

**Assessing the Quality Of The Best Friend Questionnaire**  
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### **ABSTRACT**

The Best Friend Questionnaire is a new 22-adjective measure of the quality of one's relationship with one's best friend. The purpose of this research was to assess the quality of this measure and to suggest revisions. A total of 416 undergraduate students (133 male and 283 female) completed the Best Friend Questionnaire (BFQ), along with some other measures, in return for course credit. Three statistical analyses were completed to examine the quality of the BFQ. First, a factor analysis of the 22 items on the BFQ was done. This revealed different factor structures for men and women. Second, each item on the BFQ was correlated with the following question: How likely is it that you will be friends five years from now? For both men and women, many items were correlated with the perceived likelihood of the longevity of the relationship, but once again the relationships were different for men and women. Finally, an item analysis was conducted to determine which items were contributing to the internal consistency of this measure. All items had positive corrected item-total correlations. We were somewhat surprised by the different results for men and women, and believe that these differences may be due to inadequacies of the 22 items themselves. The 22 adjectives that were included in this first version of the BFQ were arbitrarily selected. In future research, we intend to ask a wide variety of people to describe their relationships with their best friends, and use those descriptions to create a revised version of the BFQ. In addition, we may expand the scope of this revised measure, to include descriptions of any type of relationship, so that this measure can be used in a wide variety of relationship contexts.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Each friendship in our lives is unique, characterized by different settings, activities, and expectations. Each friendship also has its strengths and weaknesses. The overall quality of one's friendships is an important part of the quality of life.

Friendship quality can be important for one's professional as well as one's personal life. For example, Winstead, Dertego, and Montgomery (1995) asked how workers feel during work-type interactions with their friends at work. Those with more satisfying friendships indicated higher job satisfaction.

A previous study examined the qualities of friends that were associated with relationship satisfaction. Cole and Bradac (1996) asked participants to describe satisfying relationships and the reasons for the satisfaction. Cole and Bradac categorized responses into 14 descriptions about the friend: cares about me, physically active/attractive, socially popular, admits mistakes, motivated and industrious, approachable, inspires and enriches my life, doesn't impose, emotionally balanced, similar interests, family oriented, open-minded, good communication skills, and not abusive.

However, in this research we wanted to focus on the aspects of the friendship itself, not the friend, that might be related to friendship quality.

The purpose of this study was to assist in the development of a new measure of friendship quality, the Best Friend Questionnaire (BFQ; see Appendix A). Specifically, we conducted item analyses and factor analyses to assess and improve the internal consistency and internal structure of the measure, and we correlated individual items on the BFQ with the expected longevity of the relationship to assess and improve its convergent validity.

### **METHOD**

#### **Subjects**

A total of 416 psychology under-graduates (133 male and 283 female) participated in this study for course credit. Their average age was 20.0 (SD 5.0). 61.0% were White, 11.7% Asian, 11.0% Hispanic, 9.1% Black, 0.7% Native American, and 6.5% Other.

#### **Measures**

The Best Friend Questionnaire (BFQ) is a self-report questionnaire with 5-point likert-type items. For this analysis, only the 22 items regarding actual friendships were used. Eight items on the BFQ were reverse-scored.

Perceived Longevity was assessed by asking participants to rate the likelihood that they would be friends with this person five years from now.

### **RESULTS**

Preliminary analyses showed that the variance-covariance matrix among the BFQ items was different for men and women (Box's  $M = 510$ ,  $F(253, 193777) = 1.87$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, all of the following analyses were conducted separately for men and women.

#### **Item Analysis**

Coefficient Alpha for the BFQ was .86 for men and .90 for women. Item analyses were then conducted to see if internal consistency could be increased further (see Tables 1 and 2). For men, all items had positive corrected item-total

correlations, and there were no items whose deletion increased coefficient alpha. For women, the deletion of the “Tedious” item increased coefficient alpha just slightly, but even this item had a positive corrected item-total correlation. Thus, no items need to be deleted to increase internal consistency.

**Factor Analysis**

The 22 items of the BFQ were factor analyzed using Maximum Likelihood Extraction. Based upon the Scree plot, the Maximum Likelihood criterion, and the Kaiser-Guttman rule, we decided to extract three factors for men and women. For each group, a large number of oblique rotations (Direct Oblimin) were examined and the rotations with the pattern matrix that came closest to the ideal of simple structure were selected. See Tables 3 and 4.

Two of these factors were substantially the same for men and women, but the remaining factor was different. For men, the factors seemed to measure the following three concepts: Fun, Caring, and Routine. For women, the factors seemed to measure Caring, Tense, and Routine. The BFQ will need revision, therefore, in order to be equally useful with both men and women.

**Convergent Validity**

Finally, we correlated each of the 22 items on the BFQ with the rated likelihood that the relationship would last at least another five years (Perceived Longevity). See Table 5. For men, friendships that were supportive, giving, not superficial, warm, rewarding, caring, satisfying, and loving were perceived as having a high probability of surviving five more years. For women, only three items (tedious, boring, distant) did not have statistically significant relationships with Perceived Longevity. For both men and women, no items had significant negative correlations with Perceived Longevity, indicating that no items need to be deleted to improve convergent validity.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to examine the initial psychometric properties of a new measure of friendship quality, the Best Friend Questionnaire. Overall, item analyses and convergent validity analyses for individual items showed that none of the existing items need to be deleted. However, although there was some similarity in the factor structures for men and women, there were also differences. This may indicate that men and women describe their relationships differently, or that the item scope of the BFQ is inadequate to capture all the underlying dimensions of friendship quality.

We are currently designing a new study to collect systematic descriptions of relationships, so that the number and scope of items on the BFQ can be increased. In addition, in our future research we will develop a multidimensional measure of relationship quality that is not restricted to best friend relationships.

**REFERENCES**

Cole, T. & Bradac, J. J. (1996). A lay theory of relational satisfaction with best friends. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 13*, 57-83.

Hussong, A. M. (2000). Distinguishing mean and structural sex differences in adolescent friendship quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 17*, 223-243.

Winstead, B. A., Derlega, V. J. & Montgomery, M. J. (1995). The quality of friendships at work and job satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 12*, 199-215.

**Table 1**  
**Item Analysis for Men**

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Open	.34	.86
Supportive	.51	.85
Tedious	.33	.86
Fun	.32	.86
Unfulfilling	.58	.85
Friendly	.57	.85
Boring	.43	.85
Giving	.45	.85
Superficial	.32	.86
Warm	.44	.85
Rewarding	.52	.85
Awkward	.51	.85
Caring	.48	.85
Distant	.40	.86
Comfortable	.51	.85
Tense	.46	.85
Satisfying	.61	.85
Loving	.38	.86
Strained	.52	.85
Trusting	.32	.86
Relaxed	.37	.86
Successful	.51	.85

Note. Items were coded as necessary so that all item scores indicate higher friendship quality.

**Table 2**  
**Item Analysis For Women**

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha if Item Deleted
Open	.46	.90
Supportive	.62	.90
Tedious	.21	.91
Fun	.50	.90
Unfulfilling	.61	.90
Friendly	.57	.90
Boring	.25	.90
Giving	.56	.90
Superficial	.39	.90
Warm	.62	.90
Rewarding	.68	.89
Awkward	.44	.90
Caring	.69	.90
Distant	.51	.90
Comfortable	.62	.90
Tense	.54	.90
Satisfying	.69	.89
Loving	.58	.90
Strained	.59	.90
Trusting	.53	.90
Relaxed	.56	.90
Successful	.67	.89

*Note.* Items were coded as necessary so that all item scores indicate higher friendship quality.

**Table 3**  
**Factor Analysis for Men**

Item	Factor			Communalities
	1	2	3	
Open	<b>.43</b>	-.13	.18	.34
Supportive	<b>.33</b>	<b>-.41</b>	.00	.42
Tedious	-.03	-.08	<b>-.86</b>	.40
Fun	<b>.56</b>	.14	.12	.30
Unfulfilling	<b>.43</b>	-.28	-.14	.45
Friendly	<b>.47</b>	-.33	.01	.46
Boring	<b>.48</b>	.01	-.14	.39
Giving	.18	<b>-.52</b>	-.05	.41
Superficial	.08	-.09	<b>-.47</b>	.40
Warm	.00	<b>-.76</b>	-.08	.55
Rewarding	<b>.41</b>	<b>-.37</b>	.01	.52
Awkward	<b>.59</b>	.05	-.12	.43
Caring	.08	<b>-.79</b>	.01	.60
Distant	.38	-.16	.01	.36
Comfortable	<b>.53</b>	-.17	.09	.41
Tense	<b>.54</b>	.19	<b>-.31</b>	.48
Satisfying	<b>.40</b>	<b>-.42</b>	-.06	.57
Loving	-.05	<b>-.72</b>	-.08	.50
Strained	<b>.57</b>	.09	-.25	.47
Trusting	<b>.46</b>	.16	-.10	.29
Relaxed	<b>.46</b>	.12	-.15	.33
Successful	<b>.55</b>	-.10	-.02	.46
<b>Factor Intercorrelations</b>				
Factor 1	1.00	-.26	-.25	
Factor 2	-.26	1.00	.05	
Factor 3	-.25	.05	1.00	

*Note.* Items were coded as necessary so that all item scores indicate higher friendship quality. Salient coefficients are in bold.

**Table 4**  
**Factor Analysis for Women**

Item	Factor			Communalities
	1	2	3	
Open	<b>.51</b>	.05	-.05	.30
Supportive	<b>.72</b>	.12	-.23	.53
Tedious	-.01	.11	<b>.41</b>	.20
Fun	<b>.49</b>	.20	-.13	.36
Unfulfilling	<b>.53</b>	.00	.29	.42
Friendly	<b>.61</b>	.09	-.05	.45
Boring	.10	.15	.16	.14
Giving	<b>.68</b>	-.05	-.04	.45
Superficial	.20	.04	<b>.49</b>	.29
Warm	<b>.70</b>	-.13	.17	.54
Rewarding	<b>.77</b>	-.13	.18	.59
Awkward	.18	<b>.42</b>	.15	.33
Caring	<b>.84</b>	-.07	-.06	.63
Distant	<b>.30</b>	<b>.36</b>	.12	.34
Comfortable	<b>.54</b>	.22	.05	.46
Tense	.18	<b>.57</b>	.18	.47
Satisfying	<b>.64</b>	.00	.28	.57
Loving	<b>.74</b>	-.22	.11	.49
Strained	.26	<b>.56</b>	.13	.48
Trusting	<b>.66</b>	-.04	-.09	.40
Relaxed	<b>.50</b>	<b>.39</b>	-.20	.48
Successful	<b>.74</b>	-.01	.02	.56
<b>Factor Intercorrelations</b>				
Factor 1	1.00	.33	.22	
Factor 2	.33	1.00	.25	
Factor 3	.22	.25	1.00	

*Note.* Items were coded as necessary so that all item scores indicate higher friendship quality. Salient coefficients are in bold.

**Table 5**  
**Correlations of BFQ with Perceived Longevity**

Item	Men	Women
Open	-.04	.17**
Supportive	.21*	.30**
Tedious	.05	.03
Fun	-.09	.18**
Unfulfilling	.01	.21**
Friendly	.16	.26**
Boring	-.03	.06
Giving	.24**	.27**
Superficial	.18*	.15**
Warm	.19*	.25**
Rewarding	.24**	.24**
Awkward	.15	.15**
Caring	.30**	.32**
Distant	.14	.12
Comfortable	.16	.31**
Tense	-.03	.12**
Satisfying	.29**	.21**
Loving	.19*	.27**
Strained	-.05	.18**
Trusting	.06	.24**
Relaxed	-.10	.23**
Successful	.16	.33**

*Note.* Items were coded as necessary so that all item scores indicate higher friendship quality.  
\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

## Appendix A Best Friend Questionnaire

Think about your relationship with your best friend. Your best friend might be someone of the same sex or someone of the opposite sex; someone you are related to or someone you are unrelated to. Your best friend is the person you feel closest to.

Write down his or her initials here: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been friends? \_\_\_\_\_

How likely is it that you will be friends five years from now?

Very UNlikely	Pretty UNlikely	Somewhat UNlikely	Somewhat Likely	Pretty Likely	Very Likely
1	2	3	4	5	6

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Below is a list of adjectives. Rate each adjective in terms of how well it describes your *relationship* with your best friend. Rate the adjectives based on how well they describe your relationship as it is *right now*, not as it was in the past or how you'd like it to be in the future.

Very INaccurate	Somewhat Inaccurate	Neither Accurate nor INaccurate	Somewhat Accurate	Very Accurate
1	2	3	4	5

Open            1 2 3 4 5

Awkward       1 2 3 4 5

Supportive    1 2 3 4 5

Caring           1 2 3 4 5

Tedious        1 2 3 4 5

Distant         1 2 3 4 5

Fun             1 2 3 4 5

Comfortable    1 2 3 4 5

UNfulfilling 1 2 3 4 5

Tense            1 2 3 4 5

Friendly        1 2 3 4 5

Satisfying      1 2 3 4 5

Boring          1 2 3 4 5

Loving           1 2 3 4 5

Giving          1 2 3 4 5

Strained         1 2 3 4 5

Superficial    1 2 3 4 5

Trusting         1 2 3 4 5

Warm            1 2 3 4 5

Relaxed          1 2 3 4 5

Rewarding     1 2 3 4 5

Successful      1 2 3 4 5

*See Over...*

Different people define the ideal friendship in different ways. How would you define it? Rate each adjective below in terms of how well it describes your idea of the *ideal friendship*. Rate the adjectives based on your *general* ideas of the ideal friendship, not your hopes for any *particular* friendship.

	Very INaccurate		Somewhat INaccurate		Neither Accurate nor INaccurate		Somewhat Accurate		Very Accurate		
	1		2		3		4		5		
Open	1	2	3	4	5	Awkward	1	2	3	4	5
Supportive	1	2	3	4	5	Caring	1	2	3	4	5
Tedious	1	2	3	4	5	Distant	1	2	3	4	5
Fun	1	2	3	4	5	Comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
Unfulfilling	1	2	3	4	5	Tense	1	2	3	4	5
Friendly	1	2	3	4	5	Satisfying	1	2	3	4	5
Boring	1	2	3	4	5	Loving	1	2	3	4	5
Giving	1	2	3	4	5	Strained	1	2	3	4	5
Superficial	1	2	3	4	5	Trusting	1	2	3	4	5
Warm	1	2	3	4	5	Relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
Rewarding	1	2	3	4	5	Successful	1	2	3	4	5