (Yildiz et al. 2025). Therefore, adapting the CCSS to Turkish not only provides a linguistically appropriate tool but also tests the cross-cultural applicability of systemic communication structures in a relational culture where the boundaries between the nuclear family and the extended family are often permeable.

1.1 | The Present Study

Families are an important living structure for the emotional development and well-being of individuals. Couples that make up families basically constitute an important part of this

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structure. However, there are various elements that can threaten this structure. Even in challenging life events and normal daily life events, the interaction between couples is an important element for the overall family system (Prime et al. 2020). Within this theoretical framework, employing valid and reliable tools to assess couple communication satisfaction is essential for both research and practice. The present study first adapted the CCSS into Turkish and then examined the associations among family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction. Through this design, the study aimed to contribute a culturally appropriate measurement tool and explore how relational dynamics relate to individual life satisfaction within a hypothetical model.

2 | Study I

At this phase of the study, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed on the CCSS. Consistent with the structure of the original scale, a CFA was conducted on the 11-item form. In addition, item–total correlation, Item Response Theory (IRT), and measurement invariance (MI) analyses were employed to examine the psychometric validity and reliability of the instrument. Reliability analyses were also undertaken to ensure the internal consistency of the scale.

2.1 | Methods

2.1.1 | Participants and Procedure

Study I included 371 Turkish participants recruited via convenience sampling through online dissemination (e.g., social media platforms and university mailing lists). Regarding race and ethnicity, the sample was homogeneous, consisting of individuals identifying as Turkish. The sample comprised 101 men (27.2%) and 270 women (72.8%), with a mean age of 27.56 years (SD = 6.31; range = 20–50). All participants were either in a romantic relationship ($n = 235$, 63.3%) or married ($n = 136$, 36.7%). Regarding parental marital status, 305 participants (82.2%) reported that their parents were married, whereas 66 (17.8%) reported parental divorce. In terms of employment status, 252 participants (67.9%) were employed and 119 (32.1%) were unemployed. Prior to the commencement of data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Yıldız Technical University Institute of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (Protocol number 20250104138).

2.2 | Measures

2.2.1 | Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale

CCSS was originally developed by Jones et al. (2018). The scale comprises five dimensions (self-communication presence, self-emotional experiences, partner responsiveness, partner contribution, and communication characteristics) and consists of 11 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("not at all satisfied") to 5 ("extremely satisfied"). Higher scores reflect greater satisfaction with communication between partners. In the original study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.92.

2.2.2 | Family Harmony Scale (FHS)

FHS was originally developed by Kavikondala et al. (2016) and adapted into Turkish by Duman Kula et al. (2018). This unidimensional instrument consists of five items evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Higher scores reflect greater levels of family harmony. The internal consistency coefficient of the adapted version was reported as 0.91.

2.2.3 | The Satisfaction With Family Life Scale (TSWFLS)

TSWFLS was adapted by Karçkay et al. (2024). This unidimensional scale assesses overall satisfaction with family life by comparing individuals' family living conditions with their personal standards and expectations. The scale consists of five items rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"), with total scores ranging from 5 to 35. Higher scores reflect greater satisfaction with family life. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.94.

2.2.4 | Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality Scale (PRRQS)

PRRQS was originally developed by Fletcher et al. (2000) and adapted into Turkish by Sağkal and Özdemir (2018). The unidimensional scale consists of six items rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 7 ("very much"). Higher scores indicate greater perceived romantic relationship quality. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.86.

2.2.5 | Harmony in Life Scale (HILS)

HILS was originally developed by Kjell et al. (2016) and adapted into Turkish by Satici and Gocet Tekin (2017). The scale consists of five items (e.g., "I accept different circumstances in my life") rated on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with total scores falling between 5 and 35. Higher scores indicate a greater sense of harmony in life. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.78.

2.3 | Data Analysis

CFA was conducted using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS Graphics. Model fit was evaluated using several fit indices, including the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). MI analyses were performed based on marital status. In addition, IRT analyses, item–total correlations of the scale, and reliability analyses of the other measures were conducted.

The present study employed a multimethod psychometric framework to evaluate the validity of the CCSS. CFA was conducted to test the hypothesized five-factor structure. MI analyses examined whether the scale operated equivalently across relational status groups (romantically involved vs. married), thereby supporting meaningful group comparisons.

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Additionally, IRT analyses were used to assess item-level functioning, particularly item discrimination parameters. Collectively, these complementary analytic approaches provided evidence for structural validity, cross-group comparability, and item-level precision, thereby strengthening the psychometric validity of the adapted CCSS.

2.4 | Results

CFA was conducted for the 11-item form of the scale. The results indicated that the 11-item CCSS demonstrated an acceptable model fit: $\chi^2/df(130.234, N = 371) = 3.830$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.944, GFI = 0.934, NFI = 0.927, IFI = 0.945, TLI = 0.910, SRMR = 0.0516, and RMSEA = 0.07. Consequently, the 11-item structure of the CCSS was confirmed. All standardized factor loadings ranged from 0.59 to 0.89 ($p < 0.001$), exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.40 (Stevens 2009), which indicates that the items adequately represent the latent construct. Factor scores, descriptive statistics, and item–total correlations are presented in Table 1.

After confirming the factor structure of the CCSS, criterion-related validity analyses were conducted using Pearson's correlation coefficients. In this stage, the associations between the CCSS and several related constructs—family life satisfaction, family communication, family harmony, life satisfaction, and the Big Five personality traits—were examined. Correlation coefficients were interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) benchmarks, where 0.10 indicates a small, 0.30 a medium, and 0.50 a large effect size. The results demonstrated that the CCSS was significantly correlated with all relevant variables, including family harmony ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$), relationship quality ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$), satisfaction with family life ($r = 0.22$, $p < 0.001$), and harmony in life ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate medium to large effect sizes for the associations between couple communication satisfaction and the related constructs. Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 2.

2.5 | Item Response Theory

IRT was employed to examine item-level parameters and response characteristics of the CCSS. Unlike summative scoring methods, IRT provides information on each item's discrimination and difficulty indices (Baker and Kim 2017). Given the Likert-type structure of the scale, IRT analysis offered a clearer understanding of item performance. All items demonstrated high discrimination values ($\alpha > 0.60$), indicating strong differentiation among response levels. The results of the analysis are given in Table 1.

2.6 | Measurement Invariance

Following the CFA, MI was tested across marital status groups (romantically involved vs. married) using AMOS to determine whether the CCSS functions equivalently across relationship types. Establishing MI is essential in scale validation, ensuring that observed group differences reflect true psychological variation rather than measurement bias (Vandenberg and Lance 2000). In the Turkish context, where marital and romantic relationships differ in norms and cultural expectations, this comparison was particularly relevant. Results are presented in Table 3.

2.7 | Reliability Analysis

Reliability analyses for the 11-item form of the CCSS were conducted using Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega, and Guttmann's lambda coefficients. Reliability analyses showed high internal consistency for the 11-item CCSS across both studies. For Study I, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$, McDonald's $\omega = 0.89$, and Guttmann's $\lambda = 0.90$; for Study II, $\alpha = 0.91$, $\omega = 0.91$, and $\lambda = 0.92$, indicating excellent reliability across samples.

2.8 | Conclusion of Study I

The results of the first study provided robust evidence for the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the CCSS.

TABLE 1 | Factor loading, descriptive statistics, item–total correlations, and IRT results.

Item	Factor	Factor loading	Mean	SD	Item–total correlations	*a* Coefficient	SE	Confidence interval	*z*	$p > \|z\|$
CCSS-1	SCP	0.69	4.40	0.76	0.48	1.37	0.18	1.02–1.72	7.74	0.001
CCSS-2	SCP	0.71	4.09	0.87	0.40	0.93	0.13	0.67–1.19	7.04	0.001
CCSS-3	SEE	0.59	3.74	0.96	0.47	1.25	0.14	0.97–1.53	8.79	0.001
CCSS-4	SEE	0.79	3.89	1.03	0.68	2.26	0.23	1.82–2.71	10.03	0.001
CCSS-5	SEE	0.78	3.45	1.21	0.70	2.51	0.23	2.05–2.96	10.68	0.001
CCSS-6	PC	0.77	3.95	1.10	0.59	1.92	0.20	1.53–2.31	9.75	0.001
CCSS-7	PC	0.74	4.23	1.02	0.59	2.10	0.24	1.63–2.57	8.80	0.001
CCSS-8	PR	0.89	3.68	1.30	0.68	2.54	0.26	2.03–3.05	9.81	0.001
CCSS-9	PR	0.77	3.31	1.28	0.65	2.00	0.19	1.63–2.38	10.50	0.001
CCSS-10	CC	0.85	3.87	1.13	0.67	2.44	0.25	1.97–2.93	9.97	0.001
CCSS-11	CC	0.82	3.96	1.12	0.68	2.76	0.28	2.21–3.32	9.71	0.001

Abbreviations: CC, communication characteristics; CCSS, Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale; IRT, item response theory; PC, partner contribution; PR, partner responsiveness; SCP, self-communication presence; SEE, self-emotional experience.

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TABLE 2 | Descriptive statistics and correlations with the CCSS-11-item form.

Correlation with CCSS-11 Item						
Variables	**Mean**	**SD**	**Skewness**	**Kurtosis**	***r***	***p***
Study I						
Couple communication	37.59	7.27	−0.581	0.300	—	—
Relationship quality	19.08	3.56	−0.747	−0.121	0.62**	< 0.001
Family harmony	15.77	4.88	−0.577	−0.471	0.20**	< 0.001
Family life satisfaction	23.87	7.44	−0.593	−0.356	0.22**	< 0.001
Harmony in life	16.32	4.49	−0.319	−0.216	0.42**	< 0.001
Study II						
Couple communication	41.66	9.25	−0.620	−0.002	—	—
Family communication	19.46	4.23	−0.894	0.097	0.35**	< 0.001
Dyadic trust	35.12	10.24	−0.540	−0.374	0.58**	< 0.001
Relationship satisfaction	32.63	7.87	−0.460	−0.353	0.65**	< 0.001

Note: Effect sizes for correlation coefficients are interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) benchmarks: $r = 0.10$ (small effect), $r = 0.30$ (medium effect), and $r = 0.50$ (large effect). All significant correlations in the table represent medium to large effect sizes.
Abbreviation: CCSS, Couple Communication Satisfaction Scale.

TABLE 3 | Fit indices of marital status invariance.

Invariance	χ^2	df	TLI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Romantic relationship	122.988	33	0.91	0.93	0.92	0.08	0.055	—	—
Marriage relationship	76.392	33	0.93	0.95	0.95	0.06	0.055	—	—
Configural invariance	199.380	66	0.92	0.94	0.93	0.07	0.054	—	—
Metric invariance	192.260	70	0.91	0.94	0.94	0.07	0.048	0.003	0.01
Scalar invariance	213.074	76	0.91	0.93	0.93	0.07	0.049	0.004	0.02

Abbreviations: CFI, Comparative Fit Index; GFI, Goodness of Fit Index; IFI, Incremental Fit Index; NFI, Normed Fit Index; RMSEA, root mean square error of approximation; SRMR, Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; TLI, Tucker–Lewis Index.

The findings confirmed the five-factor structure, demonstrated strong internal consistency, and established MI across marital status, justifying the use of the scale for further structural analyses in Study II.

3 | Study II

3.1 | Methods

3.1.1 | *Participants and Procedure*

Study II included 482 Turkish participants recruited via convenience sampling through online dissemination (e.g., social media platforms and university mailing lists) and in-person data collection in classrooms and research centers using Google Forms. Similar to Study I, the sample was ethnically homogeneous, comprising Turkish individuals. The sample comprised 132 men (27.4%) and 350 women (72.6%), with a mean age of 29.24 years (SD = 8.42; range = 21–51). Of the participants, 200 (41.5%) reported being in a romantic relationship and 282 (58.5%) were married. Regarding parental marital status, 388 participants (80.5%) reported that their parents were married, whereas 94 (19.5%) reported parental divorce. In terms of employment status, 174 participants (36.1%) were employed and 308 (63.9%) were unemployed. Study II was conducted independently from Study I with a separate sample. All participants were aged 18 years or older, met the relationship status criteria, and provided informed consent prior to participation. Prior to the commencement of data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Yıldız Technical University Institute of Social Sciences Ethics Committee (Protocol number 20250104138).

3.2 | Measures

3.2.1 | *Family Communication Scale (FCS)*

FCS, the scale of Geçer and Yıldırım (2023) aims to measure family communication. This one-dimensional scale has six items. The total score on a four-point scale with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 4 being "strongly agree" can range from 6 to 24. High scores indicate that participants' family of origin communicates effectively. Reliability analysis showed that the consistency reliability coefficient of the original scale was found to be 0.82. In the present study, participants were explicitly instructed to respond to the items by considering the communication patterns within their family of origin, rather than their current nuclear family.

3.2.2 | *Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS)*

DTS was originally developed by Larzelere and Huston (1980) to measure the trust experienced by individuals in romantic or marital relationships. The scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Çetinkaya et al. (2008). The scale consists of eight items and

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one dimension and is a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = Never, 7 = Always). The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 56 and the lowest score is 8, and a high score indicates a high level of trust in the relationship. The internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish version of the DTS was 0.89.

3.2.3 | *Relationship Satisfaction Scale (RSS)*

RSS, the scale of Hendrick (1988), aims to measure relationship satisfaction in romantic or marital relationships. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Curun (2001). This one-dimensional scale has seven-items, seven-point Likert-type. High scores indicate that participants are more satisfied with their relationships. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale is 0.86.

3.3 | Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics 27 and AMOS Graphics 24. The subdimensions of the CCSS were organized according to the procedures recommended by the original authors. For the remaining unidimensional variables, item parceling was performed based on their factor loadings. Items were combined into parcels using the odd–even numbering technique, creating two parcels per construct. After parceling, mediation analyses were conducted through structural equation modeling (SEM). Considering the significant relationships among family communication, dyadic trust, couple communication satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, couple communication satisfaction was analyzed both as a consequence of dyadic trust and as a predictor of relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, the mediating roles of dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction in the relationship between family-of-origin communication and relationship satisfaction were tested. To evaluate the significance of indirect effects, bootstrap analysis was employed, providing a more robust assessment of mediation effects through the construction of confidence intervals for the estimated parameters.

3.4 | Results

3.4.1 | *Correlation Analysis*

The CCSS, adapted in this study, was found to have significant relationships with family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction. Correlation coefficients were interpreted based on Cohen's (1988) benchmarks, where 0.10 indicates a small, 0.30 a medium, and 0.50 a large effect size. Couple communication satisfaction was positively correlated with family communication ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), dyadic trust ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$), and relationship satisfaction ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate medium to large effect sizes for the associations between couple communication satisfaction and the related constructs. Correlation results are given in Table 2.

3.5 | Measurement Model

The measurement model consists of four latent variables: family communication, couple communication satisfaction, dyadic trust and relationship satisfaction, and 11 observed variables: two for family communication, two for dyadic trust, two for relationship satisfaction, and 5 for couple communication satisfaction. According to results the model fit was satisfactory ($\chi^2/df = 2.235$, CFI = 0.976, GFI = 0.942, NFI = 0.958, TLI = 0.965, IFI = 0.976, SRMR = 0.0377, and RMSEA = 0.068). These results indicate that the observed indicators adequately and meaningfully represent their respective latent variables.

3.6 | Structural Model

The SEM results indicated that the structural model demonstrated a satisfactory fit to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.179$, CFI = 0.976, GFI = 0.942, NFI = 0.959, TLI = 0.967, IFI = 0.978, SRMR = 0.0377, and RMSEA = 0.070). In conclusion, according to the model, family communication predicted dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction, dyadic trust predicted couple communication satisfaction and relationship satisfaction, and couple communication satisfaction predicted relationship satisfaction positively, respectively. All standardized coefficients are presented in Figure 1.

3.7 | Bootstrapping

The bootstrapping technique, conducted through the Gaskin estimand plugin, was applied to the full mediation model, which was hypothesized and identified as the best-fitting model based on the SEM results. The direct associations were statistically significant, indicating that dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction serve as mediating variables in the relationship between family communication and relationship satisfaction. The bootstrapping analysis confirmed the significance of multiple indirect pathways. Specifically, the serial mediation effect of family communication on relationship satisfaction through dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction was significant ($\beta = 0.143$, 95% CI [0.062, 0.271]). Regarding simple mediation effects, family communication indirectly predicted couple communication satisfaction via dyadic trust ($\beta = 0.089$, 95% CI [0.046, 0.151]) and predicted relationship satisfaction via dyadic trust ($\beta = 0.587$, 95% CI [0.288, 0.955]). Furthermore, the indirect path from family communication to relationship satisfaction through couple communication satisfaction was significant ($\beta = 0.207$, 95% CI [0.087, 0.402]). Finally, dyadic trust indirectly predicted relationship satisfaction through couple communication satisfaction ($\beta = 0.171$, 95% CI [0.096, 0.265]). These outcomes, offering additional support for the significance of both direct and indirect paths, are presented in Table 4.

3.8 | Conclusion of Study II

The second study elucidated the structural associations linking family and couple dynamics. The findings indicated that family communication predicted relationship satisfaction not only directly but also indirectly through the mediating roles of dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction.

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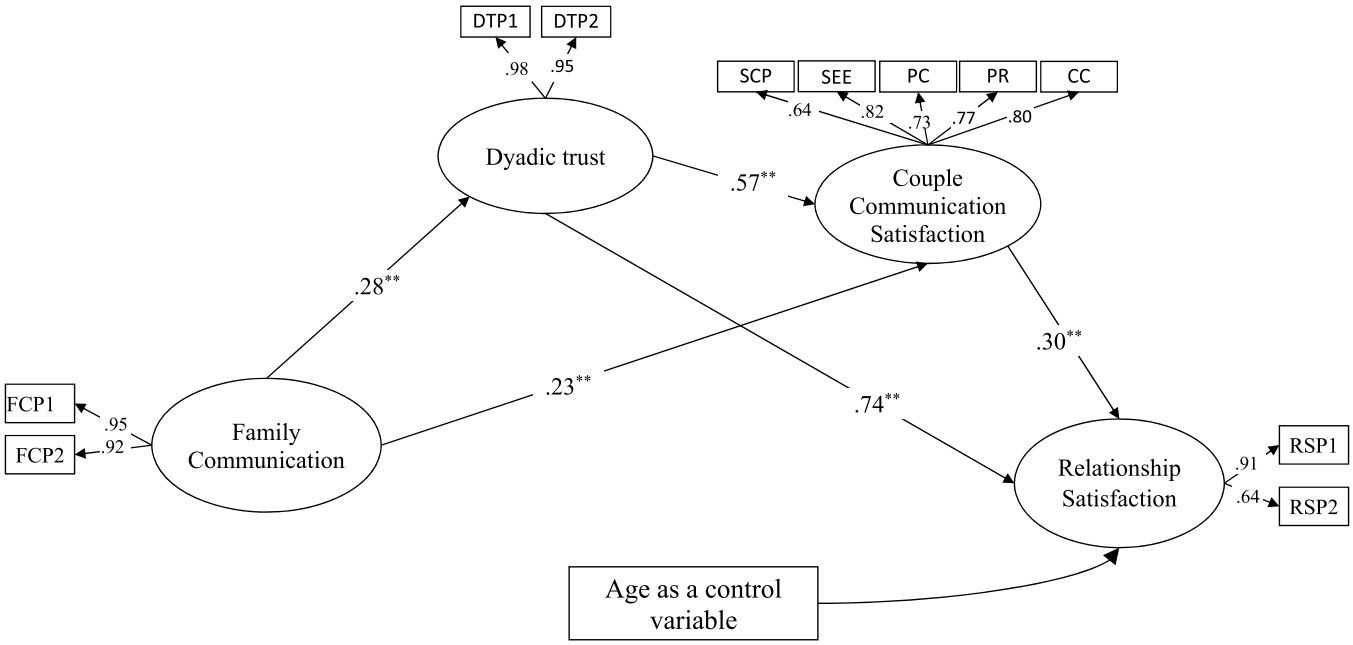


FIGURE 1 | Structural equation modeling for the serial mediation model. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$. CC, communication characteristics; DTP, parcel of dyadic trust; FCP, parcel of family communication; PC, partner contribution; PR, partner responsiveness; RSP, parcel of relationship satisfaction; SCP, self-communication presence; SEE, self-emotional experience.

TABLE 4 | Parameters and 95% confidence interval (CI) for the paths of the final model.

Model pathways	Estimated	95% CI	
		Lower	Upper
Direct link			
Family communication → Dyadic trust	0.276	0.146	0.405
Family communication → Couple communication satisfaction	0.229	0.098	0.344
Dyadic trust → Couple communication satisfaction	0.574	0.446	0.683
Couple communication satisfaction → Relationship satisfaction	0.309	0.169	0.452
Dyadic trust → Relationship satisfaction	0.728	0.599	0.847
Indirect link			
Family communication → Dyadic trust → Couple communication satisfaction	0.089	0.046	0.151
Family communication → Dyadic trust → Couple communication satisfaction → Relationship satisfaction	0.143	0.062	0.271
Family communication → Dyadic trust → Relationship satisfaction	0.587	0.288	0.955
Family communication → Couple communication satisfaction → Relationship satisfaction	0.207	0.087	0.402
Dyadic trust → Couple communication satisfaction → Relationship satisfaction	0.171	0.096	0.265

4 | Discussion

The present study advances the literature on couple and family dynamics by validating the CCSS within a Turkish cultural context and situating it within a broader nomological framework encompassing family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction. Beyond confirming its psychometric properties, this study fills a theoretical gap by conceptualizing communication satisfaction as a systemic construct intertwined with trust, relational adjustment, and family dynamics. Consistent with family systems theory, the findings provide strong evidence for the cross-cultural validity of the CCSS and its applicability in research settings. Furthermore, the results suggest potential utility for clinical practice, underscoring the cultural relevance of assessing communication satisfaction in the Turkish context. Turkish society embodies a distinctive intersection of collectivist and individualist orientations, wherein traditional expectations surrounding marriage and family persist alongside rapidly modernizing relational practices (Yildiz et al. 2025). Sociocultural contexts shape how couples interpret and experience communication satisfaction. Marital communication often reflects intergenerational expectations and familial approval, whereas nonmarital romantic communication tends to emphasize individual autonomy and peer norms (Mallory 2022). Demonstrating MI across relational groups supports the cross-cultural validity of the construct and

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highlights the importance of situating relational processes within diverse cultural settings.

Overall, the findings support the cross-cultural validity of the CCSS and demonstrate that couple communication satisfaction operates as a systemic construct embedded within family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction, reflecting both universal and culture-specific processes. To achieve these aims, the research was conducted in two phases. In Study I, the CCSS was translated into Turkish and back-translated into English by bilingual experts. Following revision, CFA supported the five-factor structure of the 11-item Turkish CCSS, with factor loadings ranging from 0.59 to 0.89, indicating adequate cultural fit. Despite its Western origins, the scale demonstrated structural validity in the Turkish sample, supporting the applicability of the spousal subsystem model in collectivist contexts. IRT analyses further indicated strong item discrimination following cultural adaptation. These findings provide strong evidence for the validity, reliability, and cultural sensitivity of the CCSS as an instrument suitable for use across different populations.

Moreover, the proposed five-dimensional construct yielded similar results in configurational, metric and scalar analyses based on relationship status for both married and romantically involved individuals. Marital status was treated as a categorical variable in the MI analysis. The primary objective of this analysis was to examine whether the scale maintained its construct validity across married and romantically involved participants. MI was tested for three main purposes: (1) to assess whether couple communication satisfaction carries the same conceptual meaning in both relationship types, (2) to ensure fair comparisons between these groups, and (3) to evaluate the potential need for relationship-type-specific approaches in couple therapy and intervention practices. Furthermore, the mosaic social structure of Turkish society, which reflects the coexistence of both conservative and secular influences (Görpe and Öksüz 2024), made it particularly important to examine whether the scale operated equivalently across different marital status groups. The CCSS demonstrated strong internal consistency, confirming a stable five-factor, 11-item structure with adequate discrimination and MI, supporting its validity and practical utility for assessing couple communication satisfaction.

Study II examined the relationships between family communication, dyadic trust, dyadic communication satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction. In addition, the mediating role of dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction in the relationship between family communication and relationship satisfaction was examined. As shown in Table 3, all variables were positively associated with couple communication satisfaction, highlighting the importance of relational and family dynamics within the spousal subsystem. These findings align with previous research (Johnson et al. 2022) and are consistent with the family systems perspective, which emphasizes continuous interaction among family subsystems. Healthy and effective couple communication is associated with greater psychological resilience and higher relational functionality (Lindblom et al. 2024). It is also linked to better emotional balance, healthier stress management, and more harmonious responses to relational challenges (Beach et al. 2023). Moreover, higher levels of communication are related to greater openness, mutual understanding, and the long-term stability of relationships (Emery and Finkel 2022). Overall, higher-quality couple communication is associated with greater functionality within the spousal subsystem and with more positive emotional interactions between partners.

Individuals occupy multiple roles across family contexts; one may belong to the spousal subsystem in their current family while simultaneously being part of the parental or child subsystem in their family of origin. These overlapping roles are associated with variations in interaction patterns across family systems (Tan et al. 2024). The findings revealed a significant association between family-of-origin communication and couple communication satisfaction, suggesting that relational processes are linked to broader family interactions and individual functioning (Darwiche et al. 2023). Accordingly, couple relationships can be understood more comprehensively within their familial and social context, where partners navigate shared life patterns and evolving roles that correspond with both personal and relational dynamics (Barton et al. 2021). Prioritizing a partner often requires daily adaptations that affect both behavior and emotion. Trust enhances enjoyment of shared experiences and overall relationship satisfaction by improving interaction quality (Nguyen et al. 2020). These dynamics align with the basic principles of the family systems approach, emphasizing the interdependence of partners within the relational system. As shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, dyadic trust and couple communication satisfaction significantly mediated the link between family communication and relationship satisfaction. These findings align with prior research emphasizing that relational and family dynamics jointly shape couple satisfaction (Haase 2023). Consistent with Bowen's Family Systems Theory, emotional processes transmitted across generations influence individuals' ability to develop trust and maintain healthy communication in adulthood. These intergenerational patterns influence relational adjustment by enhancing emotional awareness and promoting harmony within family interactions (Darwiche et al. 2022). Effective family communication contributes to healthier crisis management in romantic relationships and increased relational harmony by fostering resilience and relationship management skills in individuals (Prime et al. 2020; Deniz et al. 2023). Viewing couple relationships through the systemic lens of family communication and trust allows for a more comprehensive understanding of relational dynamics.

Relational processes have a dynamic structure, and each relationship dynamic may lead to the emergence of another dynamic (Zhu et al. 2024). Although interactions within the spousal subsystem involve multiple elements, couple communication appears to be a central component. Higher levels of communication are associated with greater joint decision-making and confidence between partners (Stanley and Markman 2020). Effective communication is also linked to a better understanding of emotional needs and higher sensitivity toward partners, while emotional reciprocity tends to co-occur with greater flexibility and relationship satisfaction (Silverman et al. 2023). In this context, it can be said that addressing the relational processes of individuals not only within the framework of couple dynamics but also within the context of wider family systems is critical for maintaining healthy relationship satisfaction.

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4.1 | Limitations and Future Research

This study highlights the importance of family communication, dyadic trust, couple communication satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction, yet it has some limitations. First, since a cross-sectional research design was used, it is not possible to talk about causal relationships between variables. Furthermore, the sample of the study may be limited to a specific demographic or cultural pattern, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Specifically, in Study II, a higher unemployment rate (63.9%) was observed compared to Study I. This disparity is largely attributable to the recruitment of participants from university classrooms, resulting in a sample composed predominantly of students who are not in the workforce. While employment status can be a stressor affecting relationship dynamics, this high rate reflects the student composition of the sample rather than involuntary job loss. To increase the validity and applicability of the findings, longitudinal and experimental studies should be conducted with couples in long-distance relationships, in different professional groups, and in different age ranges. In addition, this study focused mainly on relational variables and may have ignored other important factors such as cognitive and emotional regulation and stress level. Future studies addressing these variables will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics affecting couple communication and relationship satisfaction.

4.2 | Implications

Family and couples therapists can use the CCSS to assess couples' communication processes. In particular, considering the relationship between trust and relationship satisfaction, therapeutic techniques and psychoeducation aimed at improving the quality of trust and communication between couples can be implemented. Practically, the CCSS can serve as both a diagnostic tool and a therapeutic intervention. Therapists can review item-level responses with couples to identify discrepancies in perceived communication quality and foster immediate dialog. Furthermore, given the strong mediating role of dyadic trust, clinicians and counselors should prioritize trust-building interventions like emotionally focused techniques before addressing surface-level communication behaviors, particularly when working with couples who report negative family-of-origin experiences. From a family systems perspective, it is clear that couple therapies should not only focus on the current relationship of individuals but also address family system dynamics from the past. Therapeutic interventions addressing underlying family processes and past trust experiences are essential for enhancing relationship satisfaction. Accordingly, the CCSS serves as a practical tool for counselors to guide these interventions and objectively monitor treatment progress. To enhance relational well-being, policymakers and communities may consider developing family-couple counseling and support programs that emphasize communication processes within couples.

5 | Conclusion

The present study adapted the CCSS for use with a Turkish sample and examined the relationships among family communication, dyadic trust, and relationship satisfaction. Findings demonstrated that the CCSS exhibited strong psychometric validity and reliability, confirming its suitability for assessing couple communication in collectivist, non-Western contexts. The IRT and MI analyses further supported the scale's item-level discrimination and consistency across marital status groups. The results emphasized the central role of family communication, dyadic trust, and couple communication satisfaction in predicting relationship satisfaction. The influence of the family of origin emerged as a key factor, suggesting that communication patterns within the family-of-origin shape later relationship dynamics through trust and communication satisfaction. Importantly, dyadic trust was a stronger predictor of relationship satisfaction, highlighting trust as a primary protective factor in Turkish culture. Despite its contributions, the study's cross-sectional design limits causal inference; thus, longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to validate the proposed mediation model. In conclusion, the study contributes to the literature by validating a widely used measure in a new cultural context and offers practical implications for family therapists and policymakers seeking to develop culturally sensitive interventions to enhance relationship satisfaction.

Author Contributions

Ali Berke Körün was responsible for the writing, data collection, data analysis, and reporting of the article. Seydi Ahmet Satıcı supervised the writing, data analysis, and reporting of the article. Adam C. Jones supervised the writing and reporting of the article.

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Ethics Statement

This research was ethically approved by Yıldız Technical University Institute of Social Sciences Ethics Committee with document number 20250104138.

Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Data Availability Statement

Data will be available on request.

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