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Validity and Reliability of the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale With Turkish Children

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The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) was designed to measure life satisfaction among children and adolescents. The present study aimed to assess the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the BMSLSS. The Turkish version of BMSLSS was administered to 394 students from fourth through eighth grade. The results revealed acceptable internal consistency reliability, criterion-related validity, and construct validity for the BMSLSS. The BMSLSS scores had acceptable test-retest reliability ($r = .82$) and internal consistency ($r = .89$). Item-total correlations varied from .64 to .78. The BMSLSS had a significant correlation with the Children's Depression Inventory and the Piers Haris Self-Concept Scale. The results indicated that the BMSLSS has strong psychometric properties for the sample of the study.

Keywords: *Life Satisfaction Scale; validity; reliability; Turkish students*

The importance of life satisfaction during childhood and adolescence periods has been recognized for a long time (Huebner, 1997). Consequently, in addition to traditional emphases on deficits and psychopathology, professionals have increasingly emphasized the importance of well-being in children in an educational context (Suldo, Riley, & Shaffer, 2006).

Life satisfaction is usually considered to be an essential component of subjective well-being. Other components of subjective well-being are positive and negative affect (Huebner & Dew, 1996). Life satisfaction is more stable than the other two parts of subjective well-being (Diener & Larsen, 1984; Suldo et al., 2006). Positive affect refers to pleasant feelings and moods, whereas negative affect describes emotions that are bothersome and/or disagreeable (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). Life satisfaction has been defined as a cognitive evaluation of the quality of a person's overall life or specific aspects of life, such as family, friends, and community (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1991).

Low life satisfaction is related to adolescents between various psychological and social problems such as depressive symptoms, violent and aggressive behavior, substance use, suicide attempts, suicidal thoughts, low self-esteem, and lack of harmony in relationships (Furr & Funder, 1998; Suldo & Huebner, 2004; Valois, Zullig, Drane, & Huebner, 2001;

Valois, Zullig, Huebner, & Drane, 2004; Zullig, Valois, Huebner, Oeltman, & Drane, 2001). Life satisfaction has been reported to be an important factor in development, maintenance, and prevention of many psychological disturbances (Bender, 1997; Farrell, Valois, Meyer, & Tidwell, 2003; Huebner, Suldo, Smith, & McKnight, 2004). Consequently, instruments with strong psychometric properties are needed for the assessment of life satisfaction in different settings. The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS), developed by Huebner, Suldo, Valois, Drane, and Zullig (2004), was designed to measure life satisfaction in different contexts of life. According to Seligson, Huebner, and Valois (2003), the BMSLSS has many potential applications in educational, mental, and physical health contexts. For example, in a Zullig, Huebner, Gilman, Patton, and Murray (2005) study, the BMSLSS was able to detect a relationship between students reporting low satisfaction and the use and/or abuse of alcohol.

The BMSLSS is based on the theoretical model of the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS). Studies related to psychometric characteristics of the MSLSS and BMSLSS showed that both scales are valid and reliable in Western countries (Gilman, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000; Huebner & Gilman, 2002; Huebner, Laughlin, Ash, & Gilman, 1998; Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1997; Seligson et al., 2003; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2005; Zullig et al., 2005).

Park, Huebner, Laughlin, Valois, and Gilman (2004) stated that there is an evident need for cross-cultural studies to investigate cultural influences on the psychological processes underlying subjective well-being among children and adolescents. Cultural factors may influence children's cognitive, emotional, and social development and their overall well-being through different social and cultural experiences of parenting, family life, and schooling (Basic Behavioral Science Task Force, 1996). For example, a cross-cultural study done by Park and Huebner (2005) indicated that Korean adolescents reported lower life satisfaction than American adolescents.

The aim of the present study is to examine the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the BMSLSS.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of 394 students ($F = 189$, $M = 205$) from Grades 4 through 8. The students were from two schools in Malatya, Turkey. A total of 82 (20.1%) participants from fourth grade, 74 (18.2%) participants from fifth grade, 70 (17.2%) participants from sixth grade, 86 (21.2%) participants from seventh grade, and 82 (20.1%) participants from eighth grade were recruited for the study. Their ages ranged from 9 to 16 years old ($M = 11.95$, $SD = 1.43$).

Instruments

The BMSLSS. The BMSLSS is a 5-item measure in which each item denotes one of the five life satisfaction domains (family, school, friends, self, and living environment) included in the MSLSS. Five items are summed up to obtain a total life satisfaction score.

Items are rated on a 7-point scale with responses ranging from 1 (*terrible*) to 7 (*delighted*). The BMSLSS was found to have adequate validity and reliability properties for adolescents (Seligson et al., 2003). An additional item ("I would describe my satisfaction with my over-all life as . . .") was included with the BMSLSS items as a validity check (Seligson et al., 2005; Zullig et al., 2005).

Turkish version of the BMSLSS. The Turkish version of the BMSLSS was developed by using the back-translation method. Back translation is commonly used and regarded as a standard method for translating a research instrument from one language to another, and this method been recommended by many scholars (Behling & Law, 2000; Chang, Chau, & Holroyd, 2003; Hyrkas, Appelquist-Schmidlechner, & Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2003) as it gives an investigator control over the original instrument and its translation. Back translation was maintained through the procedure described by Brislin's classic back-translation model (1970). First, the original version was translated into Turkish, and then cross-translation was performed by two independent translators. After retranslation of the original items into English, the scale was completely identical to the original version.

Children's Depression Inventory (CDI). The CDI was developed by Kovacs (1981) and adapted to Turkish culture by Öy (1991). The investigator tested the diagnostic validity of the scale and found that the scale discriminated between students who were depressed and those who were not. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated by test-retest method, and it was found as .80. However, internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found as 0.77.

Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventory (SCI). The SCI was developed to measure the feelings people experience about themselves, and it was translated into Turkish by Özyürek (1983). There are 80 statements, and each statement requires a yes or no answer. The inventory is applied to 3rd through 12th grades. Validity and reliability studies performed by Güven (1996) yielded that the SCI is modestly correlated with self-esteem ($r = .66$), and the test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .88.

Data Collection

After identifying the schools from which the universe of the research was driven, legal permission was obtained from the school administrators. The students were told about the purpose of the research, that the information they provided would be secured by the second author, and that they were free to participate into the research. All of the students accepted to participate in the study. Then, the instruments were administered to the participants in their classrooms. Measures were applied to the sample with a 1-day interval, and it took approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete the measures.

Data Analysis

Methods were used to test the reliability of the BMSLSS, Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficients, corrected item-total correlation, and test-retest reliability with the intercorrelations

Table 1
Means of the Brief Multidimensional Students'
Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) Scores

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Family	5.97	1.20
Friends	5.61	1.49
School	5.69	1.34
Self	5.77	1.52
Environment	5.46	1.61
Overall	5.78	1.32
Total	5.7	1.43

Note: Ratings were based on a scale ranging from 1 = *terrible*, 2 = *unhappy*, 3 = *mostly dissatisfied*, 4 = *mixed*, 5 = *mostly satisfied*, 6 = *pleased*, and 7 = *delighted*.

among the BMSLSS domain. Principal components analysis and criterion-related validity methods were used to examine the validity of the BMSLSS. SPSS 11.0 for Windows was used to perform statistical analysis.

Results

Descriptive Statistics for the BMSLSS

Using the total sample of 394 children, means and standard deviations were calculated for each BMSLSS domain and overall life satisfaction score (see Table 1). Results were as follows: 5.97 ($SD = 1.20$) for family, 5.61 ($SD = 1.49$) for friends, 5.69 ($SD = 1.34$) for school, 5.77 ($SD = 1.52$) for self, 5.46 ($SD = 1.61$) for living environment domains, and 5.75 ($SD = 1.32$) for overall life satisfaction. Total score of the BMSLSS was computed by summing all 5 domains and then dividing by 5. The mean score for the total scale was 5.7 ($SD = 1.43$). The mean scores for the BMSLSS domains and overall life satisfaction scores corresponded to the *mostly satisfied* response. The means indicated a relatively high degree of satisfaction of the students for each of the domains and overall life satisfaction.

Reliability

The internal consistency of the BMSLSS was calculated by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was .89. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also computed for the grade levels. Cronbach alpha's coefficient was .71 for the fourth grade students, .73 for the fifth grade students, .65 for the sixth grade students, .77 for the seventh grade students, and .87 for the eighth grade students. These coefficients indicate that the BMSLSS is an internally consistent measure across all the grade levels.

Table 2
Item Total Correlations of the Brief Multidimensional
Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)

	BMSLSS
Family	.68
Friends	.56
School	.64
Self	.71
Environment	.68
Overall	.78

Table 3
Intercorrelations of the Brief Multidimensional Students'
Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) Domains

	Family	Friends	School	Self	Environment	Overall
Family	—					
Friends	.23	—				
School	.35	.24	—			
Self	.42	.20	.32	—		
Environment	.34	.24	.29	.37	—	
Overall	.52	.30	.43	.53	.41	—

Item Total Correlations

Item total correlations for the five items of the BMSLSS with the total BMSLSS scores were also calculated (see Table 2). All of the items showed strong item total correlations ranging from .56 to .78.

Intercorrelations Among the BMSLSS Domains

Intercorrelations among the five BMSLSS domains ranged from .20 to .53, and life satisfaction domains are interrelated (see Table 3). These modest correlations provide evidence that children can distinguish between the separate domains of the BMSLSS.

Test-Retest Reliability

Test-retest reliability of the BMSLSS was tested by giving the scale to the same students in a 2-week interval. There was a positive correlation between the total scores of the two tests ($r = 0.82$).

Table 4
Factor Loadings for the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) Items

Item	Factor Loading					
	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade	Sixth Grade	Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade	All of the Sample
Family	.873	.754	.425	.692	.830	0.76
Friends	.303	.800	.330	.652	.567	0.49
School	.757	.400	.404	.704	.798	0.69
Self	.584	.819	.898	.593	.789	0.74
Environment	.572	.439	.593	.694	.815	0.62
Overall	.839	.723	.789	.832	.884	0.82
Eigenvalue	2.788	2.756	2.235	2.926	3.715	2.89
Total of variance	46.471	45.973	37.245	48.774	61.912	48.11

Table 5
Correlations Between the Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS), Children's Depression Inventory (CDI), and Piers-Harris Self-Concept Inventory (SCI)

	Total Satisfaction Score
CDI	-.47*
SCI	.44*

* $p < .01$.

Validity

Factor Analysis

To assess the construct validity of the BMSLSS, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. The factor structure of BMSLSS was analyzed for grade levels and overall sample (see Table 4). All five items were found to be loaded satisfactorily on a single factor. For the whole sample, the single factor accounted for 48% of the total variance, factor loadings ranged from .49 to .82, and the eigenvalue was equal to 2.89.

Criterion-Related Validity

Criterion-related validity was investigated through correlational analysis with the CDI and SCI (see Table 5). Criterion-related validity coefficients yielded a relatively modest relationship between the total BMSLSS scores and CDI scores ($r = -.47$), and SCI scores ($r = .44$). All correlations were significant at .01.

Discussion

The present study examined the validity and reliability of the Turkish version of the BMSLSS. Reliability and validity studies of the Turkish version the BMSLSS indicated that the scale has strong reliability and validity values for in this sample.

To test the reliability of the BMSLSS, internal consistency and item-total correlation values were computed. Cronbach's alpha of the scale was found as .71 for the fourth grade students, .73 for the fifth grade students, .65 for the sixth grade students, .77 for the seventh grade students, .87 for the eighth grade students, and .89 for the overall sample. The results obtained from this sample showed that the BMSLSS yields excellent reliability values, and yet the Cronbach's alpha values are very similar to Cronbach's alpha values (.75) of another sample (Seligson et al., 2003).

In the Seligson et al. (2005) study on the reliability and validity of the BMSLSS, item total correlations ranged from .65 to .73. In the present study, item total correlations ranged from .56 to .78. Therefore, the present study has yielded highly similar scores. Thus, moderate intercorrelations among the BMSLSS domains provided a preliminary support for the multidimensionality of the instrument.

Congruent with the BMSLSS literature (Seligson et al., 2003; Zullig et al., 2005), one factor model was identified. The criterion-related validity of the scale was evaluated by examining its relationship with the CDI and SCI. As a result, the BMSLSS was positively correlated with the SCI and negatively correlated with the CDI. These results are consistent with a large body of literature (Adelman, Taylor & Nelson, 1989; Furr & Funder, 1998; Huebner, 1991; Huebner & Adlerman, 1993; McCullough, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000).

Some researchers (Diener & Diener, 1995; Suh, Diener, Oishi, & Triandis, 1998) explored mean differences in life satisfaction across culturally diverse groups. However, the students of the present study reported a high level of life satisfaction on the BMSLSS in general, which is consistent with life satisfaction levels reported in other studies done with children and adolescents (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1997; Seligson et al., 2003, 2005; Zullig et al., 2005).

Some limitations of the study should be noted. A need exists to replicate the findings reported here with geographically and socioeconomically diverse samples. Although the sample of the study was obtained from two different schools, both of them are located in Malatya. Thus, there is a limitation of the generalization of the findings.

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that the Turkish version of the BMSLSS is a valid and reliable measure with a high stability during a 2-week test-retest interval, and with excellent internal consistency in this sample. We believe that the Turkish form of the BMSLSS can contribute to the progress of studies on life satisfaction in Turkey. Also, the BMSLSS can be used in screening and detecting risk groups to some degree.

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