

The Resilience, Adaptation and Well-Being Project



Family Tradition Scale

FTS

FTS:

Family Traditions Scale

Overview

The Family Traditions Scale (FTS) was developed by Hamilton McCubbin and Anne Thompson (1986b) to study the role of family resistance resources in providing resiliency and stability of family life in the face of adversity. As resistance resources and adaptation resources, family traditions are important to family life, particularly in the face of adversity. Family traditions are those events, activities and practices that families have done in the past, which they are likely to continue to do and which they value and/or respect.

Development of FTS

The concept of Family Traditions as an important family resource and strength is clearly emphasized in the literature (Bossard & Boll, 1950; H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, Pirner, & M.A. McCubbin, 1988). These traditions are often passed on from one generation to another and include holiday traditions, personalized family transitions such as marriage, as well as religious traditions and special events. It is hypothesized that traditions play a very stabilizing and affirming role in families because they link the family of procreation to the family of orientation.

Conceptual Organization

The Family Traditions Scale is a 20-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=.85$) consisting of four subscales (Holidays, Transitions, Religious, and Family) calling for a respondent's assessment (Yes or No) of whether each of the traditions are carried on in the family unit. The Holiday Traditions subscale measures the extent to which the family is involved in maintaining traditions around Holidays (i.e., decorating, gift giving, place of gathering, rules, activities and people involved). The Family Transitions subscale measures the extent to which the family is involved in maintaining traditions around transitions/changes in the family (i.e., marriage, deaths, locations, ceremony, rules, experiences and practices). The Religious Traditions subscale measures the extent to which the family is involved in maintaining traditions around religious occasions (i.e., who leads the ceremony, how children participate, rules to follow and special locations). The Family Special Events subscale measures the extent to which the family is involved in maintaining the traditions around special events (i.e., which members participate, location, types of experiences and activities involved).

Families emphasize the value of family traditions across the family life cycle. Families appear to play an active role in maintaining holiday, transitional, religious and family traditions. While we can observe a greater emphasis on family traditions at the Couple stage of the family life cycle, the difference across stages is not statistically significant (H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, Pirner, & M.A. McCubbin, 1988).

Reliability

The overall internal reliability for FTS is .85 (Cronbach's α).

Validity

Bossard and Boll (1950) argued for the importance of traditions as facilitators of family functioning. In a national survey, those families who are classified as Traditionalistic, that is they are high on family traditions and high on family celebrations, were also found to be 'significantly higher on the family's sense of coherence (.24, $p=.007$), family hardiness (.23, $p=.001$), family bonding (.18, $p=.02$), and family satisfaction (.18, $p=.02$) (H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, Pirner, & M.A. McCubbin, 1988, pp.138-139).

Test-Retest Reliability

No additional studies to report at this time.

Additional Validity Checks

No additional validity information is available at this time.

Scoring Procedures

A score can be determined for each of the subscales, Traditions Around Holidays, Traditions Around Changes, Religious Occasions and Family Special Events, by scoring each Yes response as a 1 and each No response as a 0 and then adding the total number of Yes responses for the items in each subscale. A total Traditions score is obtained by summing the score of each of the four subscales.

Subscale 1:	Traditions Around Holidays	1 through 6
Subscale 2:	Traditions Around Changes	7 through 12
Subscale 3:	Religious Occasions	13 through 16
Subscale 4:	Family Special Events	17 through 20

Norms and/or Comparative Data

National data on 304 families does provide meaningful comparison data. The means, standard deviations, and percentiles are in Table 10.1 (H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, Pirner, & M.A. McCubbin, 1988).

Instrument Utilization for Research

The FTS instrument is currently being tested within the Family Stress, Coping and Health Project and by other investigators. The few studies that have included this instrument have already been cited in the validity section of this chapter and are included in the references. Therefore, a summary table of related publications is not available at this time.

Notes

1. The earlier writings on this instrument included a comprehensive description of the instrument's development. For the sake of brevity we have limited the chapter to the basic information that users have requested and needed. If you desire a copy and are unable to find our earlier publications, either the 1987 or the 1991 edition, please write to us at the Center for Excellence in Family Studies, Family Stress, Coping and Health Project, University of Wisconsin Madison, 1300 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706 or send email to manual@macc.wisc.edu . There will be a charge for these additional materials.
2. When referencing this instrument, the proper citation is: McCubbin, H.I. & Thompson, A.I. (1986). Family Traditions Scale (FTS). In H.I. McCubbin, A.I. Thompson, & M.A. McCubbin (1996). Family assessment: Resiliency, coping and adaptation-Inventories for research and practice. (pp. 341-347). Madison: University of Wisconsin System.

Table 10.1
Traditions Means and Frequencies

Raw Score	Number of Families	Percent of Families	Percentile
19	16	5.3	5.3
20	17	5.6	10.9
21	16	5.3	16.1
22	16	5.3	21.4
23	20	6.6	28.0
24	30	9.9	37.8
25	24	7.9	45.7
26	28	9.2	54.9
27	22	7.2	62.2
28	20	6.6	68.8
29	21	6.9	75.7
30	15	4.9	80.6
31	15	4.9	85.5
32	10	3.3	88.8
33	10	3.3	92.1
34	11	3.6	95.7
35	9	3.0	98.1
36	3	1.0	99.7
38	1	0.3	100.0

Mean = 26.326

Median = 26.00

SD= 4.441

Range =19.000

FTS

FAMILY TRADITIONS SCALE

English Version



Family Stress, Coping and Health Project
 School of Human Ecology
 1300 Linden Drive
 University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Madison, WI 53706

FTS

FAMILY TRADITIONS SCALE ©

Hamilton I. McCubbin Anne I. Thompson

Directions:

In our family we may have traditions. *Traditions* are those things we do as a family ...things such as decorating a tree at Christmas, which we *always do*, which we have *done in the past*, which we are *likely to continue to do*, and which we *values and/or respect*. Which of the following traditions apply to your family? **Please circle Yes (Y) or No (N) for each item.** Please respond to each and every statement.

*This is a Tradition in our
Family:*

Yes No

Traditions around holidays

1. Decorations (house, room, table, tree, etc.)
2. Gift giving and sharing
3. Place of gathering
4. Special rules and duties for everyone to follow
5. Special activities (i.e., going caroling)
6. People to include (i.e., special friends/relatives)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Traditions around changes (i.e., marriage, death, etc.)

7. Where ceremony is held (i.e., same church, etc.)
8. Who is involved in ceremony (i.e., same minister, etc.)
9. Type of ceremony (i.e., religious, private, etc.)
10. Type of rules to follow (i.e., passing down of heirlooms, reception after wedding/funeral, etc.)
11. Special experiences (i.e., songs, dances, food, etc.)
12. Special rituals (i.e., choose names, planting of tree, having special flowers, etc.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Religious occasions

13. Who leads the service
14. How children participate in service
15. Special rules to follow (i.e., fasting, etc.)
16. Special location (i.e., church, park, in the home, etc.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*This is a Tradition in our
Family:*

	Yes	No
Family special events		
17. Which members participate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Location of the family event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Experiences at the event (i.e., food, music, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Activities at the family event (i.e., baseball, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>