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THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE TURKISH VERSION OF THE SELF-COMPASSION SCALE

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The purpose of this study was to adapt the Self-Compassion Scale (SCS; Neff, 2003) into Turkish and test the validity and reliability of the measure. The study was conducted in four phases with 341 (184 female, 157 male) university students. Both the Turkish and original versions of the SCS were applied to 66 English language teachers to examine the language equivalence. Since the scale had high levels of language equivalence, validity and reliability studies were conducted. For construct validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, discriminant validity and item-total correlations were employed. For reliability, internal consistency and test-retest analysis were employed. Results demonstrated that the Turkish version of the SCS is a valid and reliable measure.

Keywords: Self-Compassion Scale, Turkey.

Individuals experience negative emotions such as grief, sadness, burnout and failure at times during their life. In order to cope with such negative emotions, they need to relieve, calm down and most importantly get over these negative emotions without any damage. Individuals should enhance their self-compassion for dealing with such negative emotions. The term *self-compassion* is derived from the word compassion since *compassion* involves *being sensitive to others'*

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suffering, being aware of their grief, having a desire to ease their suffering, and having nonjudgmental understanding for people making mistakes.

However, the term *self-compassion,* developed by Neff and based on Buddhist philosophy, involves *being open to and moved by one's own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself, taking an understanding, nonjudgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that one's own experience is part of the common human experience* (Neff, 2003a, b). In order to make the term more functional and systematic, Neff studied self-compassion in three components (a) kindness, (b) common humanity, and (c) mindfulness.

Individuals who treat themselves with kindness do not judge or criticize themselves harshly (Neff, 2003a, b; Neff, Hsieh, & Dejitterat, 2005) because self-judgment and self-criticism would stem from the feeling of alienation and weaker relationships with others (Mongrain, Vettese, Shuster, & Kendal, 1998). An individual's self-criticism is formed in two related processes. In the first process, there is self-directed hostility and criticism appears as self-loathing. In the second process the individual is unable to be warm, soothing, reassuring, self-liking, or self-directing. In short, people with high self-compassion do not experience these negative emotions. In contrast, individuals who criticize themselves harshly find it difficult to get relief (Gilbert, Baldwin, Irons, Baccus, & Palmer, 2006; Gilbert, Clarke, Hempel, Miles, & Irons, 2004; Gilbert & Irons, 2004; Gilbert & Procter, 2006; Neff, Kirkpatrick, & Rude, 2007). Perhaps the biggest bias in people's perceptions of themselves involves their penchant for overestimating their own positive qualities. People tend to judge themselves as better than the average person on virtually every dimension, and this bias can lead to a great deal of conflict and unhappiness (Leary, 2004).

Common humanity refers to *seeing one's experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than seeing them as separating and isolating* (Neff, 2003a). It also refers to *transforming negative emotions into positive instead of avoiding them*. This transformation process comes into being with kindness, understanding and values of shared humanity. Common humanity takes its inspiration from cultural, universal values of justice, equality, independence and tolerance. Individuals who have common humanity maintain their own cultural values, respect other cultural values, believe in basic democratic values such as justice, equality and freedom, and try to adapt their relationships in line with these values. They are tolerant of both themselves and others since this common humanity is the essence of cultural and universal values (Neff, 2001, 2003a, b, c; Neff & Harter, 2002a, b, 2003; Neff & Helwig, 2002).

Mindfulness refers to *holding one's painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness rather than overidentifying with them*. This awareness process takes negative judgment away, lessens self-criticism and enhances self-understanding.

When this process takes place, the individual's self-kindness increases (Neff, 2003a). When an individual encounters the components of a problem he/she should use his/her mindfulness mechanism with regard to the components of intention, attention, and attitude taking into account the present moment and situation, a special and purposeful method, and a nonjudging intention (Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006).

Briefly, when an individual has high levels of self-compassion, positive thoughts are enhanced, and the effects of negative thoughts lessen. Professionals (e.g., teachers, counselors, psychiatrists) aiming at helping individuals improve themselves should use such a fundamental skill. The purpose of this study was to take the version of the SCS originally developed by Neff (2003b) and adapt it for use with Turkish subjects.

Validity and Reliability Studies of the Original Self-Compassion Scale

The scale assesses the characteristics of the self-compassion construct. Responses are given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always* (1-5) to evaluate how often participants act in the manner stated in each of the items. It is a 26-item scale which is composed of six subscales: self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness and overidentification. These subscales were confirmed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) making up a total score that would represent a participant's overall level of self-compassion: self-kindness versus self-judgment, common humanity versus isolation, and mindfulness versus overidentification. Factor loadings of these subscales were as follows: for self-kindness, .71-.77; for self-judgment, .65-.80; for common humanity, .57-.79; for isolation, .63-.78; for mindfulness, .62-.80; for over-identification, .65-.78. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was .92, and for the subscales .78, .77, .80, .79, .75, .81, respectively. Test-retest reliability coefficient for the overall scale was .93, and for the subscales .88, .88, .80, .85, .85, .88, respectively (Neff, 2003b).

STUDY 1

Method

Participants SCS was applied to 66 English Language teachers. The original form of the SCS and the Turkish version were administered to English Language teachers twice with a two-week interval between the two administrations to check the language equivalence of the scale.

Procedures Study 1 involved translation of the SCS into Turkish by the authors. In the second phase, three professors who are fluent in English from the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance of Selcuk University

were asked to translate the SCS into Turkish. Then the two translated forms were compared and modifications were made accordingly.

Results

A significant positive relationship was found between the scores from the Turkish and English forms of the SCS administered over a two-week period (r = .96, $p < .001$). Therefore, the translated version was accepted as equivalent to the original.

STUDY 2

Method

Participants Validity and reliability studies of the SCS were conducted with 341 (54% female; 46% male; M = 19.81 years; SD = 1.53) university students selected randomly.

Procedure Study 2 involved testing the construct validity of the Turkish SCS. The factor validity of the six subscales was examined using CFA and EFA. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) were applied to the data prior to factor extraction to ensure that the characteristics of the data set were suitable for exploratory factor analysis. Since the KMO and BTS results indicated that our data satisfied the psychometric criteria for factor analysis, EFA was performed. CFA was performed to establish whether the six-factor construct in the original SCS had good fit with the data collected in the current study. Furthermore, item-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient were calculated.

Results

In order to determine the factor structure of the SCS, CFA was employed. The fit indexes of CFA were χ^2 = 1523,02 (df = 299, $p < .01$), (χ^2/df) = 5.09, RMSEA = 0.123, RMS = 0.128, standardized RMS = 0.255, GFI = 0.692 and AGFI = 0.638. In CFA, if the ratio of χ^2 to degrees of freedom (χ^2/df) is above 3, it means that the model does not have a good fit to the data.

Before conducting factor extraction, we applied the KMO and BTS to ensure that the characteristics of our data set were suitable for factor analysis. KMO analysis yielded an index of 0.916 and BTS 3321.568, $p < 0.001$. The KMO and BTS results indicated our data satisfied the psychometric criteria for factor analysis to be performed. Item factor loadings ranged from .041 to .712 (Table 1). Five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 emerged from analyses of the SCS. Examination of the scree plot suggested the first immediate change in the first factor. Eigenvalues for the first factor were 8.264 (31.7%), for the second factor 2.250 (8.6%), for the third factor 1.382 (5.3%), for the fourth factor 1.284 (4.9%), and for the fifth factor 1.063 (4%).

Item-total correlations ranged from .029 to .646 for 26 items (see Table 1).The 1st and 22nd items were eliminated since their loadings were below .30.

TABLE 1
RESULTS OF FACTOR LOADINGS AND ITEM-TOTAL CORRELATIONS OF SCS

Item Number	Factor loadings	Item-total correlations
1	.041	.029
2	.507	.456
3	.534	.479
4	.644	.598
5	.539	.474
6	.591	.547
7	.479	.429
8	.511	.459
9	.613	.539
10	.492	.442
11	.601	.548
12	.654	.590
13	.581	.541
14	.712	.646
15	.509	.467
16	.665	.618
17	.483	.413
18	.506	.463
19	.669	.599
20	.600	.542
21	.482	.433
22	.362	.285
23	.566	.509
24	.651	.607
25	.658	.617
26	.624	.567

STUDY 3

METHOD

Participants Discriminant validity studies of the SCS-Turkish form were conducted with 189 (68.8% female; 31.2% male; M = 19.06 years; SD = 1.13) university students selected randomly.

Procedures Criterion-related validity was assessed by examining the relationship between the SCS and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted into Turkish by Çuhadaroğlu (1986); the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Köker (1991); and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen

(1988) and adapted into Turkish by Gençöz (2000).

Instruments *Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)* The RSE is a 10-item scale which is composed of 5 positive and 5 negative expressions. High scores on the RSE represent high levels of self-esteem. Turkish adaptation studies were carried out by Çuhadaroğlu (1986). A 10-item brief RSES rates the global self-worth of individuals on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). Cuhadaroğlu reported test-retest reliability coefficients of .71 over a 4-week period. For the construct validity, she found significant differences between the RSES scores of normal adolescents and neurotic ($p < .05$) and psychotic ($p < .01$) adolescents.

Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) The PANAS (Watson et al., 1988) consists of two 10-item mood scales and was developed to provide brief measures of positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). Turkish adaptation studies were carried out by Gençöz (2000). Gençöz found two dimensions as in the original form and internal consistency coefficients were .83 and .86 for positive and negative affect, respectively; test-retest reliability for each was $r = .45$ and $r = .54$, respectively. Criterion-related validity was assessed by examining the relationship between the Beck Depression Scale (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock, & Erbaugh, 1961), and the Beck Anxiety Scale (Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988). The correlation coefficients were -.48 and -.22 for positive affect, .51 and .47 for negative affect.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) The SWLS developed by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991) was used. The SWLS measures global life satisfaction and consists of 5 items of which the values are evaluated on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). According to the results of the reliability study of the scale, the test-retest reliability was $r = .85$ and item-total correlations varied between .71 and .80.

Results

The results of the correlation analysis for assessing criterion-related validity indicated that there was a significant relationship between SCS and RSE scores (zero order $r = .62$, $p < .001$) SCS and SWLS scores (zero order $r = .45$, $p < .001$); SCS and PA scores (zero order $r = .41$, $p < .001$); SCS and NA scores (zero order $r = .-48$, $p < .001$). According to the results of partial correlation coefficients analysis controlling for RSE there was significant relationship between SCS and SWLS scores ($r = .20$, $p < .01$); SCS and PA scores ($r = .24$, $p < .01$); and SCS and NA scores ($r = .-37$, $p < .001$).

STUDY 4

Method

Participants Test-retest reliability analysis was conducted with 93 (66.7% female; 33.3% male; M = 18.56 years; SD = 1.04) university students selected randomly.

Procedures In Study 4, the test-retest reliability of the Turkish SCS was checked. The scale was administered twice with an interval of three weeks between the first and second time of administration.

Results

After the Turkish version of the SCS had been administered twice as described, resulting reliability coefficient was r = .83.

DISCUSSION

In this study, validity and reliability studies of the SCS were carried out with a university student sample. English and Turkish forms of the SCS were found to be positively correlated (r = .96, $p < .001$). This result indicated that both Turkish and English forms of SCS were similarly understood by the participants. EFA and CFA were performed in order to examine the factor structure of the SCS. Results of the EFA and CFA demonstrated that the measure has a single factor. People are expected to be compassionate and tolerant in Turkish culture. Behaviors of people who are compassionate and tolerant are approved of in Turkish culture since compassion and tolerance are esteemed generally. Individuals' tolerance of themselves and of others is regarded as a virtue (Büyükkaragöz & Kesici, 1996). For an individual to be tolerant, he/she has to be tolerant and respectful to himself/herself and others, accept things as they are in reality, and be transparent in relationships. Hence, an individual possessing these characteristics would be said to be compassionate. That may be why the SCS demonstrated a single structure. However, Neff (2003b) found a 6-factor solution in her study. Similarly, Öveç, Akın, and Abacı (2007) found a 6-factor solution in their adaptation study of the SCS for the Turkish culture. Inconsistency between the results of that study and the present study may show that more research into construct validity is required for the Turkish version of the SCS.

Item-total correlations were calculated to assess how the scale items differentiated the students with regard to their self-compassion. Two items (1, 22) below .30 were eliminated from the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .89 and test-retest reliability was .83. With a suggested cut-off for reliable measurement instruments of .70, it can be concluded that the reliability level was satisfactory. The results of the correlation analysis for assessing discriminant validity indicated that there

were significant relationships between self-compassion and self-esteem, self-compassion and positive affect, self-compassion and negative affect, and self-compassion and life satisfaction. Consistent with the current study, Neff (2003b) found a positive and significant relationship between self-compassion and life satisfaction. Neff, Rude, and Kirkpatrick (2007) found significant relationships between self-compassion and both positive and negative affect. These results also support our findings in this study. These results demonstrated that the Turkish version of the SCS is a valid and reliable measure.

The SCS adapted for the Turkish culture may be a convenient instrument for identifying individuals who develop negative emotions about themselves and who cannot develop self-understanding and tolerance. Researchers or professionals such as teachers, counselors and psychiatrists, whose aim it is to help others, could use the instrument. Furthermore, this study is important because it enables cross-cultural studies of Turkish and other cultures to be carried out, now that a valid and reliable version of the SCS has been developed in Turkish.

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