

## **COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE QUESTIONNAIRE – CONCLUSIONS FROM MARITAL STUDIES**

**Maria Kaźmierczak, Mieczysław Plopa**  
University of Gdańsk, Poland

**Summary.** The studies examined the role of mutual support, commitment and depreciation of a partner for a husband's and wife's satisfaction with a relationship. Theory suggests that those three categories of marital interactions are crucial for the quality of relationships. Support, commitment and depreciation were assessed by the Communication in Marriage Questionnaire (KKM) created by M. Kaźmierczak and M. Plopa. 496 couples were recruited to the studies, which were conducted in a correlation paradigm. Satisfaction with marriage was assessed by Good Marriage Questionnaire (KDM-2) created by M. Plopa and J. Rostowski. Results indicated that support, commitment and aggressive behaviors have a significant, predictable and discriminable effect on satisfaction with marriage. Furthermore, "the diversified similarity rule" proposed by Rostowski was confirmed. In general, spouses perceive their own behaviors similarly as well as, in a similar way they assess behaviors of their partner, regardless of the level of their satisfaction. Still, it is the similarity connected with different, more or less adaptive patterns of behaviors. Communication in Marriage Questionnaire seems to be a reliable and valid method of analyzing interactions between spouses.

### **Introduction**

Over the past few decades there has been a proliferation of research on marital interactions. Rostowski (1986a, p. 6) states that in modern societies we encounter the change in defining the institution of marriage itself. We witness the process of "desocialization and personalization" of a marital relationship. The author concludes that stability and development of marriage depends mainly not on economic nor traditional factors, but on personality and character traits, partners' system of values and the way they see each other (Rostowski, 1986a, p. 8; 1986b, p. 44). Marriage stabilizes lives of two people and facilitates cooperation as well as creates new, common goals.

---

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Maria Kaźmierczak: University of Gdańsk, Institute of Psychology, ul. Pomorska 68, 80-343 Gdańsk.

The special unity of two persons in a marital relationship is emphasized by Braun-Gałkowska (1985, 1992) as well, who says not about “the sum” of two people, but about “integrity” – new, total quality (exclusive, stable) built by mutual influences of a husband and a wife. This special “integrity” is being developed due to realization of common needs, goals as well as creation of a similar purpose in life, which results in higher level of psychological well-being. Definition of marriage mentioned above reflects theses of Systems Theory, which analyzes patterns of interactions between family members in order to improve them. Systems Theory postulates that a family or a marital relationship is a dynamic system of “mutually dependent elements” (Mostwin, 1992, p. 33; Plopa, 2004). Each of family members, in the context of changing reality, takes on a specific role in the system. That is why, mutual interactions between spouses are one of the main elements of this system. Ziemska (1979), Braun-Gałkowska (1987) or Plopa (2004) emphasize the essential role of helping behaviors, process of communication and aggressive behaviors in partners’ everyday life.

A lot of authors conducting research on marriage postulate that reciprocal support and proper communication between partners are crucial fundamentals of a satisfying relationship (e.g., Plopa, 2004, 2005). Both, helping behaviors and good communication are connected with “partners’ maturity towards marriage” – mainly with psychological maturity, which consists of the level of intellectual, personal, emotional and social development (Rostowska, 2001, 2003). Rostowska concludes that a realistic way of thinking, rational perception of reality, logical and verbal abilities or imagination (intellectual maturity) are reflected in good decisions and behaviors appropriate to a particular situation connected with emotional control. Such people communicate properly with each other, act fast or carefully depending on the situation, which enhances the efficiency of their behaviors (Ryś, 1999; Ziemska, 1979). Both partners should present similar and suitable level of intellectual development. Furthermore, as Rostowska (2003) postulates, the personality factor of maturity is reflected in individual, autonomic actions connected with a strong will, one’s views or a system of values. A spouse mature in the aspect of personality is someone that helps others, is sensitive to others’ needs or problems and acts to improve their situation. Additionally, Rostowska as well as Ryś state that emotional maturity results in the stability of affect, in “being protected against” (certainly to a particular extent) mood changes and frustration. Such a person differentiates between emotional reactions properly, what facilitates acting efficiently in particular situational contexts – so, it enables effective support and good communication with a partner as well. What is more, according to Rostowska, we can also say about social maturity. There are six levels of social emotions’ differentiation, although not every person finds himself on higher levels. The lowest level of social emotions’ development is “the expectation of receiving” connected with treating people as the permanent source of help and various favors, which is intertwined with egotism as well as non – adaptive functioning in a marriage and in a family. A “being to nice or angry” stadium is reflected in very extreme behaviors – in order to reach one’s goals, a person could be profusely warm, empathetic or may inflame easily. A next stadium is “the ability of compromising” – connected with emo-

tional control and objective view of a situation, which is an essential element of a conflict resolution process, also in a marital and a family everyday life. A socially mature spouse is able “to present others with something” as well – what constitutes a source of great satisfaction for him/her. Finally, socially mature partners have abilities of “creative, satisfying cooperation”. A relationship like that is not a consumer one, but spouses concentrate on the realization of higher values (mutual interests, social work etc.), (Ziemska,1979). Partners’ well-being becomes a value itself. Spouses’ behaviors are characterized by emotional deepness, what results in marital happiness.

A great role of helping behaviors and communication for marriage stability and duration is reflected in various typologies of functions fulfilled by marital relationships. M. Ziemska (1973, 1979) underlines the meaning of partners’ reciprocal acceptance for emotional climate in a family. Respect for a spouse enables the creation of a close, psychological bond with him/her and due to this, the realization of, so essential, nurturing needs (helping others as well as receiving support from them, which includes one’s nearest and dearest, so also a partner). H. Sęk (1985), amongst crucial functions of marital relationships, enumerates supporting each other in self-development. Fulfilled, basic needs are strong predictors of stability and high quality of marriage. Z. Tyszka (1979, p. 77), who defines marriage as “a legal, stable relationship of a woman and man who live together and cooperate in order to enhance psychological well-being of family members, and particularly to bring up children and support each other (...)”, also says about a great role of helping behaviors and proper communication for the quality of a marital relationship. The author mentions such functions of marriage like an economic one (providing material resources for family members), a protective function (taking interest in physical and material safety of the youngest and the oldest members of family), recreational functions (spending partner’s spare time together, common interest in well-being of family members etc.), emotional functions (fulfilling emotional needs and expression of one’s personality).

M. Argyle (1991) states that a satisfying marital relationship is “the most effective form of social support” and due to this fact, it protects against stress of everyday life. It is of utmost importance that this support is reciprocal. Helping a spouse is reflected in giving him/her good advice, in emotional and financial support, in cooperation, also managing of “mundane” matters – in other words, it is based on appropriate communication between partners. It enables to create “a complete relationship”, in which spouses know how to communicate efficiently and how to bolster partners’ well-being. Broadly speaking, in connection with the subject matter of maturity mentioned above, those people love “in a mature way” – and such love consists of, as Ryś (1999) postulates: mutual presence (being close to a partner), exclusiveness (loyalty towards a spouse), empathizing (feelings of trust and ability of understanding partners’ views, acts and emotions) and mutual support (the symbol of a deep, mature love).

By contrast, improper communication between partners and the lack of support from a spouse may result in conflicts, which have a detrimental influence on the individual physical and psychological health as well as on functioning of the entire family. Marital conflicts are being connected with depressive symptoms of partners, eat-

ing disorders, alcoholism, domestic violence or even spousal homicides. Various authors say about “equal” (based on partnership) and “non-equal” style of communication between spouses. In the “equal” style, partners respect their views, desires and needs, what increases tolerance and protects against critical perception of each other. On the other hand, it allows for independence of actions. Spouses do not want to control each other and try to directly reveal their real views and motives of individual behaviors (Rembowski & Rostowski, 1986; Ryś, 1999). Two non-equal styles are characterized by: 1. self-concentration – on one’s own opinions, goals, needs – *the egocentric style*; 2. subordination to a partner and resignation from one’s needs, aspirations, plans etc. – *the altruistic style*. When communication process is non-equal it can result in a conflict.

Z. Celmer (1989) enumerates nine main areas of conflicts in a relationship: 1) intellectual differences between spouses; 2) temperamental differences; 3) differences in interests; 4) differences in attitudes towards children’s upbringing; 5) different patterns of behaviors learned in childhood; 6) financial problems; 7) sex life problems; 8) contacts with friends; 9) marital gender roles (e.g., Ryś, 1999). Fincham and Beach (1999) noted that the frequency and the character of conflicts can be modified by stressors that exist in social surroundings of a couple. Still, many authors underline that not an every conflict exerts a completely negative influence on a marriage functioning (e.g., Trawińska, 1977; Ryś, 1999; Rostowska, 2001; Braun-Gałkowska, 2003; Beisert, Liberska & Matuszewska, 2003) – some of them may increase the quality of a marital relationship, because partners could notice particular problems in their marriage, analyze and resolve them. However, a damaging aspect of troubled interactions (a destructive influence of conflicts) is forcefully emphasized.

### **The questionnaire’s construction**

In order to analyze marital interaction styles we created “Communication in Marriage Questionnaire” in two versions: self-report of behaviors and description of partner’s behaviors. We have been working on a scale between the years 2001 – 2003. Over two thousand married people took part in our studies. The process of the questionnaire’s construction was complicated and its detailed description can be found in a book “Marital and Family Bonds. Methods of Analyses” (“Więzi w Małżeństwie i Rodzinie. Metody Badań”) by Mieczysław Plopa (2005). It should be noted that both versions of the test were created on the basis of information gathered from spouses and linked with their daily interactions. Partners were asked about helping and aggressive behaviors as well as those, connected with their mutual communication. Those three types of behaviors were chosen for their, above mentioned and well depicted by specialists, role in influencing marital quality. Participants gave us information on both, one’s own and partner’s behaviors. In that way, items represent typical and common behaviors in relationships. Furthermore, we could measure self-image of a husband/a wife and his/her attitude towards a partner (on specific behav-

ior scales). This methodological paradigm follows Pietrzyk (1994) theses that studies on marriage are the most effective when self-description of behaviors as well as perception of spouse's behaviors are included. Analyses of data gathered in that way should have an interpersonal character.

During the studies, as a result of explanatory and confirmatory analyses, three dimensions of behaviors in two versions of the questionnaire were defined (Kaźmierczak & Plopa, 2005):

Marital Support Scale (MSS): showing respect for a partner, noticing his/her efforts; taking interest in his/her problems and needs; participating in the process of resolving mutual problems; so, supporting a partner in various situations of the everyday life (e.g. "I am interested in my partner's successes and problems").

Marital Commitment Scale (MCS): connected with verbal and non-verbal communication skills; the ability of creating the ambience of common understanding and cooperation in a relationship; revealing one's emotions; emphasizing the importance of a partner as a person to us; diversity of an everyday routine (various ways of spending couple's spare time together); the ability to compromise (e.g. "I hug a partner and kiss him").

Depreciation Scale (DS): being aggressive towards a partner; dominating a spouse; control over partners' actions; lack of respect for partners' dignity (e.g. "I offend a partner").

In studies conducted in order to construct the test, we found that two its versions are reliable (the Cronbach's alpha for all dimensions of both test's versions exceeded 0.70). Furthermore, they were theoretically valid (Kaźmierczak, Plopa, 2005).

MSS coexisted with such positive personality traits as warmth to others, emotional stability or vitality in behaviors. It was also connected with a secure attachment style in a marriage. MCS was associated with e.g. emotional stability or expansiveness in actions as well as with a secure attachment style in a relationship. DS, on the other hand, coexisted with e.g. neuroticism, oversensitiveness or low openness. Moreover, it was associated with insecure attachment styles in a marriage – ambivalent and avoidant.

In addition, it should be stressed that the above mentioned pattern of connections between three dimensions of marital communication and attachment styles was obtained in the case of two versions of the test (my behaviors – my attachment style; my partner's behaviors – my attachment style).

On the basis of data collected from almost two thousand women and men normalization of the questionnaire was successfully completed (Kaźmierczak & Plopa, 2005).

The purpose of current studies was to explore the quality of marital relationships with a created KKM measure. Presented analyses are a part of a larger project realized by M. Kaźmierczak (2005a) in her doctoral dissertation.

The following analyses are arranged into two parts.

First, we intent to confirm connections between interactions with a partner and the marital quality. Theoretical background of analyses presented in that part has already been given. Marital support and commitment are expected to correlate posi-

tively with satisfaction with a relationship. Behaviors defined as “depreciation factor” are expected to exert the opposite effect diminishing the level of marital satisfaction.

Second, we test “the diversified similarity rule” proposed by Rostowski, which gives us further possibilities of diagnosing the emotional climate in a relationship with KKM. J. Rostowski (1986a, 1986b;1987) stresses that in the psychological literature a consensus seems to have emerged that similarity between partners is associated with marital satisfaction. Partners’ similarity exerts a great impact on their marital life – it makes a partner more attractive to us, it facilitates compromise, it makes spouse’s behaviors more clarified and reasonable. As a result, our perception of a partner becomes more positive as we share a lot of views, emotions and feel accepted by him/her. Rostowski states that the crucial issue is not just the similarity itself, but a score that partners obtain on particular dimensions, on which they are being compared. That is why, the author formulates “the diversified similarity rule” in the aspect of personality traits, but it may be relevant to describing behavioral and social context of similarity as well. Rostowski says that “particular traits should be on the certain level and in a particular form” to exert a benevolent influence on marriage quality. This rule was confirmed by Braun-Galkowska (1985) in her studies. The authors of presented article postulate that “the diversified similarity rule” may be suitable for the explanation of the connection between spouses’ behaviors based, amongst many factors, on personality (e.g., Plopa, 2004, 2005) and satisfaction with a relationship. If our questionnaire is an appropriate, valid method of assessing marital quality, less satisfied partners should describe more aggressive behaviors and less helping behaviors or connected with commitment (version 1 of the questionnaire) than happy couples – and they should be similar in those perceptions (what is predicted by Rostowski). We decided to test this hypothesis.

## **Method**

### **Procedure**

Studies were conducted in a correlation paradigm. Partners received a set of questionnaires to complete. Those tests were given to participants by researchers or by researchers’ assistants who were aware of the studies’ goals. In each case, participants were asked to fulfill questionnaires alone and not to consult with a spouse. Then, in the shortest period of time possible, participants were to return sets of tests directly to a researcher or a researcher’s assistant. Owing to the active commitment of researchers’ assistants the number of participants increased.

### **Sample**

In a presented article we describe the results of studies in which 496 couples were enrolled. There were two groups of participants – 301 couples (the study was conducted in the autumn and in the winter of 2003) and 195 couples (the study was carried out in the spring and in the summer of 2004). Due to the limited space of this article

as well as in order to increase the clarity of analyses described, we present results for two samples together. On the other hand, as we want this article to be as detailed as possible, we describe demographic characteristic of two groups separately. We wish to show that explicit similarities between samples allow us, when it is desired, to join data collected in two studies.

**First sample.** A total of 301 were recruited to the study. Participants were mainly from the region of Gdańsk and Elbląg – from bigger and smaller cities and villages. As it comes to age, the group was very diversified. The female average age was 36.5, and the male average age was 38.7. Women were between 20 and 74 years old; the youngest man was 22 and the oldest was 78. Due to this, the length of marriage was various. The average marriage lasted 14 years. There were people married for about half of a year as well as a couple married for 54 years. Spouses knew each other before the wedding for 2.8 years on average. The group presented different levels of education. Most people graduated from high school. The majority of couples had two children. The average age of a child was 15.4 years old. The youngest children were few months old and the oldest “child” was 53.

**Second sample.** 195 couples took part in a study. Like in the first sample, the majority of participants were from the region of Gdańsk and Elbląg – from towns as well as villages. Spouses differed in age. The female average age was 36.7, and the male average age was 39.2. The youngest woman was 18 and the oldest – 68 years old; men were between 19 and 74 years old. Like in the first study, marriages lasted a various period of time. A medium length of a marriage was 14.2 years. Some spouses were married for few months, but there was also a couple living together for 47 years. People knew each other before the wedding for about three years. The majority of participants graduated from high school. The average age of their children was 13.6. The youngest children were few months old and the oldest “child” was 45 years old.

## **Measures**

In the present study the following instruments were administered: (1) Communication in Marriage Questionnaire (KKM) by M. Kaźmierczak and M. Plopa (2005) – self-reported behaviors; (2) Communication in Marriage Questionnaire (KKM) by M. Kaźmierczak and M. Plopa (2005) – description of partner’s behaviors; (3) Good Marriage Questionnaire (KDM-2) by M. Plopa and J. Rostowski (Plopa,2005) – a questionnaire which measures satisfaction with a marital relationship.

## **Results and discussion**

### **Interactions with a partner and individual satisfaction with marriage**

We decided to analyze whether one’s own interpersonal behaviors as well as perception of a partner are predictors of one’s individual satisfaction with marriage. With this end in view, multiple linear regression (enter method) analysis was carried out.

Table 1. Individual behaviors in marriage and perception of a partner as predictors of one's satisfaction with a relationship – multiple linear regression (enter method) analysis

Behaviors in a marriage	Standardized coefficients with female satisfaction with marriage	t	Standardized coefficients with male satisfaction with marriage	t
MSS – self-reported behaviors	0,22	3.54***	0.18	2.31*
MCS – self-reported behaviors	0.05	0.90	0.12	1.82 <sup>a</sup>
DS – self-reported behaviors	-0.06	-1.48	-0.12	-2.10*
MSS – description of partner's behaviors	0.42	5.43***	0.24	2.92*
MCS – description of partner's behaviors	-0.06	-1.03	0.08	1.11
DS – description of partner's behaviors	-0.17	-3.78***	-0.05	-0.84
R	0.72	0.63		
R sq	0.52	0.40		
adj. R sq	0.51	0.39		
F	74.87***	41.91***		

\*\*\* p < ,001    \*\* p < ,01    \* p < ,05    <sup>a</sup>p < ,10

It is apparent that the model's ability to account for variation in satisfaction is considerable for each sex. In the group of women, 52% of the variation in relationship satisfaction is accounted for by one's own interpersonal behaviors and by one's perceptions of partner's behaviors. For male satisfaction,  $R^2 = 0.39$ . When we consider many factors which influence marital satisfaction and were not included in the model, this predictive power is substantial. However, as we see, some gender differences in the model's prediction power is noticeable. Female satisfaction seems to be better explained. Support received from a husband (satisfaction enhancement) and his aggressive behaviors (satisfaction is diminished) as well as helping him (satisfaction is increased) exert unique effects on wife's satisfaction. In the group of men, supporting wife as well as receiving help (satisfaction enhancement) and individual aggressive behaviors (satisfaction is diminished) make a unique significant contribution to the predictive power of the equation. In the case of husband's behaviors linked to commitment,  $p < 0.10$  level of significance was reached, so we can say only about some tendency of enhancing male satisfaction.

Overall, the commitment factor seems to be connected in the less significant way with marital quality. It may be the case that arranging nice surprises or organizing activities during spare time is fairly difficult to remember as it is not connected with extreme emotions, like in the situation of receiving/giving help or in that, where aggression is encountered.



As a whole, the results of the analysis described above indicate that “marital behaviors” factor, as defined in this study, has a significant, predictable and discriminable effect on one’s satisfaction with marriage.

### Similarity of partners’ behaviors and satisfaction with marriage

We isolated two groups with the highest and the lowest level of general satisfaction with marriage as measured by KDM-2. The medium fraction of the group was omitted during analyses, because of its non-homogenic character, what is advised by methodologists (e.g., Brzeziński, 1996). A general linear model – repeated measures procedure was carried out in order to confirm that more satisfied spouses are similar to each other in the aspect of high level of commitment, support and low level of aggressive behaviors; low adjusted couples should be also similar, but in the negative pattern of behaviors (low support, low commitment and high depreciation).

Table 2. Results of testing the effects of one’s own behaviors and partner’s own behaviors in groups of satisfied and not happy marital relationships

The source of intraindividual effects	The level of effects’ probability		
	F	Df	Eta <sup>2</sup>
The type of a behavior***	343.406***	1.716	0.458
The type of a behavior x The level of satisfaction***	57.392***	1.716	0.124
A participant	0.351	1.000	0.001
A participant x The level of satisfaction <sup>a</sup>	3.684 <sup>a</sup>	1.000	0.009
The type of a behavior x A participant x The level of satisfaction ***	241.768***	1.412	0.373
The level of satisfaction (intragroup factor) ***	92.70	1	***10.186

\*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 <sup>a</sup>p < .10

The type of behavior: MSS, MCS, DS; A participant: 1 – self-reported behaviors; 2 – self-reported behaviors of a partner; The level of satisfaction: general satisfaction with marriage after isolating 4 groups: a group 1 – the lowest quartile and a group 4 – the highest quartile

As a Table 2 shows, there is an unique effect of the intrapersonal factor “the type of a behavior”, which confirms that this variable is multidimensional – different frequency of particular behaviors is noticed in more or less satisfying relationships. This is also verified by the interaction of “the level of satisfaction” and “the type of a behavior”, which reached the most stringent significance level. There is no main effect of “a participant” factor, which means that self-description and self-description of a partner are similar in particular couples. Interaction of “a participant” and “the level of satisfaction” factors (tendency level) confirms that, regardless of the quality of marriage, spouses perceive themselves in a similar way. However, there are differences

between two groups of relationships – less or more satisfied – in the frequency of engaging in particular behaviors (support, commitment and depreciation).

A Table 3 and a Figure 1 present simple effects of satisfaction in their influence on behaviors – happy partners perceive themselves as more supporting and committed in communication, but less aggressive towards a spouse than those, dissatisfied.

Table 3. Simple effects of satisfaction with marriage on partners' behaviors

The type of behavior	Self-description of behaviors					Self-description of partner's behaviors				
	Low satisfaction (n = 211)		High satisfaction (n = 212)		t	Low satisfaction (n = 210)		High satisfaction (n = 207)		t
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Support	36.11	7.31	44.00	5.11	-12.86***	35.29	7.59	44.79	5.24	-14.85***
Communication	28.13	6.26	33.24	5.67	-8.80***	27.39	6.37	34.70	5.60	-12.46***
Depreciation	26.26	6.96	20.25	5.76	9.68***	27.01	7.15	19.77	5.92	11.29***

\*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 <sup>a</sup>p < .10

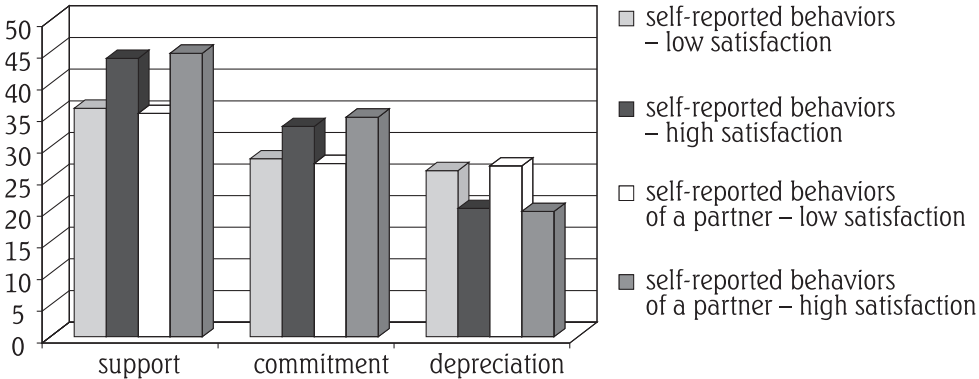


Figure 1. Mean differences between more and less satisfied couples on behavior dimensions

It may be concluded that “the diversified similarity rule” is confirmed in our studies. Partners' behavior styles are always similar in a particular couple, but, depending on the level of satisfaction, they are more or less adaptive (see – simple effects of

satisfaction [a Table 3, a Figure 1]). In other words, above analyses of simple effects indicate that the fact of assessing one's marriage as less/more satisfying influence the way he/she perceives himself/herself in a relationship.

Subsequently, we decided to assess the level of similarity between self-description of behaviors (version 1 of the questionnaire) and perception of the same (our) behaviors by a spouse in less or more satisfying relationships. Once again, two groups with the highest and the lowest level of general satisfaction with marriage, as measured by KDM-2, were classified. A general linear model – repeated measures procedure was carried out.

Table 4. Results of testing the effects of one's own behaviors and assessment of partner's behaviors in groups of satisfied and not happy marital relationships

The source of intraindividual effects	The level of effects' probability		
	F	Df	Eta <sup>2</sup>
The type of a behavior ***	765.010***	1.237	.656
The type of a behavior x The level of satisfaction ***	259.115***	1.237	.393
A person assessed***	26.916***	1.000	.063
A person assessed x The level of satisfaction ***	16.310***	1.000	.039
The type of a behavior x A person assessed ***	13.098***	1.346	.032
The type of a behavior x A person assessed x The level of satisfaction ***	27.199***	1.346	.064
The level of satisfaction (intragroup factor) ***	87.373***	1	.179

The type of behavior: MSS, MCS, DS; A person assessed: 1 – self-reported behaviors; 2 – assessment of partner's behaviors; The level of satisfaction: general satisfaction with marriage after isolating 4 groups: a group 1 – the lowest quartile and a group 4 – the highest quartile

All effects analyzed reached the stringent level of significance, but again, Eta<sup>2</sup> parameters indicate that the largest differences are connected with “the type of behavior” factor and its interaction with “the level of satisfaction”. The effect of an intraindividual variable “type of behavior” confirms that this construct is not unidimensional. Various patterns of behaviors are noticeable among more or less satisfied couples, which is presented in more detailed way in a Table 5 and a Figure 2. Regardless of their level of satisfaction, partners perceive their own behaviors and behaviors of a partner (“a person assessed”) similarly – more positively in happy couples and less – in low adjusted ones. It is confirmed by the lack of a main effect of “a person assessed” factor. So, a spouse perceives us in a fairly similar way as we describe ourselves (differences reached a weak, tendency level) – what is specially apparent in the group of high adjusted married people. Due to this fact, as we suppose, interaction effects between “a person assessed” factor and other variables are weak.

Table 5. Simple effects of satisfaction with marriage on partners' behaviors

The type of behavior	Self-description of behaviors					Description of partner's behaviors				
	Low satisfaction (n = 211)		High satisfaction (n = 212)		t	Low satisfaction (n = 210)		High satisfaction		t
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Support	36.11	7.31	44.00	5.11	-12.86***	31.90	8.25	43.70	5.57	-17.10***
Communication	28.13	6.26	33.24	5.67	-8.80***	25.61	6.87	33.96	6.13	-13.05***
Depreciation	26.26	6.96	20.25	5.76	9.68***	27.80	7.81	18.97	5.82	13.08***

\*\*\* p < .001 \*\* p < .01 \* p < .05 <sup>a</sup>p < .10

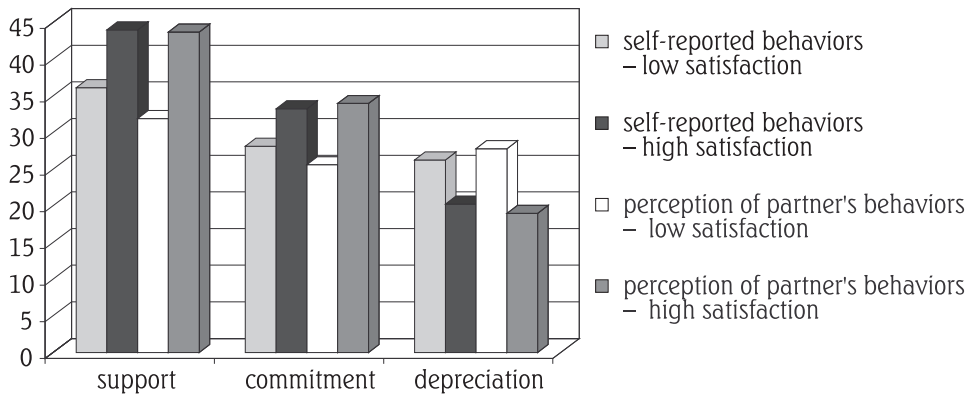


Figure 2. Mean differences between more and less satisfied couples on behavior dimensions

The main conclusion that could be drawn from analyses described above is: spouses perceive their own behaviors similarly as well as, in a similar way, assess behaviors of their partner, regardless of the level of their satisfaction. Nonetheless, it is the similarity connected with different, more or less adaptive patterns of behaviors. When spouses are similar in their tendency to engage in highly aggressive behaviors or not to support each other, they could not love "in a mature way". Only partners who take interest in mutual problems or needs, who are emphatic (e.g., Kaźmierczak, 2005a; Kaźmierczak, 2005b), psychologically mature, bolster the quality of their relationship. Those results confirm "the diversified similarity rule" – in this case, in the behavioral context. What is more, they confirm that our questionnaire can be used to analyze the emotional climate in marriage in an effective way.

## Conclusion

*Communication in Marriage Questionnaire* (KKM) seems to be an efficient diagnostic method for interactions between spouses. Evidence was strong that with KKM we may describe emotional climate in a relationship and define a particular marriage as less or more satisfying, what was confirmed in studies, in which hundreds of couples took part. Consequently, those analyses have also a predictive value when it comes to the assessment of marriage stability.

By and large, all patterns of behaviors in samples differing in satisfaction were understandable and predicted by the authors. The similarity aspect of those behaviors proved that two versions of the test were needed – self-reported behaviors and perception of partner's behaviors - as well as emphasizes the importance of support, commitment and depreciation for the quality of marriage. All in all, studies presented in this article and those carried out earlier, during the process of the questionnaire's creation, indicate that KKM is a valid measure.

Next, a need emerges to explore the validity of our method in practice, in psychotherapy, in the process of helping spouses to resolve their marital problems. What is more, psychological interviews with partners would help to confirm the results obtained with KKM, because we are perfectly aware of all correlation studies' limitations. In addition, a longitudinal design would allow an examination of the influence of support, commitment and depreciation on marital quality. It is our belief that further works connected with development of the questionnaire are needed, cause it analyzes an extremely crucial area of our lives, what has to be carry out in the most objective and valid way possible.

## References

- Argyle, M. (1991). *Psychologia stosunków międzyludzkich*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Beisert, M., Liberska, H. & Matuszewska, M. (2003). Od konfliktu do rozwodu. In H. Liberska & M. Matuszewska (Eds.) *Małżeństwo: męskość, kobiecość, miłość, konflikt* (s. 171-188). Poznań: Fundacja Humaniora.
- Braun-Gałkowska, M. (1985). *Miłość aktywna*. Warszawa: PAX.
- Braun-Gałkowska, M. (1987). *Psychologia domowa*. Olsztyn: Warmińskie Wydawnictwa Diecezjalne.
- Braun-Gałkowska, M. (1992). *Psychologiczna analiza systemów rodzinnych osób zadowolonych i niezadowolonych z małżeństwa*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.
- Braun-Gałkowska, M. (2003). Psychoprofilaktyka życia rodzinnego. In I. Janicka & T. Rostowska (Eds.) *Psychologia w służbie rodziny* (s. 10-18). Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Brzeziński, J. (1996). *Metodologia badań psychologicznych*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Celmer, Z. (1989). *Małżeństwo*. Warszawa: PZWL.
- Fincham, F. D. & Beach, S. R. H. (1999). Conflict in Marriage: implications for working couples. *Annual Reviews Psychology*, 50, 47-77.

- Kaźmierczak, M. (2005a). *Empatia a jakość relacji interpersonalnych w związku małżeńskim*. Niepublikowana praca doktorska. Gdańsk: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.
- Kaźmierczak, M. (2005b). Empatia jako czynnik podnoszący jakość komunikacji interpersonalnej. In M. Plopa (Eds.) *Człowiek u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia. Zagrożenia i wyzwania* (tom 1, s. 561-571). Elbląg: Wydawnictwo EUH-E.
- Kaźmierczak, M. & Plopa, M. (2005). Kwestionariusz Komunikacji Małżeńskiej (KKM). In M. Plopa, *Więzi w małżeństwie i rodzinie. Metody badań*. Kraków: Impuls.
- Mostwin, D. (1992). *Przestrzeń życiowa rodziny*. Warszawa: Synapsis.
- Pietrzyk, A. (1994). Diada małżeńska jako przedmiot diagnozy psychologicznej. Wskazania metodologiczne. *Problemy Rodziny*, 4, 15-18.
- Plopa, M. (2004). *Psychologia rodziny. Teoria i badania*. Elbląg: Wydawnictwo EUH-E.
- Plopa, M. (2005). *Więzi w małżeństwie i rodzinie. Metody badań*. Kraków: Impuls.
- Rembowski, J. & Rostowski, J. (1986). Trudności i zagrożenia (z problematyki psychologicznej modelu małżeństwa partnerskiego). *Problemy Rodziny*, 1(145), 12-18.
- Rostowska, T. (2001). *Konflikt międzypokoleniowy w rodzinie*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Rostowska, T. (2003). *Dojrzałość osobowa jako podstawowe uwarunkowanie życia małżeńskiego i rodzinnego*. In I. Janicka & T. Rostowska (Eds.) *Psychologia w służbie rodziny* (s. 45-55). Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Rostowski, J. (1986a). Poziom podobieństwa cech osobowości partnerów jako uwarunkowanie dobranego związku małżeńskiego. *Zeszyty Naukowe. Rozprawy i Monografie*, 74. Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański.
- Rostowski, J. (1986b). Znaczenie problematyki osobowości partnerów w badaniach nad małżeństwem. In M. Ziemska (Eds.) *Społeczne konsekwencje integracji i dezintegracji rodziny* (tom 2, s. 39-62). Warszawa: TWWP.
- Rostowski, J. (1987). *Zarys psychologii małżeństwa*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Ryś, M. (1999). *Psychologia małżeństwa w zarysie*. Warszawa: Centrum Metodyczne Pomocy Psychologiczno-Pedagogicznej MEN.
- Sęk, H. (1985). Wybrane koncepcje teoretyczne jako podstawa poradnictwa małżeńskiego i rodzinnego. In M. Kozakiewicz (Eds.) *Wybrane zagadnienia poradnictwa małżeńskiego i rodzinnego* (s. 51-84). Warszawa: PZWL.
- Sęk, H. (1993). *Społeczna psychologia kliniczna*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Trawińska, M. (1977). *Bariery małżeńskiego sukcesu*. Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza.
- Tyszka, Z. (1979). *Socjologia rodziny*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Ziemska, M. (1973). *Postawy rodzicielskie*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna.
- Ziemska, M. (1979). *Rodzina a osobowość*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna.