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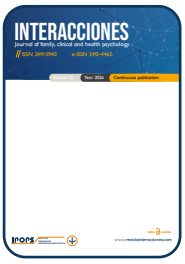

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Validation of the Brief Version of the Intrafamily Relations Assessment Scale in Young People

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Intrafamilial relationships are a fundamental component of psychosocial well-being in youth. However, factors such as parental work overload and domestic violence can weaken these bonds, highlighting the need for valid and reliable instruments to evaluate them.

Objective: To examine evidence of validity based on internal structure and reliability of the brief version of the Intrafamilial Relationships Scale among young people in Metropolitan Arequipa.

Method: An instrumental study was conducted with 471 participants aged 18 to 29 residing in Metropolitan Arequipa.

Results: Eleven items demonstrated adequate content validity. Confirmatory factor analysis supported a two-factor correlated model (Union/Expression and Difficulties) with satisfactory fit indices: $\chi 2/df = 3.235$, CFI = .954, TLI = .941, RMSEA = .075, SRMR = .036. Factor loadings ranged from .540 to .825. Likewise, the short version of the ERI proved to be invariant across the sex of the respondents. Furthermore, the Union/Expression dimension exhibited convergent validity with the Family Satisfaction Scale and the Family APGAR. Both the Union/Expression factor ($\omega = .901$) and the Difficulties factor ($\omega = .743$) showed strong reliability.

Conclusion: The brief version of the Intrafamilial Relationships Scale demonstrates robust psychometric properties among young people in Arequipa, providing a valid, reliable, and culturally appropriate tool for assessing intrafamilial relationships in this population.

Keywords: Intrafamily relationships, Psychometric properties, Validity, Reliability, Young adults.

INTRODUCTION

Family constitutes the primary context for socialization and the integral development of the individual. Within it, the first affective bonds are formed, and the norms of coexistence, support, and care are established, exerting a decisive influence on emotional health and psychosocial development throughout life (Gutiérrez et al., 2016; Suárez & Vélez, 2018). The social, cultural, and economic transformations that have characterized recent decades, including urbanization, labor mobility, and shifts in gender roles, have profoundly altered the structure and functioning of the family, with direct effects on the quality of interactions among its members (Lima et al., 2017; Peña et al., 2021). In this regard, intrafamilial relationships, understood as the network of bonds encompassing cohesion, communication patterns, emotional expression, and coping strategies, represent a key determinant of both individual and collective well-being, shaping the capacity for conflict resolution as well as adaptation to the challenges inherent in the life cycle (Castro et al., 2021; Malma, 2016). This dimension acquires relevance within psychological and social research, as its implications are fundamental for the comprehensive development of young people, directly influencing their emotional stability, identity

integration, and academic or occupational performance (Castro et al., 2021; Torres et al., 2015).

It is important to note that young people are particularly susceptible to family dynamics, as adolescence and early adulthood are marked by a constant tension between the pursuit of autonomy and the need for emotional support (Vargas & Giuliana, 2024). Within this context, the quality of parent–child relationships remain a fundamental pillar for decision-making, vocational guidance, and psychosocial well-being (Carrillo & Pilco, 2023; Santander & Rojas, 2020). To foster the development of adaptive strategies and to successfully address academic, occupational, and social challenges, it is essential that family members maintain open and respectful communication, as well as flexible roles that respond to the evolving demands of children in the process of becoming independent (Fernández, 2021; Chinga & Plua, 2023). When these elements are weakened, the literature has documented an increase in emotional and behavioral problems, underscoring the need for tools capable of accurately assessing the central dimensions of family functioning (Barajas, 2016; Ruiz & Carranza, 2018).

In the case of the city of Arequipa, young people face specific challenges related to mental health, domestic violence, and the reorganization of parental roles. Several studies indicate that parental work overload, economic stress, and the persistence of the "double presence" alter household dynamics and hinder communication with children (Moreira & Antón, 2023; Zambrano et al., 2019). Furthermore, a study conducted by the Institute for Marriage and Family at Universidad Católica San Pablo (IMF-UCSP, 2023) found that poor communication, infidelity, and lack of understanding lead many families in Arequipa to consider marital separation as a solution to their conflicts, while also highlighting domestic violence as a significant factor in the weakening of family ties. Likewise, previous records and studies in the region reveal persistent failures in parent–child communication and in parents' ability to reach effective marital agreements (Vega, 2014). On the other hand, data from the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI, 2022) reported an increase in nuclear households (68.6%) alongside a decrease in extended households (24.3%). This prevalence of the nuclear family concentrates intrafamilial dynamics within parent–child interactions, which may foster greater role flexibility, direct communication, and the strengthening of affective bonds. However, the decline in extended households limits broader support networks traditionally associated with the transmission of values and intergenerational emotional support (INEI, 2023).

Faced with this scenario, the evaluation of intrafamilial relationships requires culturally validated psychometric instruments. One such example is the Intrafamilial Relationships Assessment Scale (ERI), developed in Mexico by Rivera Heredia and Andrade Palos (2010), with the aim of providing a reliable and culturally relevant instrument to assess the family environment from the perspective of the individual. The authors drew on theoretical models of family functioning proposed by Moos et al. (1974), Olson et al. (1983), and Bloom (1985), integrating elements of cohesion, communication, conflict resolution, and emotional expression into everyday family life. Based on these references, they developed an initial version of 80 items, which was subjected to analyses of content validity, factorial validity, and internal consistency, ultimately consolidating three stable dimensions: Unity and Support, Expression, and Difficulties. These dimensions capture both positive and problematic aspects of the family environment (Rivera Heredia & Andrade Palos, 2010).

The initial validation process was conducted with Mexican secondary school adolescents and university students, revealing high overall internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$) and a factor structure aligned with the theoretical assumptions of healthy family functioning. Subsequently, the authors proposed three versions of the scale: a long version of 56 items for extensive research, an intermediate version of 37 items for clinical or educational contexts, and a brief version of 12 items designed for rapid assessments or exploratory studies (Rivera Heredia & Andrade Palos, 2010). Since its publication, the ERI has been employed in various Latin American studies to examine the relationship between family functioning and psychosocial variables such as self-esteem, prosocial behavior, and emotional adjustment (Albirena, 2016; Alva, 2020; Castro et al., 2021; Espejo, 2016).

Studies conducted in Mexico have demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties of the ERI. In this regard, Castro et al. (2021) confirmed a two-factor structure in the intermediate 37-item version among 1,498 Mexican adolescents, using both exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$–$.93$) and significant correlations with related variables, supporting its psychometric validity. Likewise, Barraza (2021) validated the brief 12-item version in a sample of 314 Mexican university students ($\alpha = .86$), confirming a three-factor structure through exploratory factor analysis. Furthermore, Rivera Heredia and Andrade Palos (2010) provided the first psychometric evidence for the long 56-item version in 671 Mexican adolescents ($\alpha > .90$), demonstrating convergent validity through statistically significant correlations ($p < .05$) with scales assessing affective climate and intrafamilial support. More recently, Rivera Heredia et al. (2024) examined the psychometric properties of the brief version of the ERI in a sample of 189 Mexican parents who had returned from the United States, as well as parents without migration experience. Their findings revealed a strong correlation between the Union and Expression dimensions when they estimated the original three-factor structure; consequently, a two-factor model comprising Union/Expression and Difficulty was adopted. In order to achieve an invariant model with adequate goodness-of-fit indices, items 4 and 8 were removed, resulting in satisfactory fit statistics ($\chi 2/df = 1.06$, CFI = .99, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .002, SRMR = .05).

In the Peruvian context, several studies have confirmed the psychometric properties of the ERI across its different versions and regions. Regarding the brief version, Mariaca (2023) administered the instrument to 538 university students from Tacna, obtaining adequate content validity (Aiken's $V > .80$), optimal fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 3.090$; CFI = .935; RMSEA = .062), and adequate reliability for the total scale ($\omega = .837$); similarly, Rivadeneyra de la Torre (2022) reported acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 3.274$; CFI = .852; RMSEA = .0995) and adequate internal consistency ($\omega = .708$) in 229 psychology students from Lima. With respect to

the intermediate 37-item version, Mamani and Orihuela (2021) reported high reliability (α = .951) and satisfactory content validity (V = .857) in adolescents from Juliaca, whereas Palomares (2018) found acceptable reliability (α = .724) and significant content validity through Aiken's V (p < .001) in students from South Lima. Finally, with the long 56-item version, Gonzales (2021) demonstrated convergent validity through moderate correlations (r = .389–.689), a satisfactory three-factor structure (χ^2/df = 2.185), and excellent reliability (ω = .933) in Piura; likewise, Muñoz and Rodríguez (2019) evidenced high reliability across the three dimensions (ω = .88–.91) in La Libertad.

It is worth noting that, although previous psychometric studies of the ERI in the Peruvian context have provided valuable evidence regarding the properties of the instrument across different regions, most of these works have been conducted as undergraduate theses, which limits their visibility and integration into the international scientific debate (Chávez, 2022). This situation contrasts with the international landscape, where ERI validations have predominantly been disseminated through articles published in indexed journals, thereby fostering a more fluid dialogue with the global scientific community. Equally relevant, to date no study has examined the psychometric properties of the 12-item short version of the ERI in the population of Arequipa, whose sociocultural characteristics may influence the functioning of the instrument. This version was selected over the longer alternatives because it reduces response fatigue, demonstrates adequate psychometric properties (Mariaca, 2023; Rivera et al., 2024), and is especially suitable for exploratory studies in contexts where assessment time is limited (Rivera & Andrade, 2010). Nevertheless, despite its increasing use in Latin American research, evidence regarding its measurement invariance by sex remains scarce and restricted to specific Mexican samples (Rivera et al., 2024), which constrains the possibility of making valid comparisons across groups from other cultural contexts.

Considering the, the present study aims to examine the validity and reliability of the short version of the ERI in a sample of young adults from Metropolitan Arequipa, as well as to evaluate its measurement invariance across sex. The findings of this study seek to provide a brief, robust, and culturally appropriate instrument that enables valid group comparisons and contributes to strengthening research and intervention on family functioning within educational, clinical, and community contexts in the region.

METHODS

Design

The present study employed an instrumental design (Ato, 2013), as it examined the validity and reliability of the brief version of the Intrafamily Relations Assessment Scale.

Participants

The sample consisted of 471 participants, 57% of them were female. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 29 years (M = 21.55). Regarding occupational status, 61% were strict students, 7% were exclusively employed, 32% engaged in both activities, and 0.6% reported neither activity. In terms of educational level, 81% were currently enrolled in or had completed university studies, 11% had completed secondary education, 5.7% were enrolled in or had completed technical studies, 2.3% were enrolled in or had completed postgraduate studies, and 0.4% reported no formal education. With respect to marital status, 97% were single, 1.3% were cohabiting, 0.8% were married, 0.2% were separated, and 0.2% were widowed. Regarding parenthood, 97% reported having no children. In terms of family composition, 54% belonged to a nuclear family, 16% to an extended family, 16% to a single-parent family, 12% to a one-person household, and 2% to a reconstituted family.

Sample size was estimated using Arifin's (2025) calculator for confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), specifying RMSEA = .05, degrees of freedom = 41, p = .05, and statistical power = 95%, which yielded a minimum required sample size of 391 participants. A non-probabilistic purposive sampling method was employed, oriented toward the selection of adult participants, with the aim of obtaining a homogeneous sample. The exclusion criterion was incomplete responses to the research instruments.

Instruments

A sociodemographic questionnaire was used, consisting of closed-ended multiple-choice questions assessing basic characteristics such as sex, age, occupational status, educational level, marital status, parenthood, and family composition.

The main instrument was the brief version of the Intrafamily Relations Assessment Scale (ERI; Rivera Heredia & Andrade Palos, 2010), which assesses individuals' perceptions and experiences regarding their family relational dynamics; for instance: "My family members usually do activities together". The brief version of the scale originally consists of 12 items with Likert-type response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), distributed across three dimensions: Union and Support (Items 1, 4, 7, and 10), Expression (Items 2, 5, 8, and 11), and Difficulties (Items 3, 6, 9, and 12).

In addition, the Family Satisfaction Scale (FSS), based on the Circumplex Model of Olson and Wilson (1982) and adapted for Peru by Villarreal-Zegarra et al. (2017), was used. This scale assesses individuals' perceptions of different aspects of their family life in comparison with an ideal, as well as their perceived happiness and cohesion. It consists of 10 items with response options ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). Construct validity evidence from exploratory factor analysis indicated adequate sampling adequacy (KMO = .92; Bartlett's test, $\chi2(45) = 1429.8$, p < .001) and a unidimensional structure with factor loadings between .621 and .810, explaining 56.2% of the total variance. Confirmatory factor analysis supported this model with satisfactory fit indices ($\chi2(34) = 115.31$, p < .001; CFI = .985; RMSEA = .048; SRMR = .043). In the present study, the scale showed excellent internal consistency (α = .914; ω = .915).

The Family APGAR Questionnaire, originally developed by Smilkstein (1978) and adapted into Spanish by Forero et al. (2006), was also administered. This instrument assesses satisfaction with family functioning from the perspective of each family member. It consists of five items with response options ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (always), corresponding to five

domains (Adaptation, Partnership, Growth, Affection, and Resolve). In the present study, internal structure validity was examined using confirmatory factor analysis, yielding adequate fit indices: $\chi2(5) = 9.331$, $p = .097$; CFI = .999; TLI = .998; RMSEA = .043; SRMR = .013. The instrument also demonstrated satisfactory reliability ($\alpha = .895$; $\omega = .895$).

Procedure

Firstly, the necessary permissions were obtained from authorities across various academic programs, which allowed questionnaire administration in university classrooms. To achieve a more representative sample of young people from different everyday contexts in Arequipa, data collection was expanded to public spaces with high foot traffic, such as parks, areas surrounding universities and technical institutes, shopping centers, and public transportation stops.

At the beginning of each assessment, participants were provided with an informed consent form detailing the study objectives, assessment procedures, and the voluntary nature of participation, while ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were then given a QR code that automatically directed them to a digital questionnaire hosted on the Google Forms platform, which contained the assessment instruments. The estimated completion time was 10 to 15 minutes, during which the research team remained available to address any questions. Additionally, to maximize reach and geographic representativeness, the questionnaire link was disseminated via social media platforms, mainly through WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook stories, facilitating participation by young people from different areas of Metropolitan Arequipa.

Data analysis

First, content validity of the brief version of the ERI was examined using judgments from nine expert judges, all of whom were university professors with advanced academic training (two with doctoral degrees and seven with master's degrees). In addition, six were family psychotherapists, two worked in family prosecutor's offices, and one was a social psychologist, all with at least 10 years of professional experience. Judges rated the coherence, relevance, and clarity of each item using a scale from 1 (does not meet the criterion) to 4 (fully meets the criterion). Aiken's V coefficient was calculated with a 95% confidence interval, and items were considered acceptable when the lower bound of the confidence interval exceeded .50 (Penfield & Giacobbi, 2004).

After data collection, univariate normality was examined using item skewness and kurtosis. Additionally, the item test correlation was calculated, for which the items belonging to the Difficulty dimension (3, 6, 9, 12) had to be reverse-coded. It is important to emphasize that these items were only inverted for this specific procedure; in subsequent analyses, such as the factorial analysis or the estimation of reliability, they were treated in their original form. whereas multivariate normality was assessed using Mardia's test. Moreover, multivariate normality was assessed using Mardia's test. Multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance (Ghorbani, 2019), resulting in the removal of 12 cases. Furthermore, considering that the scale employs a five-option Likert-type response format and one of the objectives of the present study was to analyze measurement invariance, the robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) was preferred. This estimator has demonstrated superior performance in simulation studies compared to the weighted least squares mean and variance adjusted method (WLSMV) when analyzing measurement invariance (Sass et al., 2014). Model fit was evaluated using the following criteria: $\chi2/df \leq 3$, RMSEA ≤ .08, SRMR ≤ .08, and CFI and TLI ≥ .95 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Additionally, an exploratory structural equation model (ESEM) with targetT rotation was estimated as a complementary analysis to examine whether the high correlations observed between factors in the CFA solution could be attributed to overly restrictive cross-loading constraints (Marsh et al., 2019).

Once a parsimonious factorial structure was established, measurement invariance across sex was examined. Configural invariance was first tested without parameter constraints across groups, followed by tests of metric and scalar invariance by constraining factor loadings and item intercepts, respectively. Latent mean invariance was subsequently evaluated by constraining latent means across groups (Dimitrov, 2010). Invariance was assessed based on changes in model fit indices, with $\Delta CFI < .01$ and $\Delta RMSEA < .015$ indicating invariance relative to less constrained models (Chen, 2007).

Instrument reliability was assessed through internal consistency using McDonald's omega coefficient (Hair et al., 2010). All analyses were conducted using R software version 4.5.2 (R Core Team, 2025), utilizing the packages lavaan version 0.6-21 (Rosseel et al., 2025), psych version 2.5.6 (Revelle, 2025) and esem version 2.0.0 (Prokofieva et al., 2023).

Ethical Considerations

The research protocol was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee of the Universidad Católica San Pablo (code: 72.CEPI.UCSP.2025). All participants were informed about the study and signed a consent form prior their participation. The essential aspects of the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct of the American Psychological Association (2017) were duly considered. It was emphasized that their participation was entirely voluntary, and all information provided would be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

RESULTS

Regarding content validity, eleven items of the brief version of the ERI were considered valid according to the expert judges' evaluations. In contrast, Item 7 ("Nuestra familia acostumbra hacer actividades en conjunto") did not meet the established criterion, as the lower bound of its 95% confidence interval for Aiken's V was below .50; therefore, this item was excluded from subsequent analyses.

As shown in Table 1, item distributions approached univariate normality, with skewness and kurtosis values falling within the acceptable range of −1.5 to 1.5 (Forero, 2009). In addition, corrected item–total correlations exceeded .40 in all cases, indicating adequate item discrimination and internal consistency. Furthermore, an analysis of response distribution revealed no

significant floor or ceiling effects; although some items showed higher mean scores (e.g., Eri 4 and Eri 10), they remained within the conservative threshold of standard deviations from the scale midpoint, ensuring sufficient variability for the subsequent CFA. On the other hand, Mardia's test indicated the absence of multivariate normality ($p < .001$).

First, the original three-factor model was tested and showed adequate overall fit indices: $\chi2 = 130.873$, $df = 41$, $p < .001$, $\chi2/df = 3.192$, CFI = .957, TLI = .943, RMSEA = .074, and SRMR = .034. Despite the acceptable fit, the correlation between the Union and Expression factors was extremely high ($\rho = .976$), suggesting substantial overlap and indicating that both factors might be capturing the same underlying construct. Additionally, multigroup analyses by sex revealed negative residual covariances in the male subsample, pointing to potential model misspecification.

In consequence, an ESEM model was estimated to evaluate whether the high correlation between Union and Expression observed in CFA was due to overly restrictive cross-loading constraints. Results indicated that Union and Expression items loaded on a common relational dimension, while Difficulty items mainly loaded on another dimension ($\lambda = .456$ to $.752$). This model showed adequate fit indices: $\chi2 = 85.002$, $df = 28$, $p < .001$, $\chi2/df = 3.036$, CFI = .991, TLI = .983, RMSEA = .067, and SRMR = .022. After that, an alternative two-factor model was specified, combining Union and Expression into a single factor (Union/Expression) while retaining the Difficulties factor. This model also demonstrated satisfactory fit indices: $\chi2 = 139.122$, $df = 43$, $p < .001$, $\chi2/df = 3.235$, CFI = .954, TLI = .941, RMSEA = .075, and SRMR = .036. Given its adequate fit and the absence of the estimation problems observed in the three-factor solution, the two-factor model was retained as the most parsimonious representation of the data.

Table 2 shows that all standardized factor loadings were above .50, indicating a strong relationship between the items and their respective latent factors in the total sample as well as in analyses stratified by sex. The Union/Expression factor exhibited higher internal consistency than the Difficulties factor; nevertheless, both factors demonstrated acceptable reliability ($\omega > .70$) across all samples. Furthermore, the correlation between the Union/Expression and Difficulties factors was negative and of moderate to high magnitude in the total sample ($\rho = -.765$), as well as in the female-only ($\rho = -.845$) and male-only ($\rho = -.656$) subsamples, which is consistent with the theoretical assumptions underlying the ERI. To further evaluate discriminant validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) was calculated (Henseler et al., 2015). The HTMT value between the Union/Expression and Difficulties factors was .764, which is well below the conservative threshold of .85. This result provides robust evidence that these dimensions represent empirically distinct constructs, successfully addressing potential concerns regarding factor overlap.

Regarding convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for the Union/Expression factor was .566, exceeding the recommended threshold of .50. For the Difficulties factor, the AVE was .421. Although this value is below .50, it can be considered acceptable given that the factor's construct reliability exceeded the .70 criterion, suggesting that the items still represent the construct adequately in the context of a brief version (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 3 shows that the two-factor model of the brief version of the ERI exhibited adequate goodness-of-fit indices in the sample divided by sex, with slightly better fit observed in the male group. Additionally, evidence of configural, metric, and scalar invariance was found, as changes in model fit indices remained within the recommended criteria ($\Delta CFI < .01$ and $\Delta RMSEA > .015$) when progressively imposing parameter constraints. Given that scalar invariance was established, latent mean differences between groups were subsequently examined. Constraining latent means to equality did not result in a significant deterioration of model fit ($\Delta\chi2(2) = 4.74$, $p = .094$), supporting latent mean invariance. Furthermore, no statistically significant differences were found for the Union/Expression factor ($\Delta M = 0.06$, $z = 0.99$, $p = .319$, $d = 0.10$) or for the Difficulty factor ($\Delta M = 0.06$, $z = 0.87$, $p = .385$, $d = 0.09$). In both cases, effect sizes were trivial, indicating negligible practical differenc-

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the ERI brief version items

Items	M	SD	g_1	g_2	r_{it}
Eri 1	3,63	1,03	-0,51	-0,23	0,573
Eri 2	3,71	1,04	-0,64	-0,1	0,675
Eri 3[a]	2,17	1,09	0,57	-0,61	0,544
Eri 4	4,00	0,91	-0,68	0,01	0,723
Eri 5	3,67	0,99	-0,44	-0,28	0,729
Eri 6[a]	2,14	1,10	0,66	-0,48	0,582
Eri 8	3,75	0,98	-0,51	-0,29	0,748
Eri 9[a]	3,07	1,14	-0,01	-0,7	0,446
Eri 10	3,90	0,91	-0,68	0,17	0,737
Eri 11	3,71	1,01	-0,56	-0,13	0,619
Eri 12[a]	2,61	1,18	0,29	-0,87	0,564

Note. M= mean; SD= standard deviation; g1= skewness; g2= kurtosis; r_{it}= item test correlation. [a] inverted item

es between groups.

As presented in Table 4, the Union/Expression dimension showed positive and statistically significant correlations with both Family Satisfaction and Family APGAR scores, providing evidence of convergent validity. In contrast, the Difficulties dimension did not show statistically significant correlations with either Family Satisfaction or Family APGAR ($p > .05$). Although an inverse association was theoretically expected, these findings indicate a lack of discriminant validity for this dimension with respect to the comparison measures used in the present study.

DISCUSSION

The objective of this study was to analyze the evidence of validity based on the internal structure and reliability of the brief version of the Intrafamilial Relationships Assessment Scale (ERI) in a sample of young people from Arequipa. The main finding was that the structure that best represents the empirical data corresponds to a correlated two-factor model, composed of the dimensions Union/Expression and Family Difficulties. This differs from the original three-factor structure proposed by Rivera Heredia and Andrade Palos (2010), although similar results have been reported in recent studies conducted with Latin American populations. For instance, Castro (2021), using the intermedi-

Table 2. Factor loadings for the total sample and by sex for the ERI brief version

	Total (*n*= 459)		Female (*n*= 261)		Male (*n*= 198)	
Item	Union/ Expression	Difficulties	Union/ Expression	Difficulties	Union/ Expression	Difficulties
Eri 1	0,641		0,629		0,665	
Eri 2	0,718		0,728		0,698	
Eri 3		0,624		0,649		0,587
Eri 4	0,809		0,804		0,814	
Eri 5	0,812		0,801		0,835	
Eri 6		0,714		0,764		0,648
Eri 8	0,783		0,799		0,761	
Eri 9		0,54		0,553		0,52
Eri 10	0,825		0,834		0,809	
Eri 11	0,692		0,712		0,66	
Eri 12		0,706		0,704		0,692
α	0,901	0,738	0,903	0,761	0,898	0,701
ω	0,901	0,743	0,903	0,764	0,898	0,706
AVE	0,566	0,421	0,57	0,446	0,562	0,383

Table 3. Invariance by sex of the ERI brief version

Model	χ^2	*df*	*p*	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	ΔCFI	ΔRMSEA
Female	105,4	43	< .001	0,953	0,939	0,079	0,039		
Male	74,7	43	0,002	0,965	0,955	0,063	0,038		
Configural	180,7	86	< .001	0,957	0,946	0,072	0,039	–	–
Metric	186,8	95	< .001	0,959	0,953	0,068	0,043	0,002	-0,005
Scalar	201,4	104	< .001	0,957	0,954	0,066	0,045	-0,002	-0,001
Means	206,1	106	< .001	0,956	0,954	0,066	0,047	-0,001	0,000

Table 4. Evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for the ERI brief version

	1	2	3	4
1. Union/ Expression	—			
2. Difficulties	.258***	—		
3. Family Satisfaction	.660***	0,084	—	
4. Family APGAR	.621***	0,083	.802***	—

***$p < .001$.

ate version of the instrument, reported a two-factor empirical solution in which union, support, and expression were grouped into a single dimension, while family difficulties formed an independent factor, jointly explaining 41.01% of the variance. Likewise, Barraza (2021), who applied the brief version of the instrument, found that exploratory factor analysis initially yielded a two-factor correlated solution that merged union, support, and expression. Forcing the extraction of three factors to preserve the original structure proved methodologically problematic, and confirmatory factor analysis revealed unsatisfactory fit indices ($\chi 2/df = 3.55$, RMSEA = .09, $p < .05$), thereby questioning the empirical adequacy of the three-factor model. In line with these findings, Rivera Heredia et al. (2024) reported a similar pattern when analyzing the brief version of the ERI in Mexican parents with and without return migration experience. Their results showed an extremely high correlation between the Union/Support and Expression dimensions ($\rho = .98$), indicating a lack of empirical discrimination between these factors. As a result, the authors opted for a more parsimonious two-factor solution comprising a combined Union/Expression factor and a separate Difficulties factor.

Taken together, the accumulated evidence suggests that a two-factor structure, distinguishing between positive aspects of family relationships (union, support, and expression integrated) and family difficulties, provides a simpler and more empirically valid representation of the construct. This solution is consistent not only with theoretical considerations but also with the principles of factorial parsimony, offering a more coherent framework for understanding intrafamilial dynamics in youth populations.

Beyond the examination of factorial structure, an important contribution of the present study lies in the evaluation of measurement invariance across sex. The results indicated that the two-factor structure of the ERI brief version is conceptualized, measured, and scaled equivalently in men and women. Moreover, constraining latent means to equality did not result in a significant deterioration of model fit, providing additional support for latent mean invariance. Consistent with this result, no statistically significant differences were found between men and women in either the Union/Expression or the Difficulties dimensions, and effect sizes were trivial. It is important to mention that evidence regarding the measurement invariance of the ERI brief version remains scarce in Latin American research. To date, only Rivera Heredia et al. (2024) have examined invariance in a specific Mexican adult population. The present study extends this evidence by demonstrating invariance across sex in a sample of young people from a different cultural and regional context, thereby strengthening the generalizability of the ERI brief version and supporting its use in comparative research.

In addition, the results demonstrate that the brief version of the ERI shows satisfactory reliability properties among young people in Arequipa. McDonald's omega coefficient for the Union/Expressivity dimension reached .901 in the total sample, indicating excellent internal consistency and stability in the measurement of this construct. These values are higher than those reported by Mariaca (2023) in a university population from Tacna ($\omega = .837$) and notably higher than those obtained by Rivadeneyra de la Torre (2022) in psychology students from Lima ($\omega = .708$), suggesting that the instrument maintains, and even enhances, its psychometric stability in the Arequipa context. On the other hand, the Difficulties dimension yielded more modest but acceptable coefficients ($\omega = .741$), an expected result given that this subscale consists of only three items, a factor that technically limits the reliability coefficients (Reidl, 2013). Nevertheless, the values obtained remain within the acceptable range for applied research, underscoring the capacity of these three items to consistently measure perceived difficulties in the family environment.

When compared with studies that employed longer versions of the instrument, a consistent pattern of high reliability is observed in the Peruvian context. Gonzales (2021), using the long 56-item version in Piura, reported $\omega = .933$, while Muñoz and Rodríguez (2019) in La Libertad obtained omega coefficients between .88 and .91 for the three original dimensions with the same extended version. Similarly, Mamani and Orihuela (2021), applying the intermediate 37-item version in Juliaca, reached $\alpha = .951$, showing that both long and intermediate versions tend to yield slightly higher coefficients due to the greater number of items per dimension. Nevertheless, the values obtained in the present study with only 12 items are notably competitive, particularly in the Union/Expressivity dimension ($\omega = .901$), which approximates the coefficients reported with longer instruments. This finding underscores the psychometric efficiency of the brief version and highlights its practical utility in contexts where time constraints limit the feasibility of extended assessments.

Regarding convergent validity, the Union/Expressivity dimension showed positive and significant correlations with the Family Satisfaction and Family APGAR instruments, supporting its convergent validity. This finding represents a significant contribution, given that previous psychometric studies of the ERI in Peruvian populations have reported limited evidence in this area. A review of the literature indicates that only Mariaca (2023) documented convergent validity, reporting a significant and high-magnitude correlation between intrafamilial relationships and family communication ($r = .629$, $p < .05$) with a large effect size in university students from Tacna. Gonzales (2021) reported moderate correlations ($r = .389–.689$), although without specifying the constructs evaluated. In contrast, most Peruvian validations of the ERI, including the works of Rivadeneyra de la Torre (2022), Mamani and Orihuela (2021), Alva (2020), Muñoz and Rodríguez (2019), Montalvo (2019), Palomares (2018), Malma (2016), Albirena (2016), and Espejo (2016), have focused primarily on content validity and internal structure, without examining the instrument's relationship with other theoretically relevant constructs.

The magnitudes of convergent validity observed in the present study are comparable to those reported by Mariaca (2023), reinforcing the instrument's ability to consistently relate to measures of well-being and family functioning in Peruvian contexts, and thereby helping to address an important methodological gap in the validation of this instrument. Contrary to expectations, the Difficulties dimension did not show statistically significant correlations with any of the instruments employed, despite the theoretical anticipation of an inverse relationship

that would support its discriminant validity. This result suggests that the Difficulties dimension may capture specific aspects of family dynamics not assessed by the comparison instruments used, or that young people in Arequipa perceive family difficulties as a construct relatively independent from their overall satisfaction with family functioning. Future research should examine discriminant validity using instruments that measure theoretically opposed constructs, such as family conflict or indicators of psychological distress, which would presumably show stronger correlations with family difficulties.

Finally, the findings of this study should be interpreted considering certain limitations. First, the use of non-probabilistic sampling restricts the generalizability of the results to broader populations, while the cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of temporal or causal relationships between the variables examined. In addition, the exclusive reliance on self-report measures may have introduced social desirability biases that could affect the validity of the responses. In view of these limitations, future research should explore the factorial structure of the ERI in clinical samples and examine its convergent validity through the inclusion of behavioral indicators, observational measures, and third-party reports that complement self-report data. Moreover, longitudinal studies would be valuable to assess the temporal stability of the instrument and its predictive capacity with respect to psychological adjustment and family well-being.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Data will be made available on request.

DECLARATION OF THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
We used Claude 4.5 to translate specific sections of the manuscript and improve the wording of certain sections. The final version of the manuscript was reviewed and approved by all authors.

DISCLAIMER
The authors are responsible for all statements made in this article.

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