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Turkish adaptation of the workplace ostracism scale[*]

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to adapt Ferris et al.'s (2008) workplace ostracism scale into Turkish in two separate studies (Study 1, *N* = 337) (Study 2, *N* = 348). We tested the internal consistency, factor structure and construct validity (in terms of convergent validity) and the Turkish version of WOS criterion-related validity. Results indicated that the internal consistency level of the Turkish version of WOS is high and the factor structure is compatible with the original scale. In both studies, findings supported the construct validity. In Study 1, workplace ostracism was positively related to supervisor undermining and turnover intention, and negatively related to interpersonal justice, job satisfaction and psychological well-being. In Study 2, workplace ostracism positively correlated with perceived stress and anxiety and negatively correlated with organizational citizenship behavior and affective commitment. In this respect, evidence supported the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of WOS, and the adapted Turkish version of the scale could be used in future studies. Since WOS is a widely used scale worldwide to measure workplace ostracism, adapting WOS to Turkish following international scale adaptation standards is a remarkable contribution to organizational behavior literature.

İşyerinde dışlanma ölçeğinin Türkçe'ye uyarlanması

MAKALE BİLGİSİ

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, Ferris ve arkadaşlarının (2008) geliştirdikleri İşyerinde Dışlanma Ölçeğinin iki ayrı çalışma ile (Çalışma I, N=337; Çalışma II, N=348) Türkçe'ye uyarlanması amaçlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda; İşyerinde Dışlanma Ölçeği Türkçe formunun içsel tutarlılığı, faktör yapısı, yapı geçerliliği (yakınsak geçerlilik açısından) ve ölçüt geçerliliği test edilmiştir. Elde edilen bulgular, İşyerinde Dışlanma Ölçeği Türkçe formunun iç tutarlılık düzeyinin yüksek olduğunu ve faktör yapısının orijinal ölçekle uyumlu olduğunu göstermiştir. Her iki çalışmanın bulguları da ölçeğin yapı geçerliliğini desteklemektedir. Çalışma I'in

Anahtar Kelimeler:
İşyerinde Dışlanma, Güvenilirlik, Geçerlilik, Ölçek Uyarlama.

bulguları, işyerinde dışlanmanın yöneticinin çalışanı baltalama davranışı ve işten ayrılma niyeti ile pozitif yönlü; kişilerarası adalet, iş tatmini ve psikolojik iyi oluş ile negatif yönlü ilişkide olduğunu göstermektedir. Çalışma II'de ise işyerinde dışlanmanın; algılanan stres ve anksiyete ile pozitif yönlü ilişkili olduğu, örgütsel vatandaşlık davranışı ve duygusal bağlılık ile negatif yönlü ilişkili olduğu saptanmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde; İşyerinde Dışlanma Ölçeği Türkçe formunun geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçek olduğu ve gelecek çalışmalarda kullanılabileceği söylenebilir. İşyerinde Dışlanma Ölçeğinin (Ferris vd., 2008) dünya çapında, işyerinde dışlanma olgusunun ölçümünde oldukça yaygın kullanılan bir ölçek olduğu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, bu ölçeğin uluslararası ölçek uyarlama standartları izlenerek Türkçe'ye uyarlanmasının örgütsel davranış yazını için önemli bir katkı olduğu düşünülmektedir.

1. Introduction

The factors that trigger ostracism in working life are increasing gradually. The competition among informal groups, ambition, desire to promote, gain and sustain power, and some pathological personality traits are the most fundamental antecedents of ostracism (Robinson and Schabram, 2017; Sommer et al., 2001). The most fundamental effects of ostracism on group dynamics and employee psychology are the deterioration of synergy, decrease in organisational citizenship behavior, weakening of belonging to the institution, deterioration of the organisational climate, and the increase in the levels of stress, depression, and burnout of employees (Ferris et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2000; Williams, 2001; Wu et al., 2011). In short, workplace ostracism both negatively affects employee psychology and creates a disadvantage in terms of the organisation's sustainability. Thus, it is necessary to analyse workplace ostracism reasons in-depth and develop policies to take the relevant measures systematically (Gamian-Wilk and Madeja-Bien, 2018). To carry out more research on ostracism, the construct should be measured with a valid and reliable scale with comprehensively tested psychometric properties (Ferris et al., 2008).

Ostracism is intertwined with many concepts. Among these, concepts such as loneliness, bullying, aggression, social undermining, interpersonal deviance, and social exclusion come to the fore (Ferris et al., 2008). However, although these concepts overlap conceptually and theoretically with ostracism, they differ in terms of the level of ostracism. For this reason, for the measurement of workplace ostracism, scales based on the theoretical and empirical background of direct ostracism are needed rather than the scales developed to measure the concepts mentioned above. To fill this gap in the literature, Ferris et al. (2008) conducted a comprehensive scale development study through four separate studies ($N = 727$). As a result of these studies, Ferris et al. (2008) developed a valid and reliable 10-item WOS whose psychometric properties were tested.

This scale is the only widely used scale worldwide to measure workplace ostracism. It is a significant need to adapt this scale to different languages and cultures to better understand and manage workplace ostracism, which is a critical issue in organizational psychology studies. In this respect, this study focuses on the Turkish adaptation of the WOS developed by Ferris et al. (2008). The ostracism scales developed by Turkish researchers in studies conducted in Turkey exist in the literature (e.g., Abaslı and Özdemir, 2019). However, it was observed that there were critical limitations in the development of the relevant scales. The limitations of the existing workplace ostracism scales are issues such as lack of a clear conceptual distinction of workplace ostracism, not adopting a comprehensive approach in creating an item pool, not testing the construct validity of the scales and not being developed with appropriate methods by including critical variables for the construct validity testing. Overcoming these limitations is essential to provide supporting evidence on the psychometric properties of a scale.

In addition, in some studies conducted in the Turkish sample, WOS developed by Ferris et al. (2008) was used. However, there was no explanation of the scale's adaptation or translation process. This situation indicates that these studies are contented with only the translation of the scale. This is basically an important limitation as a scale needs to be adapted comprehensively to a different culture. In a recent

study, Çalışkan and Pekkan (2020) adapted the WOS developed by Ferris et al. (2008) into Turkish. However, in the adaptation of the process, the construct validity was not tested; only factor analysis was performed. This is also a significant limitation in a typical adaptation study. For these reasons, adapting the scale developed by Ferris et al. (2008) in Turkish is vital. The relevant scale is the most preferred in the world and is used by many researchers in various studies (Wu et al., 2011; Zimmerman et al., 2016). In this context, in the present study, we aimed to adapt Ferris et al.'s (2008) WOS to Turkish based on the international adaptation standards, and by this way, it is expected that the study will make a remarkable contribution to the literature and also increase the number of ostracism research conducted in Turkey.

Adapting the workplace ostracism scale to Turkish requires a series of procedures. First of all, an ideal procedure should be followed in the translation process into Turkish. In this study, the psychometric properties of the Turkish version of the scale were tested through; a) factor structure, b) internal consistency, c) construct validity (convergent validity), and d) criterion-related validity. In testing the psychometric properties of the scale, two separate studies were conducted in two samples. In the first study, workplace ostracism, supervisor undermining (for convergent validity testing), as for the criterion-related validity testing variables such as job satisfaction, interpersonal justice, intention to quit, psychological well-being and job performance variables were measured. In the second sample, workplace ostracism, perceived stress, organizational citizenship behaviour, anxiety, and affective commitment variables were measured to test the criterion-related validity.

To test the validity of the Turkish form of the scale, it must meet some criteria. In this direction, firstly, the internal consistency of the scale should be at an acceptable level. Then, the factor structure of the scale should be determined following the original scale. Another critical issue is testing the construct validity of the scale. To test the construct validity of the scale, workplace ostracism should be positively associated with variables such as supervisor undermining, turnover intention, perceived stress, and anxiety. On the other hand, it should be negatively associated with variables such as job satisfaction, psychological well-being, job performance, affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Choi, 2020; Howard et al., 2020). In determining these variables, the variables in the study of Ferris et al. (2008) were taken as basis. Accordingly, the WOS was expected to be negatively correlated with affective commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, psychological well-being, and organizational citizenship behavior. The relationship pattern mentioned above should be obtained for criterion validity to be supported within the scope of relationships with other constructs. As the level of meeting the validity expectations of the scale increases, findings that support the psychometric features will be obtained.

2. Method

While creating the Turkish version of the workplace ostracism scale, the procedure recommended by Sousa and Rojjanasrirat (2011) was followed. Accordingly, the authors first obtained permission to adapt the scale (Personal contact: Dr. Lance Ferris). Later, the scale was translated into Turkish independently by two linguists and the researcher. The relevant translations have been integrated into a single format by a group of academics working in the organizational psychology field. Then, with the participation of a group of doctoral students, what is understood from the items was asked with the sound thinking technique. Turkish translation of the scale was finalized after some minor revisions. Later, a back-translation into English was performed by a bilingual linguist who did not know the original items. The relevant back translation was compared with the original scale by the researcher and another linguist. It was concluded that similar words were used in some verbs and nouns, and although there were partial differences in the sentence structure of the two items in the scale, there was no difference in meaning integrity. Thus, the Turkish version of the scale was finalized. In two separate studies (Study 1 $N = 337$, Study 2 $N = 348$), the internal consistency, factor structure, and construct validity (convergent validity, discriminative validity, relationships with other structures) of the Turkish version of the final scale were examined. Thus, the psychometric properties of the scale were tested. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Sakarya University Social and Human Sciences Publication Ethics Committee (No: E-61923333-050.99-29282, Date: 07.05.2021).

2.1. Study I

2.1.1. Participants and procedure

The first questionnaire form was sent to approximately 500 employees working in different sectors with the convenience sampling method. Considering the limitations of the pandemic period, the questionnaire form was created through a website and applied online. E-mail and social media were used to deliver the questionnaire to potential participants, and people were asked to participate in research voluntarily. 354 people participated in research. However, 17 of them, which were sloppy through control questions, were excluded. As a result, the first study's sample size was 337 participants.

2.1.2. Scales

Workplace ostracism: Employees' level of ostracism was measured using a 10-item scale developed by Ferris et al. (2008). Participants were asked to rate their agreement (1=never; 7=always) for each item.

Interpersonal justice: The Turkish version (Yelboğa, 2012) of the 4-item interpersonal justice scale generated by Colquitt (2012) was used. Participants reported their agreement with items (1=to a small extent; 5=to a large extent).

Supervisor undermining: Supervisor undermining was measured by the supervisor undermining dimension of the social undermining scale. It was generated by Duffy et al. (2002) and a Turkish version (Ülbeği et al., 2014) was used. Participants were asked to rate their agreement (1=never; 6=every day) for each item.

Job satisfaction: The Turkish version (Keser and Öngen Bilir, 2019) of the 5-item overall job satisfaction scale generated by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) was used on a five five-point Likert-type and each item is rated from "1=strongly disagree" to "5=strongly agree".

Turnover intention: The Turkish version of (Güçer et al., 2017) a 3-item Turnover intention scale developed by Cammann et al. (1979) was used. The participants rated the items (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

Job performance: The Turkish translation (Akkoç et al., 2012) of the 4-item job performance scale generated by Kirkman and Rosen (1999) was employed. The participants rated the items (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree).

Psychological well-being: The Turkish form (Telef, 2013) of the 8-item *psychological well-being* scale developed by Diener et al. (2009). The participants rated their agreement with the items (1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree).

2.1.3. Results

2.1.3.1. Item analysis and confirmatory factor analysis

Before applying the CFA, the total item correlations of the scale were examined. Total-item correlations of WOS (*.58* and *.76*) were found to be at satisfactory levels. In addition, it was determined that if the item was removed from the scale, the level of internal consistency would not increase.

As a result of CFA, the single-factor structure of the scale was endorsed in the first study, as it was in the original. CFA findings showed that the factor structure of WOS was satisfactory in the first sample ($\chi2$ = 104.827, p <.000, $\chi2$ / df = 2.99, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .94, AGFI = .91, RMSEA = .07) (Kline, 2005; Schermelleh-Engel et al, 2003).

2.1.3.2. Descriptive statistics and reliability findings

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics as well as internal consistency values for the variables investigated in the first study.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and internal consistency values for Study 1

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. WOS	6.56	.66	(.91)						
2. SU	5.27	.89	.51***	(.96)					
3. IJ	1.78	.88	-33***	-.43***	(.86)				
4. JS	2.24	.88	-33***	-.29***	.36***	(.82)			
5. TI	3.81	1.28	.30***	-.36***	-.26***	-.70***	(.88)		
6. JP	1.66	.70	-.20***	-.16**	.24***	.36***	-.22***	(.81)	
7. PW	2.30	1.13	-.29***	-.21***	.32***	.43***	-.34***	.44***	(.90)

Note: N = 337. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, WOS = Workplace Ostracism, SU = Supervisor Undermining, IJ = Interpersonal Justice, JS = Job Satisfaction, TI = Turnover Intention, JP = Job Performance, PW = Psychological Well-Being. Values in parentheses indicate Cronbach's Alpha coefficients.

2.1.3.3. Convergent and criterion-related validity testing

To test the construct validity, convergent validity, and the relationships of workplace ostracism with other constructs (to test criterion validity) were examined in the first study. Relationships between variables are shown in Table 1. The relationship between supervisor undermining and workplace ostracism was examined to test convergent validity. Supervisor undermining was examined in the test of convergent validity in this first study, and a positive relationship between workplace ostracism and supervisor undermining was expected. Another process in the test of construct validity is to examine the relationships of workplace ostracism with other variables. When the findings were examined, workplace ostracism was positively correlated (*r: .51; p <.001*) with supervisor undermining. The finding supports the convergent validity of the workplace ostracism scale. When other findings are examined, as expected workplace ostracism was found to be negatively related to interpersonal justice (*r: -.33; p <.001*), job satisfaction (*r:-.33; p <.001*), job performance (*r:-.20; p <.001*) and psychological well-being (*r:-.29; p <.001*) and positively with the intention to quit (*r:.30; p <.001*). All these findings support the appropriateness of the psychometric properties of the workplace ostracism scale.

2.2. Study II

2.2.1. Participants and procedure

The second questionnaire form, similar to the first one, was applied online, and employees working in different sectors were asked to participate voluntarily. E-mail and social media were used to deliver the questionnaire form to potential participants. A total of 361 people participated in research. However, 13 of them, were found to be filled sloppy and excluded. Thus, the sample of the second study consisted of 348 participants.

2.2.2. Scales

Perceived stress: The Turkish version (Eskin et al., 2013) of the 14-item scale generated by Cohen et al. (1983) was used to measure participants' stress perceptions. Participants were asked to rate their agreement (1=never; 5=very often) for each item.

Organizational citizenship behaviour: Organizational citizenship was measured by a 21-item scale generated by Basım and Şeşen (2006). Participants were asked to rate their agreement (1=never; 6=always) for each item.

Anxiety: A 10-item "worry and anxiety scale" generated by Dugas et al. (2001) was used to assess participants' anxiety levels. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Akyay (2016). The scale is on a nine-point Likert-type. While some items are graded from "1=no difficult" to "9=extremely difficult", while others are graded from "1=never" to "9=seriously".

Affective commitment: Affective commitment was measured by affective commitment dimension of the organizational commitment scale generated by Meyer and Allen (1997). Turkish adaptation

procedures were conducted by Wasti (2000). Affective commitment consists of six items and all items are rated from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree by the participants.

2.2.3. Results

2.2.3.1. Item analysis and confirmatory factor analysis

Total-item correlations (*.51* and *.74*) of WOS were observed at acceptable levels. In addition, it was determined that if the item was removed from the scale, the level of internal consistency would not increase.

Due to the CFA, the single-factor structure of the scale was also endorsed in the second study, as it was in the original. CFA findings indicated that the factor structure of WOS was also satisfactory in the second sample ($\chi2$ = 105.003, p <.000, $\chi2$ / df = 3.00, TLI = .94, CFI = .95, GFI = .94, AGFI = .90, RMSEA = .07) (Kline, 2005; Schermelleh-Engel et al, 2003).

2.2.3.2. Descriptive statistics and reliability findings

Descriptive statistics and internal consistency values for the variables examined within the scope of the second study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and internal consistency values for Study 2

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. WOS	6.60	.54	(.88)				
2. PS	3.26	.58	.20***	(.85)			
3. OCB	2.54	.79	-.17**	-.30***	(.90)		
4. A	5.59	1.69	.15**	.63***	-.14**	(.88)	
5. AC	2.50	.94	-.12*	-.34***	.39***	-.15**	(.91)

Note: N = 348. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation, WO = Workplace Ostracism, PS = Perceived Stress, OCB = Organizational Citizenship Behaviour, A = Anxiety, AC = Affective Commitment. Values in parentheses indicate Cronbach's Alpha coefficients

2.2.3.3. Criterion related validity testing

In the second study, the relationships of workplace ostracism with another construct were examined to test the criterion related validity. Relationships among variables are shown in Table 2. It was found to be negatively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour (*r: -.17; p <.01*), affective commitment (*r: -.12; p <.05*) and associated positively with perceived stress (*r:.20; p <. 001*) and anxiety (*r:.15; p <.01*). All these findings support the appropriateness of the psychometric properties of WOS in the context of the second study.

3. Discussion and conclusion

Interest in ostracism has increased considerably, and many recent studies have emphasized its importance (Chen et al., 2020; Howard et al., 2020, Uslu, 2021). One of the areas for improvement regarding ostracism is that the scales aiming to measure workplace ostracism are quite limited. Despite recent efforts towards this goal, the need for reliable and valid scales has yet to be fully met. In this context, there is a great need for new scales or adaptation studies of previous scales that have been validated in the international literature. Especially the lack of a valid and reliable workplace ostracism scale in Turkish makes this situation even more compulsory. For these reasons, the present study is aimed to adapt WOS developed by Ferris et al. (2008) to Turkish based on international standards. For this purpose, two studies were designed in two samples, and the psychometric properties of the relevant scale were tested.

The findings are congruent with the original study (Ferris et al., 2008). The reliability values of the original scale in all four studies are similar to the findings obtained in this study (e.g., *0.88* and *0.89*). The fit indices obtained from the CFA in both studies provided acceptable results. The first study examined the relationship between supervisor undermining and workplace ostracism to test convergent

validity and, a moderate positive correlation was obtained. This finding is very close to the coefficient obtained in Ferris et al. (2008)'s study (e.g., *.51* and *.56*). Relationships of workplace ostracism with other constructs are also consistent with the previous research. Workplace ostracism was negatively related to interpersonal justice, job satisfaction, job performance, and psychological well-being and positively related to turnover intention. Both according to Ferris et al. (2008)'s scale development study and other studies in the literature, workplace ostracism was negatively related to interpersonal justice (Ferris et al., 2008), job satisfaction (Leung et al., 2011), job performance (Choi, 2020; Uslu, 2021), and psychological well-being (Wang et al., 2020) and positively related with turnover intention (Singh and Srivastava, 2021). All these findings supported the psychometric properties of the adapted Turkish version of WOS.

The second study investigated only the relationships between workplace ostracism and other constructs for construct validity. According to the findings, workplace ostracism was negatively associated with affective commitment and organizational citizenship behavior and positively associated with perceived stress and anxiety. Relationships of workplace ostracism with other constructs are also consistent with existing empirical findings. According to previous empirical studies, workplace ostracism was found to be negatively associated with organizational citizenship behaviour (Choi, 2020) and affective commitment (Ferris et al., 2008; Lyu and Zhu, 2019) and negatively associated with perceived stress (Chung, 2018; Wang et al., 2020;) and anxiety (Ferris et al., 2008; Samma et al., 2020). Only the significant relationship between organizational citizenship behaviour and workplace ostracism did not align with the finding in Ferris et al.'s (2008) study. However, in general, a negative relationship between the two variables is expected, and the second study's findings also endorsed the WOS' psychometric properties.

As with any research, this research also has some limitations. First, convergent validity was tested only with the supervisor undermining variable in the first study and not in the second study. The main reason for this situation is the absence of a Turkish workplace ostracism scale, which has been validated by international standards. The other limitation is that self-report measurements were performed in both studies. Self-report measurements are often criticized for carrying bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, it is very challenging to measure ostracism other than the self-report method. Also, no test-retest reliability testing was applied.

There is still a need for new scale adaptations in the literature. In this sense, designing new adaptation studies for workplace ostracism, therefore, would be significant in future studies. New adaptation studies can be conducted, especially in the Turkish context, and the scale obtained in the current study can be used to test the convergent validity of new subsequent scales. The variables included in the present study to test construct validity were designed based on Ferris et al. (2008) 's suggestions. However, adaptation studies can also be conducted by considering variables including some other attitudes and behaviours (i.e., perceived organizational support, fear-based silence, cynicism, or trust). Thus, it is significant both in terms of widespread use of the workplace ostracism scale and proving that workplace ostracism has a different construct than other constructs.

In conclusion, in the present study, WOS developed by Ferris et al. (2008) was adapted into Turkish, and its psychometric properties were tested. All findings reveal that the Turkish version of the scale can be used in future studies (see Appendix).

Author statement

Research and publication ethics statement

This study has been prepared in accordance with the ethical principles of scientific research and publication.

Approval of ethics board

Ethics Committee Approval has been obtained for this research with the 07.05.2021 dated and E-61923333-050.99-29282 numbered decision of Social and Human Sciences Publication Ethics Committee of the Sakarya University.

Author contribution

All authors have contributed the study equally.

Conflict of interest

Declaration of support

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Appendix

Turkish version of workplace ostracism scale

Turkish Items

1. Diğerleri sizi işyerinde görmezden geldi.

2. İçeri girdiğinizde diğerleri alanı terk etti.

3. Selamlarınız işyerinde karşılıksız kaldı.

4. İşyerinde kalabalık bir yemekhanede istemeden yalnız oturdunuz.

5. Diğerleri işyerinde sizden uzak durdu.

6. İşyerinde diğerlerinin size bakmayacağını fark ettiniz.

7. İşyerinde diğerleri sizi konuşmanın dışında bıraktı.

8. Diğerleri işyerinde sizinle konuşmayı reddetti.

9. İşyerindeki diğerleri sanki siz orda yokmuşsunuz gibi muamele etti.

10. İşyerindeki diğerleri kahve molası için dışarı çıktıklarında sizi davet etmedi veya bir şey isteyip istemediğinizi sormadı.

Original Items in English (Ferris et al, 2008)

1. Others ignored you at work.

2. Others left the area when you entered.

3. Your greetings have gone unanswered at work.

4. You involuntarily sat alone in a crowded lunchroom at work.

5. Others avoided you at work.

6. You noticed others would not look at you at work.

7. Others at work shut you out of the conversation.

8. Others refused to talk to you at work.

9. Others at work treated you as if you weren't there.

10. Others at work did not invite you or ask you if you wanted anything when they went out for a coffee break

Note. The measurement was made using 7-point Likert as in the original scale. The levels of participation in statements are as follows: 1 = Never, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Somewhat Frequently, 5 = Often, 6 = Quite Frequently, 7 = Always. The order of the items are the same with the original order.

Compliance with Ethical Standards: This study was approved by the Sakarya University Research Ethics Board (No: E-61923333-050.99-29282, Date: 07/05/2021). Informed Consent: Informed consent was obtained from all participants before answering online questionnaire by clicking "*I agree*" button.