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The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness: Urdu Translation and Validation in Pakistani Culture

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Abstract

The objectives of this research were to translate the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) into Urdu and establish the psychometric properties of this scale in Pakistani context. The translation process was carried out by a comprehensive forward-backward method. The pilot study was conducted with a sample of 20 participants to check for readability and cultural appropriateness. In the final study, 500 adults from Pakistan participated in this research, and all completed a web-based version of BSFL developed in Urdu. The selection for this study was carried out by using a convenience sampling method. The findings revealed the internal reliability of translated scale to be excellent with a value of .768. Values for model fit for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) revealed satisfactory model fit: $\chi^2/df=2.88$, TNI=.981, IFI= .987, TLI= .968, CFI= .987, RMSEA= .05. Overall, results indicate that the Urdu BSFL is a culturally appropriate, reliable, and valid instrument that can be used both in research and applied settings to assess fear of loneliness among Pakistani adults.

Keywords: Fear of Loneliness, Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL), Urdu Translation, Psychometric Properties, Pakistani Adults, Scale Validation

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1. Introduction

Fear is a basic and universal emotional experience accompanied by feelings of apprehension, anxiety, or distress in relation to a real or imagined threat or harm (Öhman, 2008). Research studies have found that adaptive effects may occur when fear contributes to an individual's training and preparedness to respond appropriately in threatening situations. However, an excessive, inappropriate, or disproportionate expression of fear relative to the actual level of threat or harm may lead to maladaptive psychological outcomes (LeDoux, 2000; Lazarus, 1991; & Arne Öhman, 2005). Fear has long been an important construct for research domain in psychological, neurobiological, and social sciences owing to its crucial function in the survival of humanity and emotional homeostasis. Neurobiological investigations have clearly demonstrated that fear reactions are mainly processed in the structures of the amygdala complex in the brain, responsible for quick threat detection and subsequent enhancement of heart rate and alertness (LeDoux, 2012; Barlow, 2022). Although these processes are extremely important in the context of dangerous situations, the continuous occurrence of anticipatory cognitive and emotional responses in the absence of actual threats may contribute to chronic anxiety and difficulties with emotional regulation **(**Grupe & Nitschke, 2013). Research on the nature of fear and anxiety indicates that the fear response is *not merely reactive;* instead, it frequently involves anticipation and cognitive appraisals of potential threat based on previous experience (Britton et al., 2011; Helbig-Lang et al., 2012). This means that social fear such as fear of isolation, rejection or loss can persist and continue to exert a significant impact on mental health regulation even when the immediate environment is safe (Vassilopoulos, 2008).

Fear of loneliness can be defined as an individual's persistent apprehension and distress regarding being alone or insufficiently connected to others and is accompanied by heightened sensitivity to rejection and/or loss (Rokach, 2014). It entails an unpleasant experience triggered by being alone, excessively preoccupied with being lonely, and an urge to check one's status with other people. People who fear loneliness experience anxiety in response to being separated from their social connections, along with avoidance behaviors to avoid being alone (Qualter et al., 2015).

Conceptually, fear of loneliness should be distinguished from loneliness itself**.** Loneliness is defined as a subjective emotional state arising from perceived discrepancies between one's desired and actual social contact (Perlman & Peplau, 1981; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008), whereas fear of loneliness refers to anticipatory emotional responses and worry about the possibility of social disconnection or isolation, rather than the actual experience of isolation (Russell et al., 2012; Ventura-León et al., 2020). In this sense, loneliness reflects an *experienced deficit in social relationships* (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010), while fear of loneliness involves *anticipatory concerns about future social deprivation*, independent of current social reality (Mund & Neyer, 2016; van Tilburg et al., 2020). It indicates that one can fear being lonely even while being physically surrounded by others, such as in the case of conflict, dissatisfaction with relationships, or concerns about the quality of connections (Joiner et al., 2003; Qualter et al., 2015). This distinction is crucial both conceptually and for assessment, as it underlines the proactive, anticipatory nature of fear of loneliness as an emotional state that may motivate behaviors aimed at seeking proximity and reassurance, rather than simply responses to isolation once experienced (Baker & Brownell, 2008; Qualter et al., 2015).

In its complex nature, fear of loneliness has gained increasing attention as an important psychological construct used to explain maladaptive interpersonal, emotional, and behavioral processes across diverse populations (Ventura-León et al., 2020; Qualter et al., 2015). Theoretically, the construct includes cognitive components, such as negative beliefs about solitude (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008); emotional components, such as emotional discomfort when there is no social contact (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010); and behavioral components, including excessive efforts to avoid being alone (Joiner et al., 2003; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010).

People who feel an elevated fear of loneliness may show high levels of emotional dependency, low self-efficacy in social interactions, and poor control over their affects, all of which could negatively impact their psychological well-being and social performance (Bornstein, 2005; Pincus & Lukowitsky, 2010; Rubin & Coplan, 2004). Fear of loneliness has been found to result in poor coping strategies, such as high reassurance-seeking, high overdependence on significant others, and poor tolerance for independence (Al-Yagon & Mikulincer, 2004; Ventura-León et al., 2020). Such strategies, although aimed at dealing with painful affects, may have a contradictory and harmful impact on interpersonal relationships and perceptions, thus perpetuating an overall fear of loneliness (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Qualter et al., 2015). This cyclical process identifies an impetus to treat fear of loneliness as a distinct concept within psychology that provides insight into an issue that affects both individuals and their interpersonal relations (Ventura-León et al., 2020; Rubin & Coplan, 2004).

The theoretical bases of fear of loneliness include attachment theory, cognitive behavioral theory, and evolutionary perspectives. Attachment theory suggests that internal working models of social relationships developed from early experiences of intimacy in turn affect an individual's vulnerability to experiences of loneliness and fear of being alone (Bowlby, 1969; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). People with insecure attachment styles, including those who are anxiously attached, are especially predisposed to greater vulnerability to fear of loneliness in terms of worries of rejection and unavailability of significant others. Cognitive behavioral perspectives highlight distorted and negative thought processes, self-schemas, and vigilance toward threats of rejection among others (Cacioppo et al., 2015). Evolutionary perspectives, in turn, propose that fears of loneliness are beneficial in that, throughout human history, threats of social isolation were threat components related to survival, with humans seeking to maintain connectedness (Dunbar, 2010). Yet in some contexts, this fear of loneliness could be considered otherwise negative, hence contributing toward experiences of distressed emotions.

In terms of developmental theories, the fear of loneliness may develop at various stages of life depending on the dynamics of social roles and interpersonal relationships. During adolescence and early adulthood, the need for peer acceptance and social belonging tends to increase vulnerability to the fear of loneliness (Qualter et al., 2015; Rubin & Coplan, 2004). During adulthood, life transitions such as relationship breakups, occupational stress, or relocation to new environments may trigger experiences associated with the fear of loneliness (Mund & Neyer, 2016; Rokach, 2014). In later stages of life, the loss of close relatives, retirement, and shrinking social networks can contribute to increased loneliness and fears related to social isolation (van Tilburg et al., 2020; Weiss, 1973). The study of fear of loneliness from a lifespan perspective therefore suggests that assessment instruments should be flexible enough to capture these developmental differences across age groups (Qualter et al., 2015).

In particular, there has been sufficient empirical support for the proposition that fear of loneliness has been linked to negative psychological outcomes such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem,

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and life satisfaction (Heinrich & Gullone, 2006; Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). Furthermore, fear of loneliness has been shown to impact levels of interpersonal behavior since it tends to increase levels of social monitoring, inequity of social dependence for approval, and avoidance of potentials for loneliness (Brennan & Shaver, 1995). A constant struggle with feelings of loneliness could hamper the impact of the available resources for dealing with stress, hence making a person susceptible to stress and lack of psychological adaptation.

There is clinical research that suggests a transdiagnostic role for fear of loneliness with various mental phenomena. It has been suggested as a contributing risk for the symptoms of social anxiety, as well as symptoms of borderline personality and depression-related rumination. This would conclude that fear of loneliness is a predisposition risk and not a symptom of a current mental issue. The significance of assessing fear of loneliness at a clinical setting would be beneficial for treatment processes due to a deeper emphasis placed on a main fear of emotions that trigger maladaptive forms of behavior. Despite its relevance, there is considerable debate over the conceptualization and measurement of fear of loneliness. Whereas some researchers conceptualize it as a transient emotional response to perceived social isolation, others conceptualize it as a relatively stable dispositional trait reflecting chronic sensitivity to social disconnection (Rokach & Brock, 1998; Weiss, 1973). These conceptual differences have been highly influential in the development of assessment strategies. Because of the subjective and contextual nature of loneliness-related fear, self-report measures continue to be one of the most prevalent methods in psychological research (Perlman & Peplau, 1981).

There have been some measures designed to detect loneliness and other alike constructs, such as the Fear of Loneliness Scale (FLS) designed by Rokach (2004) and some UCLA measures focusing on anticipatory aspects of social isolation (Russell et al., 1978). This type of test provides information from a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral point of view, based on a single mental state, which happens when an individual finds themselves alone. For example, FLS contains some questions directed at anxiety of social isolation, distress when alone, and avoidance behaviors, having coefficients of reliability varying from .78 to .88 (Rokach, 2004; DiTommaso & Spinner, 1993). However, some measures, although being reliable, have certain disadvantages, one of which may be a considerable length of certain questionnaires.

Long assessment tools also create problems, including respondent fatigue, reduced response accuracy, and limited participation, especially in groups characterized by a shortage of time or lower literacy levels. These issues become more critical in applied contexts such as community-based research, educational institutions, and online surveys. This concern has made the development of brief but reliable measures a priority in recent psychometric research, enabling data collection in an efficient way while maintaining conceptual rigor.

In the light of these observations, a need arose to develop the Brief Fear of Loneliness Scale as a short self-report measure intended to efficiently capture the core emotional and cognitive elements of fear associated with being alone or socially disconnected. By eliminating item redundancy yet retaining theoretically meaningful indicators, the brief scale permits efficient measurement without sacrificed reliability or conceptual clarity. The increasing focus on brief measures is a practical concern in psychological, clinical, and applied research, where many constructs are assessed together and participant burden needs to be minimized (Smith et al., 2000).

In non-Western cultures such as in Pakistan, the measurement of "fear of loneliness" assumes a special significance because of the collectivist nature of the culture, in which a high value is placed upon family solidarity and interconnectedness. In addition to a resilient social framework, there are constant sociocultural transitions and developments today, such as urbanization, changes in family systems, academic and job stress, and the increasing use of electronic communications, which may potentially increase the risk factor for fear of loneliness. At the same time, a lack of availability and use of culturally adapted and Urdu-language measurement scales is an extremely critical issue in the effective measurement and interpretation of "fear of loneliness." Western-developed psychological measurement scales and instruments may not, in fact, be effective in measuring culturally defined patterns and manifestations of emotional experiences and interconnectedness.

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives: to translate the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) into Urdu using a standard translation method, and to assess the psychometric properties of the Urdu version of the BSFL by examining its internal consistency and reporting the model fit indices for its unidimensional structure.

2. Method

The current study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) was translated from English to Urdu. In the second phase, the
factor structure of the BSFL was examined. Since the BSFL is unidimensional, the reliability of the BSFL was tested through the Internal Consistency Method. In the second phase of the research, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was performed on Pakistani college students, university students, and employees. Since the BSFL is unidimensional, the values of Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted were not considered.

2.1 The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL)

The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) was designed and created by Ventura León, Sánchez Villena, Caycho Rodríguez, Barboza Palomino, and Rubio (2020) to capture people's fear of experiencing loneliness as a distinct psychological entity. The scale contains 5 items and is a unidimensional scale with a measurement type of frequency scale. The participants are required to answer questions on a scale format with 5 options on a Likert scale with 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Almost Always, and 5 = Always. The scale reported a satisfactory outcome concerning its internal consistency $\alpha > .88$ using Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The BSFL scale established content and construct validity with content validity provided using expert opinion with regard to item relevance and representativeness with a large sample population among youths and adults. The BSFL scale has remained a short and valid scale to measure fear of loneliness.

2.2 Participants

A total of 500 participants were involved in the study. The sample consisted of 248 males, accounting for 49.6%, and 252 females, accounting for 50.4%, with ages ranging from 18-30 years and above. The sampling method used was convenience sampling.

2.3 Procedure

The current study obtained formal approval from Ethical Review Board of the university. After having obtained ethical approval for conducting the study, a Google Form was designed and carefully formatted for efficient and well-organized collection of data. The Google Form for data collection was segmented into three different sections for easy comprehension and response by the respondents.

Section I included the consent form, in which the participants were informed in writing regarding the objectives of the study. The consent of

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the participants was obtained after informing them that the participation was absolutely voluntary, and in case they wish to withdraw, it will not affect them negatively in any way. They were assured of their privacy and confidentiality.

Section II contained questions about participants' demographics, including age, gender, family status, and Qualification. This section was designed to collect the essential background variables needed for statistical analysis and to facilitate an understanding of the sample characteristics.

Section III consisted of the translated statements of BSFL in Urdu. The participants were instructed to respond to all items in the light of personal experiences and perceptions of fear of loneliness. The link to the Google Form was shared with the participants through multiple online channels, including WhatsApp and SMS, to reach and involve as many participants as possible. Data collection was performed only through the online survey method. The responses were recorded in a secured manner. Later, the data so collected were tabulated, coded, and analyzed using SPSS, version 23.

2.3.1 Phase I: Translating the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL)

Before the process of translation was initiated, approval from the original authors for the translation of the BSFL was obtained. This was in adherence to ethical considerations and copyright laws. Translation was done through procedures recognized across the global stage (Brislin, 1970, 1976, 1980), in addition to adhering to guidelines as suggested by the International Test Commission (2017).

2.3.2 Step 1: Forward Translation

The translation in the forward translation phase was carried out independently by two bilingual psychology experts proficient in both languages and well versed in their respective cultural systems. The translation team was made aware of the aims and scope of the study, and the concept behind each question. The team was specifically asked to pinpoint questions that might not apply and could be considered inappropriate in Pakistani context and to suggest alternatives that could preserve their concept. A major concern was to establish equivalence in meanings rather than word-for-word translations. This ensured that the translated items were capturing the original intent of the scale.

2.3.2 Step 2: Committee Approach

After the completion of the two independent Urdu translations, the translations and the original English version were reviewed and compared by a committee of experts. A thorough review was conducted to determine the consistency and instructions of the translated items. Items from the two translations are combined and modified to form a harmonized draft. Suggestions from the experts are considered to improve the readability and equivalence of the concepts.

2.3.3 Step 3: Backward Translation

The back-translation was carried out to establish the semantic and conceptual congruence of the translated scale. Three professional linguists were asked to back-translate the Urdu draft into English. This exercise was important in determining possible bias, inconsistencies, or incorrect meanings that might be present in the translated scale (John et al., 2006). The back- translated version was checked for accuracy and meaning congruence between the back- translated version and the original scale.

2.3.4 Step 4: Committee Review

A committee consisting of four individuals, including psychologists, a sociologist, and an English linguist, as well as a PhD researcher in psychology, performed a comprehensive review of the back-translated version in comparison to the English version. All the items were examined cautiously to check for their understanding and similarity to the English scale version. Finally, the Urdu version of the BSFL was developed after reaching consensus among all the committee members that the translated version accurately captured the concept of fear of loneliness and could be administered on the target group.

2.3.5 Step 5: Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out with a sample of 20 respondents using convenient sampling with an equal number of males and females in the sample, to evaluate the understanding and conceptual validity of the Urdu BSFL. The respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study. The scale was administered to the respondents after they were requested to point out the items they did not understand. Feedback obtained confirmed the lack of ambiguity with all items. The pilot study established the fact that there were no difficulties in understanding the concepts embodied in each item. An average of 5 to 7 minutes were taken to complete the scale.

3. Results

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=500)

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age	17-20	229	45.80%
	20-25	1	0.20%
	21-25	215	43%
	26-30	42	8.40%
	Above 30	13	2.60%
Gender	Male	248	49.60%
	Female	252	50.40%
Family Status	Nuclear family	247	49.40%
	Joint family	253	50.60%

Table 1 describes the demographic characteristics of the sample of university students, college students, and professionals through descriptive statistics.

Table 2.

Reliability statistics (N=500)

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.768	5

Note: Cronbach's Alpha= α, N= Total Number of items

Reliability reflects the consistency or stability of a measuring instrument in measuring a certain construct over time and under different conditions (Tavakol & Dennick 2011). The Urdu version of BSFL had a good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha .768, which means that the scale items were adequately measuring the construct of fear of loneliness.

Table 3.

Item-total correlation of The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (N=500)

	Correlations				
Items	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
1	1	.481**	.326**	.268**	.492**
2		1	.506**	.400**	.438**
3			1	.380**	.340**
4				1	.347**
5					1
M	2.36	2.24	2.12	2.31	2.21
SD	1.27	1.25	1.26	1.18	1.27

Table 3 shows the inter-correlations, means and standard deviations for the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness.

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Phase 2: Confirmation of Factor Structure and Assessing the Psychometric Properties of The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is one kind of multivariate statistical method used for testing whether a hypothesized measurement model fits the observed data theoretically. CFA is commonly implemented for confirming the factor structure of a scale by investigating the relationship among the observed indicators and latent constructs. This lets the researcher assess the validity of an adapted or translated instrument and estimate if the proposed model adequately represents the data.

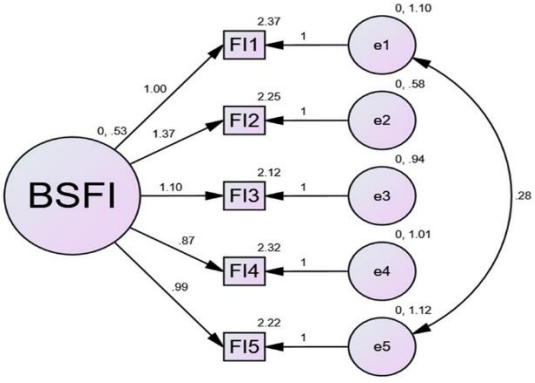
The Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness was performed in order to confirm its factor structure on the adapted scale. The total contributions collected for this study were from 500 participants, of which 258 were male and 252 female participants, and this sample was used for conducting the CFA. The CFA was employed to examine whether the data collected fitted the proposed model in the light of the theoretical framework of the fear of loneliness.

CFA is a procedure that confirms or modifies a hypothesized model of relationships using observed data for a set of measured variables. More precisely, it explores whether there are significant relationships between the observed indicators and their unobserved or latent construct, which is defined by underlying factors or components represented through multiple observed indicators. This process provides evidence regarding the construct validity of the scale.

The CFA model fit indices were Chi-square/df, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness has one or more latent constructs, which were determined using a series of observed indicators aimed at tapping an individual's fears/concerns regarding alone or social isolation. The acceptable values of the model fit indices showed a goodness of fit of the CFA measurement model.

In total, based on justifications for deletion and fit indices for the model, the CFA model for the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness was selected as the best fit for the data. This is proof of the concept that in fact the Urdu version of the scale measures the same thing as the English version because what it measures is based on the original instrument. Below is a visualization of the CFA model, along with the factor loadings, as well as a table of the results of the CFA.

Figure 1: CFA Model for The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness



The Confirmatory Factor Analysis found adequate justification for the proposed measurement model on the translated version of the scale. As observable from Figure 1 above, each item showed adequate loading on the single dimension. This thereby suggests the effective translation of the items to capture the theoretical essence of the proposed dimensions on the source scale. The specification on the model to allow the covariance between the selected error terms was satisfactorily done. For a translated scale on dimensions like the current one, the similarities within the items can create similar residuals. This thereby creates a justification for the necessity to allow the specifications on the model to resolve the misfit created on the model along the items. Allowing the specifications within the model creates a considerable improvement on the model fit. This thereby creates an interpretation suggesting the substantial misfit on the model had been related to the measurement characteristics on the dimensions and not on the theoretical constructs. Most importantly, the specifications did not affect the single dimension on the translated version of the proposed dimensions; instead, the specifications improved the parsimony on the theoretical dimensions.

Table 4.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (N=500)

CMIN/DF	NFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA
2.88	0.981	0.987	0.968	0.987	0.061

Note: NFI= Normed Fit Indices, IFI= Incremental Fit Indices, TLI= Tucker Lewis Index, CFI= Comparative Fit Indices, RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The Urdu version of the scale showed high construct validity. Fit indices (value of CMIN/DF=2.88, RMSEA= .061, CFI= .987, TLI= .968, IFI= .987, NFI= .981) were satisfactory to excellent suggesting high fit of the scale with the data. The overall psychometric performance of the translated scale was satisfactory to excellent. The value of the model suggests that the model fits good.

Table 5.

Descriptive Statistics of The Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (N=500)

Variables	K	M(SD)	*A*
The brief scale of Fear of Loneliness	5	11.26(4.51)	0.768

Note: k = Total Number of items, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, α = Cronbach's alpha

The data shown in Table 5 includes the internal consistency, as well as the average and standard deviation, for the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness.

4. Discussion

Fear of loneliness is a basic psychological construct involving the consistent fear or distress related to loneliness or a lack of social connection to others, the susceptibility to the idea of rejection or abandonment from the social world (Rokach, 2014; Qualter et al., 2015). Fear of loneliness involves cognitive component, behavioral component and emotional component related to negative feelings towards loneliness, feelings of distress or discomfort during the lack of contact from the social world to avoid conditions leading to loneliness (Peplau & Perlman, 1982).Specifically, there is a requirement for culturally modified Urdu translation and administration of the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) to properly measure the fear of loneliness in a Pakistani setting where the values of collectivism, family solidarity, and interdependence are placed on high priority (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). The proposed research was carried out to translate and administer the BSFL to Pakistani adults and students to test its psychometric soundness.

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Findings suggested that the Urdu BSFL had sufficient internal consistency to conclude that overall data reliably measured fear of loneliness in the Pakistani community. The inter-item correlations indicated that all items contributed meaningfully to measuring the intended construct. This outcome supports existing evidence on the BSFL that has identified high internal reliability in previous validation studies (Ventura-León et al., 2020). A slightly lower alpha value in the Urdu measure may reflect cultural differences in the experience and interpretation of fear related to being alone in social contexts, highlighting the importance of culturally sensitive measurement approaches (Cheung et al., 2011; van de Vijver & Hambleton, 1996). These findings suggest the need to apply culturally appropriate instruments to accurately capture psychological constructs within different sociocultural settings.

Confirmatory factor analysis yielded strong support for the unidimensional structure of the instrument. The model fit indices indicated a very good fit, suggesting that the Urdu translation adequately reflected the intended latent construct. These findings are consistent with the original validation of the BSFL, which also supported a single-factor structure representing fear of loneliness (Ventura-León et al., 2020). As discussed earlier, the introduction of covariances between selected error terms contributed to improved model fit, likely due to semantic and conceptual overlap among items in the translated version. Such adjustments are common in cross-cultural scale adaptation and do not compromise the theoretical integrity of the instrument (Beaton et al., 2000; Byrne, 2010). Collectively, these results provide strong evidence that the Urdu BSFL is a valid and reliable measure of fear of loneliness among Pakistani adults.

Fear of loneliness may represent a universal psychological construct; however, its expression and interpretation may vary across cultural contexts (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008; Qualter et al., 2015). The results further emphasized the importance of culturally translating psychological measures. In collectivist societies such as Pakistan, where interpersonal relationships, family cohesion, and social interdependence are highly valued, experiences related to solitude and social disconnection may carry distinct emotional meanings (Triandis, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Consequently, items assessing discomfort with being alone may evoke culturally specific responses shaped by collective norms and expectations regarding social connectedness. The Urdu BSFL therefore represents an important tool capable of capturing these context-specific experiences and facilitating more accurate psychological research within the Pakistani population.

Implications

The current study offers a culturally valid and psychometrically robust Urdu translation of the BSFL, filling an important void in the measurement of fear of loneliness in Pakistani samples. The proposed instrument could be used by psychologists, counselors, and mental health practitioners to identify those high in fear of loneliness, thereby helping in the development of interventions. Moreover, the brevity of the instrument makes it easy to use in cost-effective manners in clinics, research, and institutions without any loss of reliability and conceptual simplicity. This Urdu instrument of the BSFL may help in further studies regarding fear of loneliness and its impact on psychiatric conditions, social, and psychological well-being in the Pakistani community.

Limitations & Recommendations

This sample highly consisted of urban, educated participants, which may limit generalizations of findings to rural or less-educated populations. Consequently, it is suggested that future studies include more demographic groups to enhance their external validity., Data were collected using an online survey therefore, individuals with limited access to the internet might have been excluded. Further research may use printed questionnaires to obtain greater participation.

Conclusion

The Urdu version of the Brief Scale of Fear of Loneliness (BSFL) is a culturally sensitive and valid instrument for evaluating fear of loneliness among Pakistani adults. The scale possesses good internal consistency and a strong one factor structure with excellent goodness of fit statistics for a unidimensional model that is supported by confirmatory factor analysis. The use of the Urdu BSFL is recommended for future research for evaluating fear of loneliness among other populations for establishing its predictive validity and exploring relationships with various outcomes for further developing its utility within the Pakistani culture.

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