Urdu Translation and Adaptation of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale

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The aim of the study was to translate, adapt and validate the original 13-item English version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (IRSS; Rohner et al., 2020) into Urdu language to facilitate administration on Pakistani adults. The study followed three stages: Translation and adaptation, linguistic equivalence with cross validation, and establishing psychometric properties of translated Urdu version of IRSS. The sample for stage II comprised of 100 adults above 18 years of age selected through convenience sampling technique. The results showed significant correlation ($r = .84$) between both English and Urdu versions of the IRSS. Similarly, inter-item correlation of English items and Urdu items showed significant correlations with an exception of only item 3 and item 12. Moreover, value of Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .72$) illustrated the internal consistency of Urdu version of IRSS. In stage III of the study, Exploratory Factor Analysis run on a separate sample ($N = 200$) of adults indicated that the Urdu version of the IRSS is a standardized measure like the original English IRSS as all the items were significantly loaded; only items number 3 and 12 that did not load on the scale. Therefore, after excluding item number 3 and 12 with the permission of Rohner Research Publications, it is concluded that the 11-item Urdu translation of IRSS is a valid and reliable scale ($\alpha = .83$) to measure interpersonal rejection-sensitivity among Pakistani population.

Keywords. Adaptation, translation, standardization, Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale

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The construct of rejection sensitivity has been conceptually and operationally defined by many psychologists from various viewpoints. The term was first coined by German psychoanalyst, Horney (1937) in explaining her psychoanalytic perspective of why neurotic individuals face difficulty in socializing with others and in maintaining intimate relationships as compared to other human beings. This led the attention of other psychologists to study the concept of rejection sensitivity and its underlying causes as an important area of concern for psychological research. However, in late 1900s, researchers emphasized the urge to measure the tendency of rejection sensitivity among individuals in a more standardized way. For instance, Mehrabian (1994) developed measures of affiliation tendency and sensitivity to rejection in social interactions. His findings suggested that rejection sensitive individuals were prone to elicit less positive responses from others and were also characterized with lack of agreeableness in their personality when compared with others who were assessed as less rejection sensitive. Feldman and Downey (1994) described rejection sensitivity has also been described by as negative perceptions and expectations that individuals acquire in personal relations with others. For objective analysis of the construct, Downey and Feldman (1996) developed the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire-Personal (RSQ-Personal) to provide a standardized measure of respondent's tendency of rejection sensitivity and expectancy value in current personal relationships. Similarly, Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner & Khaleque, 2008) is a self-report inventory widely used to assess rejection sensitivity among children and adults and its adverse effects on parent-child relationship. For cross-cultural findings, the scale is so far available in 63 languages. In Pakistan, PARQ has been translated and validated in Urdu language by Riaz (2011).

In addition, the DSM-5 Criteria (American Psychiatric Association, 2012) specifies rejection sensitivity along with temperamental vulnerabilities, adverse attachment experiences, and fear of negativity from others as linked with development of Avoidant Personality Disorder (APD) among neurotics. Meyer et al. (2005) have provided empirical findings for this symptomology in their research conducted on 156 adults. They revealed that APD was closely associated with pessimistic cognitive-affective responses to rejection-related situations. Furthermore, findings by Nesdale and Watson (2012) proved significant impacts of perceived rejection sensitivity in initiating negative social cognitions, emotional imbalance, and problems in interpersonal behaviors among young adults. They concluded that to avoid social rejection, such individuals

show tendencies of social withdrawal and loneliness, subsequently leading to signs of psychological distress. More hazardous influences of rejection sensitivity have been explored by Leary et al. (2006) in their extensive study and revealed that rejection sensitivity triggers violent behavior (s) among its victims. They continued that prolonged social withdrawal and loneliness may eventually transform into emotional stress, pain, neglect, aggression, frustration, and low self-esteem.

As the key concept of the current research, rejection sensitivity tends to be defined in terms of interpersonal rejection sensitivity as proposed by Boyce and Parker (1989). According to them, it refers to dealing with the generalized concerns that individuals may have about socializing with others. More recently, similar explanation was also supported by Harb et al. (2002). Interpersonal rejection sensitivity may also be found as an important domain of Rohner's IPAR Theory that is an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development, recently revised by Rohner and Khaleque (2015). As the theory aims to predict and analyze the major causes, outcomes and other related factors of perceived parental acceptance and rejection globally among children and adults regardless of their cultural, racial, or religious boundaries, it proposes perceived parental acceptance-rejection as a good predictor of interpersonal rejection-sensitivity among individuals (Rohner, 2008). Interpersonal rejection sensitivity has been explained in terms of intensified susceptibility to perceive negative or hurtful intent in the behavior of others, even when there is no objective signoff such ill intent. Rejection sensitive individuals interpret the complex attitude of others as being intentionally hurtful even though there may be several other possible factors for causing ambiguous behavior(s). Intrinsically, such individuals ensure careful observance or watchfulness in social situations to eradicate the possibility of being rejected, ignored, criticized, or disrespected by others. Subsequently, the concept of interpersonal rejection sensitivity has been signified in the IPAR Theory as associated with the experience of hurt feelings and emotional pain that may persist for long and become intensified in the form of serious emotional and psychological disturbances including hostility/ aggression, depression, low self-esteem, self-inadequacy, neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Thus, interpersonal rejection sensitivity plays a key role in causing maladaptive patterns of relationships (Rohner, 2008). For this purpose, Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner, 2018) was devised for researchers worldwide to practice and understand the theoretical framework of interpersonal rejection-sensitivity and measure its extent in interpersonal relationships.

Rationale of the Study

Cross-cultural studies in the field of psychology are often conducted to investigate sensitive psychological issues (such as rejection sensitivity) in a standardized way across cultures to seek more extensive and generalizable outcomes; for instance, Garris et al. (2010) aimed to assess cultural differences in the influence of interpersonal rejection sensitivity on emotional and psychological well-being of individuals. For this purpose, levels of interpersonal acceptance-rejection were observed in a representative sample of 187 American and Japanese undergraduates. Statistical analysis of the data inferred interesting significant differences between subjects of the two cultures under study. It was concluded that Japanese respondents were more emotionally and psychologically influenced due to history of severe interpersonal rejection as compared to American participants. In another cross-cultural study on rejection-sensitivity, Hong Kong Chinese reported their society as more rejection stricken due to lack of relational acceptance than European Canadian citizens (Lou & Li, 2017). Likewise, research by Khoshkam et al. (2012) depicted high frequency of rejection sensitivity in 125 Iranian college students. Besides, positive significant correlation between rejection sensitivity and worry was measured in the targeted sample.

Similarly, keeping in mind the linguistic and cultural differences of Pakistanis from other societies, the present study was designed to translate, adapt and validate the English version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale into Urdu language to make it a reliable measure for Pakistani population. It is important to adapt the tool according to the culture where it has to be used before making any statistical inferences from it. Whether the scale is being used for cross-cultural comparison or applied on a specific population it needs to give valid and reliable information, which is possible only when the cultural differences are kept in mind.

The main objectives of the study were to translate the English IRSS in Urdu language and to compute linguistic equivalence of the translated IRSS. In addition, it was also intended to establish the psychometric properties of the Urdu IRSS.

Method

Sample

The current study was conducted in three phases, that is, translation of the scale, establishment of linguistic equivalence with

cross validation and then application on a fresh sample to establish its psychometric properties. In phase I, the sample comprised of one hundred (N =100) adults, including 50 males and 50 females of age range above 18 years (M = 21 years; SD = .94), selected through convenience sampling technique. Bilingual participants were selected to determine the linguistic equivalence between the original English and translated Urdu versions of IRSS. However, for establishing the psychometric properties of the translated Urdu version of IRSS, another sample (N = 200) comprising 100 male and 100 female adults, was taken using convenience sampling technique to determine the factor structure, reliability, and validity of the scale. Age range of the sample was above 18 years (M = 21.82; SD = 1.93). In addition, both sets of the participants were selected from different disciplines of Islamia College University and University of Peshawar.

Measures

The following measuring instruments were used in the study including Personal Data Sheet and Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale.

Personal Data Sheet. The demographic information of the respondents was collected using a brief personal data sheet as devised by the researcher. The PDS comprised of items that collected information including name, age, gender, education, family income, and family structure of the participants.

Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner et al., 2020). The Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner et al., 2020) is a standardized measure of an individual's sensitivity to the possibility of being rejected in interpersonal relationships. The IRSS comprises 13 items and was used in the current study. The responses are recorded on a 4-point Likert-type scale that is ranging from 1 = *not at all true of me* to 4 = *very true of me*. On the 13-item IRSS, the possible scores range from a low of 13 (i.e. no self-reported rejection sensitivity) to a high of 52 (i.e. maximum possible self-reported rejection sensitivity) on the scale; scores at or above the midpoint of 33 reveal the perception of serious interpersonal rejection sensitivity among respondents.

Rohner et al. (2020) revealed that the calculated value of the Cronbach's alpha for the 13-item IRSS is .90, whereas the value of the Cronbach's alpha of .72 was found in the present study. However, after excluding item number 3 and 12, the total number of the items of IRSS has now been reduced to 11 with the permission of Rohner

Research Publications (see Results). On the 11-item IRSS, the possible scores range from a low of 11 (i.e. no self-reported rejection sensitivity) to a high of 44 (i.e. maximum possible self-reported rejection sensitivity) on the scale (Rohner et al., 2020) and calculated value of Cronbach's alpha was found to be .83 for the current sample.

Procedure

The study is based on three stages including translation and adaptation of IRSS; assessing the linguistic equivalence with cross validation; and measuring psychometric properties of Urdu translation of IRSS.

Stage 1: Translation and Adaptation of IRSS

The steps followed in translation and adaptation of IRSS included determining the relevancy level of the scale, forward translation, and back translation. For carrying out the initial step of determining relevancy level of the IRSS suitable for Pakistani culture, a professional team of three psychologists and two educationists was consulted by the researchers. After thorough critical analysis, the experts rated the items on the scale as relevant and appropriate for adolescents and adults of Pakistani culture. Afterwards, the scale was sent to another team of 5 bilingual experts whose qualification was Masters in English. They translated all the items into Urdu language and so forward translation of the scale was successfully completed. Back translation of Urdu version of IRSS into English language was later done by another expert. The researcher then requested an expert penal of three psychologists to review both original English and translated Urdu versions of the scale to analyze the content, meanings, and grammar of their items. Thus, all the possible threats targeting the validity and clarity of the scale were eradicated in a systematic manner.

Stage 2: Computing Linguistic Equivalence with Cross Validation

To carry out the second stage of this study, the researcher approached the concerned officials of Department of Psychology, Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan. After seeking formal permission from the authorities, a sample (N =100) of students having age-range above 18 years (M = 21 years; SD = .94), including both males and females, were selected by convenience sampling technique. The researcher briefed the sample about the purpose of the study and told them that their participation was voluntary. All the students agreed as they were enthusiastic about their participation in the study.

The original English-version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner, 2018) was administered first. The subjects were asked to read the instructions carefully and mark the responses accordingly. It was observed that they took about 10-15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire. The same sample was contacted after three days and the translated Urdu-version of IRSS was administered by following the same procedure.

Stage 3: Establishing Psychometric Properties of Urdu Translation of IRSS

The psychometric properties of Urdu translation of short version of IRSS were established by finding out the factor structure, and reliability of the scale. A fresh sample of 200 respondents was collected from different disciplines of Islamia College Peshawar and University of Peshawar. Age range of the sample was above 18 years ($M = 21.82$; $SD = 1.93$). After taking consent, the students were given the scale in classroom setting. They were asked to carefully answer the statements. It took five to ten minutes to complete the scale. They were briefed that it is the test adaptation requirement, and no hypothesis testing is conducted on the result attained.

Results

Language equivalence between original 13-item English version and translated Urdu version of IRSS was computed by the researchers. The results showed that significant correlation ($r = .84$) exists between both versions of the scale. Moreover, item to item significant correlation of English items and Urdu items are shown by figures in Table 1.

Table 1

Item-Total Correlation for Translated Urdu Version of IRSS (13-item; N=200)

	IRSS Item	r
1.	I am sensitive to criticism by others.	.62***
2.	If my friends are in a bad mood, I tend to wonder if it is because of me.	.43***
3.	I worry very little about what people may think of me.	-.11
4.	When I talk to people I do not know, I worry about what they might think of me.	.68***

Continued…

	IRSS Item	r
5.	Disapproval by others has a negative effect on me emotionally.	.55***
6.	I worry about the kind of impression I make on people.	.62***
7.	I get upset if someone is critical of me.	.61***
8.	I find myself being watchful for possible signs of rejection in my interactions with people.	.56***
9.	I worry about what people think of me even when I know it is unimportant.	.73**
10.	I am often afraid that people will find fault with me.	.63***
11.	When I cannot hear what people are talking about, I worry that they might be saying something negative about me.	.55***
12.	I am rarely concerned about the impression I make on people.	-.21
13.	I become tense if I think I am being judged by someone.	.65***

***$p < .001$.

The results of Table 1 show the construct validity of Urdu-version of the IRSS, as all the items except item 3 and 12 are significantly contributing towards the total score.

Table 2

Linguistic Equivalence/Correlation (item by item) of Urdu and English Versions of IRSS (13-item; N=200)

	IRSS Item	r
1.	I am sensitive to criticism by others.	.71***
2.	If my friends are in a bad mood, I tend to wonder if it is because of me.	.68***
3.	I worry very little about what people may think of me.	-.10
4.	When I talk to people I do not know, I worry about what they might think of me.	.61***
5.	Disapproval by others has a negative effect on me emotionally.	.70***
6.	I worry about the kind of impression I make on people.	.69***
7.	I get upset if someone is critical of me.	.77***
8.	I find myself being watchful for possible signs of rejection in my interactions with people.	.55***
9.	I worry about what people think of me even when I know it is unimportant.	.66***
10.	I am often afraid that people will find fault with me.	.68***
11.	When I cannot hear what people are talking about, I worry that they might be saying something negative about me.	.73***
12.	I am rarely concerned about the impression I make on people.	-.12
13.	I become tense if I think I am being judged by someone.	.65***

***$p < .001$.

Table 2 provides evidence that all the items except item number 3 and 12 show significant positive correlation between English and Urdu-version of IRSS. Hence proving the correctness of Urdu translation, that is on both the English and Urdu versions participants scored the same on 11 of the items.

Internal Consistency

To measure internal consistency of Urdu version of IRSS on bilingual participants ($N = 100$), Cronbach's alpha was calculated ($\alpha = .72$), which indicate high reliability of the scale. Table 3 shows psychometric properties of the scale.

The findings of factor analysis on a fresh sample ($N = 200$) proved a single factor solution of the adapted IRSS. Scree Plot and factor structure are presented in Figure 1, and Table 4 respectively.

Figure 1
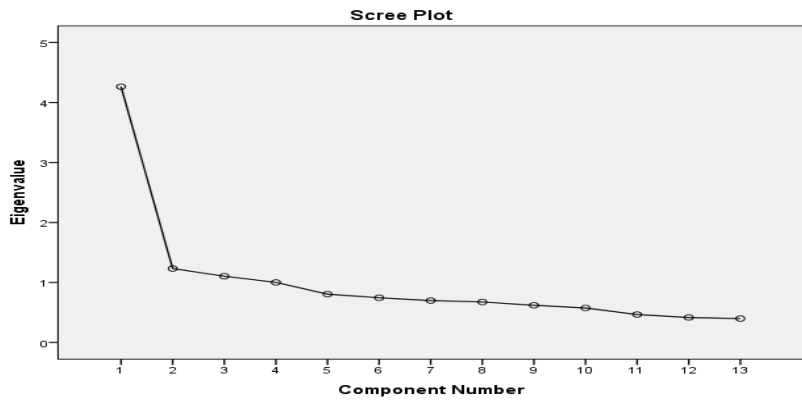*Scree-plot for EFA of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale*

Table 3

Factor Loadings for Exploratory Factor Analysis of Urdu version of IRSS (N=200)

IRSS Item	Factor loading
1. I am sensitive to criticism by others.	**.55**
2. If my friends are in a bad mood, I tend to wonder if it is because of me.	**.46**
3. I worry very little about what people may think of me.	.00
4. When I talk to people I do not know, I worry about what they might think of me.	**.63**
5. Disapproval by others has a negative effect on me emotionally.	**.57**
6. I worry about the kind of impression I make on people.	**.70**
7. I get upset if someone is critical of me.	**.68**
8. I find myself being watchful for possible signs of rejection in my interactions with people.	**.61**
9. I worry about what people think of me even when I know it is unimportant.	**.67**
10. I am often afraid that people will find fault with me.	**.61**
11. When I cannot hear what people are talking about, I worry that they might be saying something negative about me.	**.63**
12. I am rarely concerned about the impression I make on people.	.09
13. I become tense if I think I am being judged by someone.	**.64**

Note. Factor loadings > .30 are in boldface.

All items except item number 3 and 12 show significant loadings on a single factor. Reliability of the 11-item Urdu IRSS after excluding item 3 and 12 was found to be .83. Hence, the 11-item Urdu IRSS can be used in further research.

Discussion

To provide reliable knowledge about the indicators and the degree of interpersonal rejection sensitivity in Pakistani adults, the present study translated the original 13-item English version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner et al., 2020) into Urdu language.

Findings show that the item-total correlations of Urdu-version of IRSS are significantly correlated with the total score, except items number 3 and 12; this shows that all 11 items are effectively contributing towards the measurement of interpersonal rejection sensitivity among adolescents/adults. In addition, Table 2 also provides evidence that all items on both the original and adapted versions of the scale are highly correlated except items 3 and 12; thus suggesting that Urdu translation did not change the meaning of the items. Keeping in view these findings, items 3 and 12 were excluded from the scale with the permission of the Rohner Research Publications.

For further analysis, another investigation was carried out on a fresh sample of 200 respondents to show that the Urdu translated scale has the same factor structure as that of the original IRSS. Initially KMO statistic (.86) was computed which suggested that the sample size is sufficient to run exploratory factor analysis. For determining the factor structure, Principal Component Analysis with Oblimin rotation was used. As IRSS measures a single construct of Interpersonal rejection sensitivity, therefore, a fixed factor solution comprised of extracting a single dimension of the items was applied in exploratory factor analysis. Table 4 provides a strong evidence of a single factor solution of the scale. Using .30 as a cutoff point, only item no 3 and 12 did not load on the scale, whereas, significant loadings of rest of the items have been evidently recorded by the researchers. Similarly, a strong single factor solution with Eigen value of 4.26 shows 32.79 % of the variance by a single dimension which is further supported via Scree plot (see Figure 1). Possibly, one reason of the consistent findings regarding item number 3 and 12 may be that these two items were the only reverse coded items on the scale. Therefore, while answering the questionnaire, the respondents overlooked the negative elements used tactfully by the authors of the scale and that is the reason the two items did not load significantly after reverse coding. Secondly, it is possible that ambiguity in sentence structure have led to difficulty for the respondents in comprehending these two items. Nevertheless, deleting the two problematic items (3 and 12) further improved the reliability of the scale suggesting the best suitability of 11-item IRSS for Pakistani population.

Limitations and Suggestions

Following are the potential limitations of the present study including poor cross match on two items of the original scale and by

item correlation of both English and Urdu versions of IRSS (13-item) also showed non insignificant correlation of items 3 and 12. Exploratory factor analysis further revealed that items 3 and 12 did not load significantly on the scale. Subject to the possibility of improper phraseology of item 3 and 12 of Urdu IRSS that led to a potential loss of measuring the degree of sensitivity towards impression formation, this content validation issue was considered in the deletion of item number 3 and 12, producing the revised 11-item Urdu IRSS for future research. After removing items 3 and 12 in the Urdu adaptation of IRSS, it is suggested that future research may explore the psychometrics of the 11-item scale or after positively framing the two specified items.

Implications

As the study followed standardized procedures of translating the original English version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale into Urdu language, the translated Urdu version of the scale provides systematic knowledge of the degree of interpersonal rejection sensitivity among native Pakistani adults. The Urdu IRSS may be administered in future research so as to assess the possible relationships between interpersonal rejection sensitivity and other variables, such as perceived parental control, psychological well-being, workplace performance, as well as other related constructs.

Conclusion

The present research followed standardized procedures to translate the original English version of Interpersonal Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Rohner et al., 2020) into Urdu language to make it appropriate for administration in Pakistani culture. Further, psychometric properties showed significant values for linguistic equivalence and internal consistency of IRSS. To conclude, the revised 11-item scale provides a reliable tool to measure rejection sensitivity in interpersonal relations among adults of Pakistani culture.

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