

Development and Pilot Testing of the New Moral Comfort Questionnaire

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BACKGROUND

- *Moral comfort* in nurses is a relatively understudied concept with no instrument to measure it.
- In contrast, moral distress is well-documented in the literature, with several instruments to measure it.
- Theoretically, moral comfort is the positive outcome (for nurses) of a moral situation, while moral distress is the negative outcome.
- Further exploration of factors that promote moral comfort is warranted beginning with the development and testing of an instrument to measure it.
- Moral Comfort Dimensions:
 - Power & Participation in Decision-Making
 - Nursing Expertise
 - Advocacy & Role Clarity
 - Ethical Environment
 - Peace (with one's decisions/actions)

PURPOSE

To test the reliability and validity of a new theoretically developed measure, Moral Comfort Questionnaire (MCQ).

METHODS

- **Design:** Cross-sectional psychometric research design
- **Sample & Setting:** 140 acute care staff nurses working on an in-patient nursing units and in the ED in 7 South Florida not-for-profit hospitals participated in this pilot study.
- **Recruitment:** 1) Flyers posted on nursing units, 2) Invitations to participate at staff meetings, via electronic mail, and by personal invitation.
- **Data Collection:** Participants completed 2 self-report surveys: 1) 28-item MCQ (new), 2) 21-item Moral Distress Scale – revised (MDS-R) (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$).
 - Each participant received a \$15 Amazon gift card.**
 - One hospital system did not allow nurses to receive compensation.
- **FAU IRB approval** obtained on 8/23/17. Data were collected between August 2017 through June 2018.

DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability Testing:

- **Test-Retest Reliability (Stability):** 32 nurses were recruited to take the MCQ a second time for original response comparison. The results were compared using the Pearson's correlation coefficient (target values: $r \geq .50$, $p \leq .05$).
 - Each participant received additional compensation.
- **Internal Consistency (Homogeneity):** Cronbach's alpha was calculated (target value $\geq .70$).

Validity Testing:

- **Content validity:** 3 content experts rated each the relevancy of MCQ items on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not relevant; 4 = very relevant). A content validity index was calculated (target $\geq 75\%$ agreement).
 - One item was removed.
 - Several items were reworded for clarity.
- **Discriminant Validity:** A correlation coefficient was calculated between the MCQ and MDS-R (frequency and intensity) to determine if a relationship exists between the measures.
- **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA):** A five-factor solution, principal components EFA was run using Varimax rotation and factor suppression value of .4.

RESULTS (continued)

Exploratory Factor Analysis:

- KMO = .741 indicating "middling" sample size adequacy
 - Complete data, $n = 121$
- Factor loadings ranged from .460 to .760
- Eigenvalues > 1 ; 51.2% of the variance

Factor	Eigenvalue	Items	Cronbach's α
1	5.88	14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	.860
2	3.03	1, 2, 6, 11, 12, 13, 17	.507 ¹
3	2.10	3, 4, 5, 22, 23	.617 ²
4	1.83	7, 8, 9, 10	.644
5	1.50	20, 21	.671

Notes:

1. Deleting item 2 resulted in a Cronbach's α of .784 for factor 2
2. Overall MCQ reliability: Deleting MCQ items 2, 3, 4, 5, 22, 23 resulted in a Cronbach's α of .845

RESULTS

Test	Result
Test-Retest Reliability	$r = .769$, $p < .001$
Internal Consistency	Cronbach's $\alpha = .831^1$
Content Validity Index (CVI)	CVI = 84%
Discriminant Validity: MCQ/MDS-R Frequency	$r = -.193$, $p = .055$
Discriminant Validity: MCQ/MDS-R Intensity	$r = .085$, $p = .402$

Note:

1. Deleting MCQ item 2 resulted in a Cronbach's α of .851



DISCUSSION

- Further exploration of the concept of moral comfort is needed as a stepping-stone to investigating ways to promote moral comfort in nurses.
- The MCQ provides an instrument that may be used in future research studies designed to explore moral comfort in nurses.
- Factors 1, 2, 4, and 5 aligned theoretically with moral comfort dimensions found in the literature, however, factor 3 did not.
- An imbalance of the number of items loading onto each factor was noted potentially requiring deletion of redundant items for factors with more items and addition of items to factors with less items.
- Revision, addition, and deletion of items will be made prior to further testing of the MCQ.
- The small sample size was a limitation of this pilot study.
- Results support further psychometric testing of a revised version of the MCQ on a larger sample size (minimum 10 participants per item).