

Received: September 29, 2024

Accepted: November 24, 2024

<http://dergipark.org.tr/rep>

e-ISSN: 2602-3733

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December 2024 • 8(2) • 330-359

Research Article

<https://doi.org/10.54535/rep.1557924>

Development of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale (PFRRS): A Validity and Reliability Study

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the psychometric properties of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale. Data were collected from two separate study groups in 2024 to assess the validity and reliability of the developed measurement tool. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to assess the construct validity of the scale. The results supported the single-factor structure of the six-item scale. To provide evidence for the convergent validity of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale, its scores were correlated with the Psychological Flexibility Scale and the convergent validity was supported by a significant correlation coefficient of .72 between the scales. Cronbach Alpha coefficients examined for the reliability of the scale are above acceptable limits in both exploratory (.77) and confirmatory (.71) factor analyses and support internal consistency. Item-total correlations indicated that the scale items were highly correlated with the general factor representing the scale. Independent samples t-tests conducted on the top and bottom 27% of the sample revealed significant differences, indicating that the scale could discriminate between individuals with high and low levels of psychological flexibility in romantic relationships. In conclusion, the developed scale was found to be a valid and reliable measurement tool.

Key Words

Psychological flexibility • Romantic relationships • Validity and reliability

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Citation: Barkale Şahin, S. & Hamarta, E. (2024). Development of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale (PFRRS): A validity and reliability study. *Research on Education and Psychology (REP)*, 8(2), 330-359.

Introduction

Intimate relationships are considered an indispensable element of human life, which is characterized as a social being. While the types of intimate relationships vary, each type has its unique characteristics (Türküler Aka, 2022). Romantic relationships, a type of intimate relationship, are a significant interpersonal relationship type that encompasses long-term commitments such as courtship, cohabitation, and marriage (Hendrick & Hendrick, 2006). Romantic relationships, which serve as a means for individuals to meet their needs for attachment and belonging, are also essential for meeting a variety of needs. The bond formed with a romantic partner enables the fulfillment of physical, emotional, and sexual needs, making this relationship more special and unique compared to all other relationships (Akçabozan Kayabol, 2022; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Hendrick, 2016; Mills & Clark, 2001). Therefore, romantic relationships have a privileged meaning in an individual's life.

Romantic relationships play a significant role in many aspects of an individual's life, particularly their physical and mental health (Braithwaite & Holt-Lunstad, 2017; Ross et al., 1990; Schone & Weinick, 1998). Research has found that individuals in romantic relationships experience fewer mental health problems, feel less lonely, are less likely to be obese, engage in fewer risky behaviors, and report higher life satisfaction task (Beckmeyer & Cromwell, 2019; Braithwaite et al., 2010; Bucher et al., 2019; Gómez-López et al., 2019). These outcomes may be attributed to the social support and companionship provided by a partner or the fulfillment of a life task (Beckmeyer & Cromwell, 2019; Braithwaite et al., 2010). Studies demonstrating that having a satisfying romantic relationship is linked to stress buffering, mental health, physical health, subjective well-being, happiness, and prosperity further support the positive effects of romantic relationships (Diener et al., 2000; Dush & Amato, 2005; Pepping et al., 2024; Perelli-Harris et al., 2019; Purol et al., 2021; Siegel et al., 2024; Waite & Gallagher, 2000; Whisman & Baucom, 2012). Therefore, being in a romantic relationship has numerous functional implications, both individually and socially, including meeting various basic needs and leading a healthy life. Given the aforementioned significance of romantic relationships in both individual and social life, it is crucial to examine the psychological factors necessary for maintaining healthy relationships. In this context, psychological flexibility emerges as another critical factor contributing to overall well-being.

To better comprehend how psychological flexibility contributes to overall well-being, and specifically to the quality of romantic relationships, it is essential to grasp the fundamental structure of this concept. The concept of psychological flexibility is a fundamental building block and the overarching goal of acceptance and commitment therapy, representing a healthy structure (Bennett & Oliver, 2023; Bilgen, 2021; Hayes et al., 2008; Hayes & Lillis, 2021; Stoddard & Afari, 2023; K. Strosahl et al., 2017). According to this approach, individuals can cope with the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral challenges they encounter in life by possessing psychological flexibility (Fuchs, 2022). This concept, composed of six dimensions that enable individuals to maintain a healthy life and cope with difficulties on an individual level, is defined as a whole.

Understanding each of the six dimensions that constitute psychological flexibility is crucial for grasping the integrated structure as a whole. Therefore, it is essential to address the specific aspects emphasized by each dimension individually. The acceptance dimension of psychological flexibility refers to an individual's ability to connect with their internal experiences without trying to avoid, alter, or control them (Bennett & Oliver, 2023; Hayes et al., 1996, 2006; Luoma & Platt, 2015; Stoddard & Afari, 2023; K. D. Strosahl et al., 1998). The core

principle emphasized in this dimension is that efforts to avoid pain are ineffective, and attempting to suppress, control, or ignore a thought only makes it more prominent. Hence, the focus is on individuals' ability to accept their experiences (Begotka et al., 2004; Bennett & Oliver, 2023; Bilgen, 2021; Eifert & Heffner, 2003; Feldner et al., 2003; Hayes et al., 2004, 2006, 2013; Hayes & Lillis, 2021; Jäger et al., 2021; Luoma et al., 2019; Moskow et al., 2022; Stoddrad & Afari, 2023; K. Strosahl, 2002; K. D. Strosahl et al., 1998). Another dimension, cognitive defusion, refers to the process of stepping back from thoughts and observing them from an objective perspective (Harris, 2022a; Hayes & Smith, 2022; Stoddrad & Afari, 2023). The primary aim of cognitive defusion is to view distressing memories and thoughts from a detached standpoint without disrupting psychological adaptation (Demirci Seyrek & Ersanlı, 2017; Harris, 2022b; Hayes & Smith, 2022; Karakuş & Akbay, 2020; Nalbant & Yavuz, 2019). The third dimension, self-as-context, involves the flexible noticing of present experiences and the ability to narrow, widen, sustain, and direct attention as desired (Harris, 2022a; Luoma et al., 2019; Ong et al., 2023). The dimension of self-as-context is described as the part of the self that observes all experiences (Ciarrochi et al., 2010; Godbee & Kangas, 2020; Harris, 2022a; Petersen et al., 2022). In other words, this dimension reflects an individual's ability to observe their internal and external worlds independently of thoughts, feelings, physical sensations, and roles. Through this perspective, the individual is not seen as identical to their thoughts and emotions but rather as the context or stage on which these experiences unfold (Bilgen, 2021; Boone et al., 2015; Stoddrad & Afari, 2023; K. Strosahl, 2002). Of the last two dimensions of the psychological flexibility model, one is values, which represent the individual's deepest desires regarding what they stand for in life or how they wish to spend their time in the world (Harris, 2022a, 2023; Lev & McKay, 2022; K. Strosahl, 2002). The final dimension, committed action, refers to an individual's ability to take action in alignment with their values, thus living a life in line with what they deem meaningful (Harris, 2022a; Hayes et al., 2013; K. D. Strosahl et al., 1998). When these six dimensions are collectively considered, they form the core structure referred to as psychological flexibility. This structure is illustrated in Figure 1.

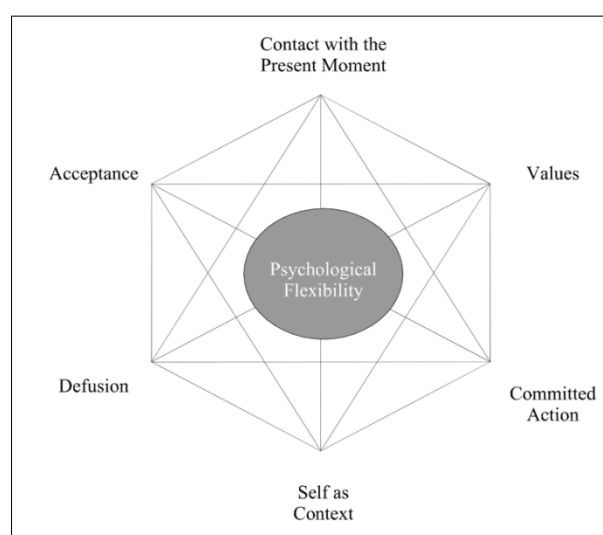


Figure 1. Psychological Flexibility Model (Hayes et al., 2008)

Psychological flexibility is defined as the ability to consciously remain in the present moment, experience the cognitive and emotional consequences of one's experiences, and behave consistently in a manner that serves one's self-defined values (Hayes et al., 2008, 2013; Hayes & Lillis, 2021; Rolffs et al., 2018). In other words,

psychological flexibility is the willingness of individuals to experience the present moment, to persist in or change their actions in accordance with their values (Bond et al., 2006; Ciarrochi et al., 2010; Maor et al., 2014). Possessing this skill allows individuals to directly engage with their experiences, free from the negative effects of their thoughts and emotions, thereby enabling them to exhibit value-driven behaviors (Hayes et al., 2004; Masuda et al., 2011; Scott & McCracken, 2015). Here, the emphasis is on an individual's relationship with all their thoughts and feelings, regardless of whether they are pleasant or unpleasant. The focus is not on the presence or absence of thoughts and emotions, but rather on their impact on actions in relation to values (Luoma et al., 2011; O'Donohue, 2023). In general terms, psychological flexibility means being willing to experience thoughts and feelings that arise in the present moment without trying to control, reduce, judge, or suppress them. By accepting experiences in this way, individuals can reduce their sense of pressure and engage in value-driven actions (Bennett & Oliver, 2023; Holman et al., 2021; Kul & Türk, 2020; Sağar, 2022; K. Strosahl et al., 2017).

The integrated structure of psychological flexibility, consisting of six dimensions, is associated with individuals' leading a higher quality of life and the positive development of their psychological skills (Ciarrochi et al., 2010; Cyniak-Cieciura, 2021; Guerrini Usubini et al., 2021; Hayes et al., 2006; Long & Hayes, 2014; Toprak et al., 2020). Research has shown that increased psychological flexibility, along with its six dimensions, positively impacts physical and mental health, as well as social adaptation (Cyniak-Cieciura, 2021; Foote et al., 2016; Fuchs, 2022; Hsu et al., 2023; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010; Kroska et al., 2020; Leahy et al., 2012; Malo et al., 2022; Maor et al., 2014; Masuda et al., 2011; McCracken et al., 2013; McCracken & Velleman, 2010; Mousavi, 2023; Nikrah et al., 2023; Pakenham et al., 2023; Ruan et al., 2022; Savruk, 2023; Thompson et al., 2021; Twohig et al., 2015; Ulubay & Güven, 2022; Villatte et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2023; Yadavaia et al., 2014; Yu et al., 2017). Therefore, psychological flexibility is an integral part of individuals' mental health and life satisfaction.

As the explanations suggest, the concept of psychological flexibility is not limited to solving a single problem or situation an individual encounters; rather, it focuses on acquiring skills that can impact all areas of life. Given its comprehensive nature, encompassing skills to cope with challenges across various life domains, this concept extends beyond individual problems to encompass social interactions, such as relationships. In this context, one of the areas where approaches that support the development of psychological flexibility are effective is in relationships, which are critically important in an individual's life, and in the problems experienced in relationships (Daks & Rogge, 2020; Dimidjian et al., 2016; Harris, 2023; Hayes et al., 2023; Twiselton, 2021). Given the negative impacts of relationship problems on couples, families, and various life domains, individuals often seek therapeutic interventions. A variety of therapeutic approaches offer distinct perspectives on relationship issues. Emotion-focused therapy (Greenberg & Goldman, 2008) focuses on emotions within relationships, cognitive behavioral therapy (Fischer et al., 2016; Yazar & Tolan, 2021) targets cognitions, and systemic therapy (Dallos & Draper, 2016) concentrates on relational patterns. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) offers a unique approach, emphasizing the acceptance of difficult emotions, alignment with personal values, and the development of psychological flexibility. ACT interventions encourage partners to work towards shared values rather than trying to change each other (Harris, 2023; Lev & McKay, 2022; K. Strosahl et al., 2017). Despite a scarcity of research examining the outcomes of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) interventions targeting psychological flexibility on romantic relationships in Turkey (Karaaziz et al., 2023; Özcan & Karagöz, 2023; Ulubay & Güven, 2022), international studies provide encouraging evidence for

their potential in fostering healthy relationships (Amani & Yari, 2022; Fani Sobhani et al., 2021; Ghahari et al., 2021; Imani et al., 2023; Khanjani Veshki et al., 2016; Mohammadian et al., 2021; Mousavi Haghighi et al., 2022; Naderi Moghaddam et al., 2023; Nemati et al., 2020; Peterson et al., 2009; Yaghoobi et al., 2020). Based on these findings, it is seen that the skill of psychological flexibility makes positive contributions to an individual's life as a general life skill (Avcı, 2023; Berger et al., 2021; Cyniak-Cieciura, 2021; Dahl et al., 2004; Dimidjian et al., 2016; Fluja-Contreras et al., 2023; Genç, 2022; Gur & Reich, 2023; Kangas & McDonald, 2011; Köksal, 2023; Konstantinou et al., 2023; Li et al., 2023; Nikrah et al., 2023; Pakenham et al., 2023; Towey-Swift et al., 2023; Villatte et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2023). Considering the undeniable importance of romantic relationships for individuals, it is seen that the activation of the skill set called psychological flexibility in this area of life provides benefits. While psychological flexibility plays a significant role in various aspects of individuals' lives, there is a notable lack of research on measuring and evaluating this skill specifically within the context of romantic relationships. This gap in the literature hinders our understanding of exactly what it means to possess psychological flexibility in romantic relationships, the mechanisms through which it operates, and, consequently, its significance for relationship outcomes. When the literature is examined, no measurement tool has been found to measure the psychological flexibility skill specifically in romantic relationships. To fill this void in the existing literature and enable more targeted research on romantic relationships, the development of a measurement tool specifically designed to assess psychological flexibility in romantic contexts was deemed crucial. Starting from this point, the aim of the measurement tool developed is to address psychological flexibility in romantic relationships. The measurement tool developed will enable data collection in studies based on the use of psychological flexibility skills in romantic relationships. The findings obtained from the measurement tool will allow a contemporary approach to be examined from the perspective of individuals experiencing romantic relationships. It is thought that the use of the developed measurement tool will open doors to many studies to be conducted in the field of close relationships, providing rich contributions both theoretically and practically in a current field.

Method

Research Design

This research was conducted using a general survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The scale developed within the scope of the research was applied to the individuals included in the study group, in line with the survey model. Survey studies, which are common in general survey models, are applied to a group of samples or a sample taken from the entire population or a part of the population in order to reach a general conclusion about a population with a large number of elements (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017; Karasar, 2012).

Scale Development Study

Measurement is the process of determining the degree to which an object or individual possesses a specified attribute or characteristic. Psychological tests used for measurement purposes are developed to enable individuals to realistically reveal the desired attribute or characteristic to be measured (Seçer, 2021). With this aim, a detailed review of the relevant literature was conducted to appropriately transform the characteristic to be measured in individuals into items. The concept of psychological flexibility, which is the subject of the scale, and the theoretical framework underlying this concept were examined in detail. In addition to these studies, the processes of developing and adapting measurement instruments related to psychological flexibility in Turkey and

abroad, and the items they contain, were examined (Burke & Moore, 2015; Francis et al., 2016; Gloster et al., 2021; Karakuş & Akbay, 2020; McCracken & Gauntlett-Gilbert, 2011; Trindade et al., 2022). As a result of all these reviews, a 30-item pool was created for the purpose of scaling the concept of psychological flexibility in romantic relationships. To ensure that the items prepared for the item pool were appropriate in terms of language usage and were clear to the reader, an expert in Turkish education was consulted. To evaluate the content and face validity of the 30 items prepared in this way, an "Expert Evaluation Form" was prepared. The expert evaluation form included evaluation scores for each item's suitability for the scale based on the criteria of suitable, partially suitable, and not suitable at all. Explanation and adjustment suggestion columns were also included for the suitability of each item. The expert evaluation form prepared for the item pool of the scale was shared with five experts in the field. Two of the experts were specialized in acceptance and commitment therapy, which forms the basis of the concept of psychological flexibility, while the other three were faculty members specializing in close relationships. By contacting the field experts via email and sending the prepared form, opinions were sought on the evaluation of the items in terms of both theory and comprehensibility. Based on the feedback received from the field experts, some items were corrected to increase their comprehensibility, and items that were considered insufficient to reflect the concept, difficult to understand, created confusion, or were considered to be asked repeatedly were removed from the pool. As a result of the adjustments made based on the feedback, a new item pool consisting of 25 items was created. The items were prepared in a 5-point Likert-type scale format. A pilot study was conducted to examine the comprehensibility of the items for the group to which the application would be made. For this pilot study, it was required that individuals have been in a romantic relationship for at least 6 months. As a result of the information obtained from this application, items that were unclear and interpreted differently from the intended purpose were removed from the pool. As a result of this process, the structure consisting of 19 items created for the scale was finalized and made ready for application.

Participants

The scale development study was conducted with two different study groups after the procedures for creating the item pool were applied. The first study group consisted of 80 individuals (82.5% female, 17.5% male) who had been in a romantic relationship for at least six months. The age range of the first study group was between 21 and 55, and it consisted of individuals who were married (72.5%), engaged (9%), and in a relationship (16.3%). Exploratory factor analysis was conducted with this study group to analyze the construct validity of the scale. The second study group of the research consisted of 218 individuals (73.9% female, 26.1% male) who had been in a romantic relationship for at least six months. The age range of the second study group was between 20 and 64, and it consisted of individuals who were married (71.1%), engaged (8.3%), and in a relationship (20.6%). Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted with the second study group to test the construct validity of the scale. The demographic information of the research group is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic data of the research group

<i>Variables</i>	First working group		Second working group	
	f	%	f	%
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	66	%82,5	161	%73,9
Male	14	%17,5	57	%26,1
<i>Age</i>				
20-34	64	%80	167	%76,6
35-44	13	%16,3	31	%14,2
45-54	2	%2,5	14	%6,4
55-64	1	%1,2	6	%2,8
<i>Education Level</i>				
Primary and Secondary School	1	%1,3	7	%3,2
High School	4	%5	22	%10,1
University	49	%61,3	120	%55,0
Master's Degree	20	%25	56	%25,7
Doctorate	6	%7,5	13	%6
<i>Relationship Status</i>				
Marriage	58	%72,5	155	%71,1
Engagement	9	%83,8	18	%8,3
Loverhood	13	%16,3	45	%20,6
<i>Length of Relationship</i>				
6 months - 11 months	11	%13,8	18	%8,3
1 year-5 years	41	%51,2	82	%37,6
6 years -10 years	21	%26,3	57	%26,1
11 years - 15 years	4	%5	31	%14,2
16 years - 20 years	1	%1,2	10	%4,6
21 years and over	2	%2,5	20	%9,2
TOTAL	80	100	218	100

Data Collection Tools***Personal Information Form***

A personal information form was created to collect data from the participants. The form included questions about gender, education level, age, current relationship status, and relationship duration.

Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale (PFRRS)

The Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale (PFRRS) is a 6-item, 5-point Likert-type scale. The highest possible score on the scale is 30, and the lowest is 6. There are no reverse-scored items on the scale. A higher score on the scale indicates a higher level of psychological flexibility in romantic relationships. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .77 in the exploratory factor analysis and .71 in the confirmatory factor analysis. The results of the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses are presented in the results section.

Psychological Flexibility Scale

The Psychological Flexibility Scale was used as a criterion to assess the convergent validity of the newly developed Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale. This scale was developed by [Uygur and Karaca \(2020\)](#). It is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 16 items. The maximum possible score on the scale is 80, and the minimum is 16. Two of the items are reverse-scored. The scale includes five subdimensions and

can yield a total score. A higher total score indicates a higher level of psychological flexibility. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was found to be .83. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .85.

Data Collection

After the pilot application of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale, data collection was carried out in two stages. First, data was collected to conduct exploratory factor analysis and reliability analysis on the 19-item structure. For data collection, it was a requirement that individuals had at least a 6-month history of a romantic relationship. Data was collected through Google Forms and was sent to participants who volunteered to participate in the study via a link. At the beginning of the form, participants were informed about the study and an informative text was presented stating that the data obtained would not be shared with anyone. After the informative text, participants were asked to give their consent stating that they had read the text and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. In the second stage of data collection conducted for the confirmatory factor analysis of the scale structure, the same criteria were sought in the participants. Participants were reached through Google Forms and the same information was provided and the consent process was carried out.

Data Analysis

In order to conduct validity and reliability analyses for the research, data collected from two distinct study groups were organized and analyzed using SPSS 29.00 and AMOS 24.00. To reveal the factor structure of the scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on data obtained from the initial study group. Before proceeding with the EFA, the dataset was examined for any missing values. Subsequently, outliers within the dataset were assessed through Z-scores and Mahalanobis distance values, with a Z-score range of -3 to +3 established as the criterion. Analysis results indicated that no extreme values that could negatively impact the analyses were present in the dataset. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined within the range of +2 to -2, indicating that the data largely conformed to a normal distribution. To assess the suitability of the dataset for exploratory factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were utilized as measures of sampling adequacy. Analysis results confirmed the sample's suitability for exploratory factor analysis. In examining the scale's factor structure, principal component analysis (PCA) was employed as the factorization technique. Factor analysis was used to identify the number of factors within the structure and the nature of the relationships between them. PCA was preferred to group the data and reduce the number of variables, aiming to achieve more accurate information with fewer measurements. This process also allowed the scale to be refined by removing redundant items that measure the same construct (Can, 2016).

To test the accuracy of the obtained structure, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. In preparation for CFA, data collected from the second study group were first checked for any missing values. Outliers in the dataset were then assessed using Z-scores and Mahalanobis distance values, with Z-scores between -3 and +3 set as the criterion. Skewness and kurtosis coefficients were examined within the range of +2 to -2, indicating that the data largely conformed to a normal distribution. To assess the dataset's suitability for confirmatory factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were used as indicators of sampling adequacy. Analysis results confirmed that the sample was suitable for the analysis, validating the dataset's readiness. For the confirmatory factor analysis, goodness-of-fit indices,

including χ^2/df , GFI, CFI, AGFI, IFI, and RMSEA, were examined. The data obtained from this analysis are presented in the findings section.

To further support the validity of the scale, a convergent validity analysis was conducted. A pre-existing, well-established measure of psychological flexibility was used as a criterion. The correlation between the scores of the new scale and the criterion scale was calculated to assess the degree to which the two measures converge on the same construct.

The reliability of the scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, item-total correlations, and independent samples t-tests to compare the scores of the top and bottom 27% of the sample. The results of all these analyses are presented in the findings section.

Results

Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the construct validity of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale. In factor analysis, it is important that the sample size is sufficient for reliable estimation of correlations (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020). For this reason, Kaiser Mayer Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett sphericity test findings were examined to test the sample size and suitability of the data obtained for factor analysis before proceeding to exploratory factor analysis. The results of KMO and Bartlett Sphericity Test are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Kaiser- Mayer- Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett Test results

KMO Measurement Value Adequacy		.743
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	χ^2	592,857
	df	171
	Sig.	.000

As a result of the tests performed, the KMO value was determined as .74 and the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was determined as $\chi^2= 592.857$ $p < 0.001$. KMO sampling adequacy value is a statistical data showing the ratio of variance in variables that can be caused by basic factors. When the value increases and approaches 1.0, it generally indicates that a factor analysis is sufficient for the data. Significant Bartlett's Sphericity test results also indicate the adequacy of the sample size for the data. As a result of the KMO value being above .70 and the Bartlett Sphericity Test findings being significant, it was decided that the data set was suitable for exploratory factor analysis (Karagöz, 2019; Seçer, 2021; Şencan, 2005).

After it was determined that the data set to be used to test the construct validity of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale was suitable for exploratory factor analysis, the analyses continued in order to reveal the structure. While determining the items to be included in the measurement tool with exploratory factor analysis, the eigenvalue must be above 1 (Can, 2016; Eşici & Karaman, 2022; Karagöz, 2019; Seçer, 2021; Şencan, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020). In factor analysis, in the process of revealing a factor from items measuring similar characteristics, items with a high level of relationship between them are tried to be brought together. In order for the item measuring a certain construct to remain in the scale, the factor loading

value is required to be above a certain value. A factor loading value of .45 and above is accepted as good (Can, 2016). Based on this information, the factor loading value criterion for the scale items to be included in the scale was preferred as .60 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020).

In the resulting structure, it was paid attention that an item should not be included in more than one factor with a difference below .10 (Seçer, 2021). In addition to the factor loadings and overlap criteria of the items, pure measurement items that were thought to best reflect the concept of psychological flexibility in romantic relationships were preferred among the items that were thought to have similar expressions in the item pool (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020). Accordingly, it was concluded that the scale provided a unidimensional 6-item structure.

Figure 2 presents the scree plot illustrating the factor structure of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale, and the factor loadings obtained are displayed in Table 3.

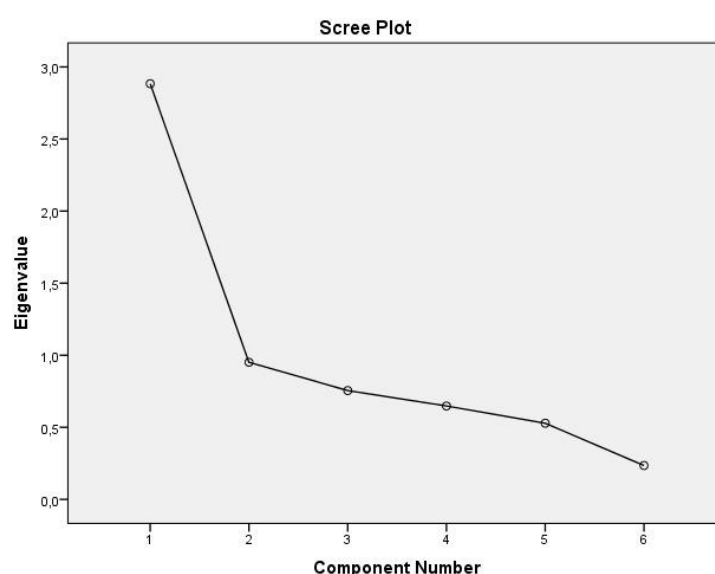


Figure 2. Scree Plot demonstrating the factor structure of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale

Table 3

Factor loadings of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale

Items No	Factor Load
Item 1: When I spend time with my partner, I can focus my attention on them	.639
Item 2: I accept the existence of many different emotions and thoughts in my relationship.	.668
Item 3: When I face a challenging situation in my relationship, I can recognize that my thoughts are just thoughts.	.639
Item 4: I evaluate problems in our relationship based on the specific situation.	.636
Item 5: My partner and I plan our lives in accordance with our values.	.730
Item 6: It is important for us to act in accordance with our values in our relationship.	.828

The factor loadings of the items in the resulting structure ranged from .64 to .83, indicating a high level of association between the items and the factor. Factor loadings above 0.45 are generally considered a good criterion for item selection (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Can, 2016). Therefore, the item factor loadings in the scale exceeded the required values. The Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale was found to be unidimensional, with a single factor explaining approximately 48% of the total variance. An explained variance of 30% or higher is generally considered an acceptable threshold for single-factor scales used in the humanities (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987; Williams et al., 2010). These results suggest that the scale is unidimensional and consistent.

The findings regarding the variance explained of the scale are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Total variance explained

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues			Sums of Square Root Charges		
	Total	Variance Percentage	Percentage of Total Variance	Total	Variance Percentage	Percentage of Total Variance
1	2.884	48.060	48.060	2.884	48.060	48.060
2	.951	15.848	63.908			
3	.755	12.580	76.488			
4	.648	10.798	87.287			
5	.528	8.801	96.088			
6	.235	3.912	100.000			

Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Exploratory factor analysis was performed to determine the factor structure of the scale with the data collected from the first group of the research. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed to determine whether this factor structure was a good fit or not. The fit values obtained as a result of the analysis are given in Table 5. The obtained data were analysed by taking acceptable fit and perfect fit values as criteria (Bayar, 2022; Eşici & Karaman, 2022; Karagöz, 2019; Manuoğlu, 2022; Seçer, 2021; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2020).

Table 5

Confirmatory factor analysis fit indices and acceptable values

Model Fit Indices	Model Fit Values	Acceptable Fit Values	Perfect Fit Values
χ^2/df	2.71	≤ 5	≤ 3
GFI	.96	$\geq .85$	$\geq .90$
CFI	.92	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$
AGFI	.92	$\geq .85$	$\geq .90$
IFI	.92	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$
SRMR	.06	$\leq .08$	$\leq .06$
RMSEA	.08	$\leq .08$	$\leq .05$

As seen in Table 5, the scale meets acceptable and excellent fit index values. The model that emerged after the confirmatory factor analysis is given in Figure 3.

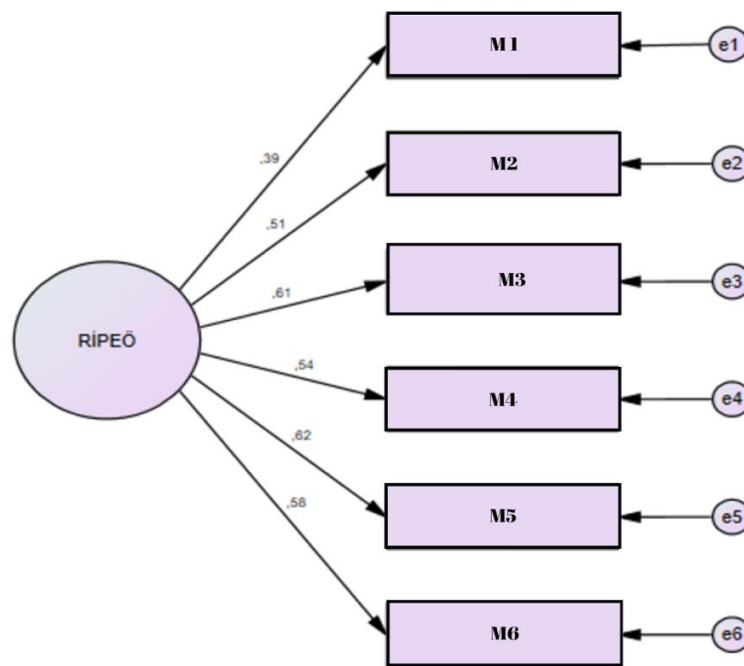


Figure 3. The model that emerged after the confirmatory factor analysis

When Table 5 and Figure 3 are evaluated together, it is seen that the structure obtained as a result of confirmatory factor analysis is confirmed by the analyses.

A convergent validity analysis was also conducted to assess the validity of the scale. To evaluate convergent validity, the correlation coefficients between the scores of the newly developed scale and a pre-existing measure of the same construct were examined. The Psychological Flexibility Scale was used as the criterion measure in this study. The criterion scale assesses psychological flexibility at a broader level, while the newly developed scale provides a more specific measure of psychological flexibility within the context of romantic relationships. The correlation coefficients between the scales are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

The correlation coefficient between the Psychological Flexibility Scale and the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale

	Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale
Psychological Flexibility Scale	.723**

p** < .001

The correlation coefficient from the convergent validity analysis is presented in Table 6. A correlation of .72 was found between the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale and the Psychological Flexibility Scale. This finding indicates that the two scales measure similar constructs.

Results of Reliability Analyses

For the reliability analysis of the scale, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was examined. The findings obtained from the scale for the first and second applications are given in Table 7.

Table 7

Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the scale applications

Scale Applications	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
Exploratory Factor Analysis Application	.77
Confirmatory Factor Analysis Application	.71

The Cronbach Alpha values obtained from the scale applications for both analyses were determined as .77 and .71. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient of .70 and above indicates that the scale is reliable (Büyükoztürk, 2019; Can, 2016; Karagöz, 2019; Seçer, 2021). The findings show that the scale is a reliable measurement tool for measuring psychological flexibility in romantic relationships.

In order to determine the discrimination of the items in the scale, the item-total correlation coefficients of the scale and the item total score averages of the data in the lower-upper 27% obtained from the total scores were compared with the independent samples t test (Can, 2016). The findings obtained from the data collected for exploratory factor analysis are given in Table 8 and the findings obtained from the data collected for confirmatory factor analysis are given in Table 9.

Table 8

Item total correlation results of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale and Independent Groups T Test value of the difference between the lower and upper 27 groups

	Item Total Correlation Coefficients	T Values of the Difference between Lower and Upper Groups
Item 1	.47	7.40**
Item 2	.51	4.95**
Item 3	.47	8.12**
Item 4	.48	5.02**
Item 5	.54	5.26**
Item 6	.67	7.67**

p** < .001

Table 9

Item total correlation results of the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale and Independent Groups T Test Value of the difference between the lower-upper 27 groups

	Item Total Correlation Coefficients	T Values of the Difference between Lower and Upper Groups
Item 1	.32	7.79**
Item 2	.42	8.90**
Item 3	.51	14.19**
Item 4	.42	11.84**
Item 5	.51	11.43**
Item 6	.45	13.14**

p** < .001

When the findings of the exploratory factor analysis given in Table 8 are considered, it is seen that the item total score correlation coefficients vary between .47 and .67. When the findings of the confirmatory factor analysis given in Table 9 are considered, it is seen that the item total score correlation coefficients vary between .32 and .51. It is known that items with item total score correlation coefficients of .30 and above discriminate individuals well. Therefore, it was determined that the items in the scale were well discriminative and showed a high internal consistency by exemplifying similar behaviors (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Can, 2016; Karagöz, 2019). Another way used for item analysis is to compare the differences between the item score averages of the lower 27% and upper 27% groups formed in line with the total scores obtained from the scale using an unrelated samples t-test. Significant differences between the groups in the desired direction are accepted as an indicator of the internal consistency of the test. The results obtained from the analysis are interpreted as showing the discrimination of the items in terms of behavior when measuring individuals (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Karagöz, 2019). When the total scores of the lower and upper 27% groups were subjected to independent samples t-test analysis, it was seen that the difference between the item mean scores was statistically significant ($p < .001$). As a result of the findings, it can be stated that the scale items are well discriminative and reliable.

Discussion, Conclusion & Suggestions

In this study, the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale (PFRRS) was developed. The construct validity of the scale was examined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). As a result of the analysis, a unidimensional structure explaining 48.060% of the total variance was obtained for the PFRRS. The structure identified through EFA was then tested by conducting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using a new data set. The goodness-of-fit indices for the model derived from the CFA were found to meet both acceptable and excellent fit criteria. A correlation coefficient of .72 was obtained from the convergent validity analysis, indicating a strong convergent validity between the Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale and the well-established Psychological Flexibility Scale. This finding provides evidence that the newly developed scale measures the same construct as the criterion measure. For the reliability analysis of the PFRRS, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient, item-total correlation coefficients, independent samples t-test results for the differences between the upper and lower 27% groups analysis were utilized. Given that the

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was above .70, the scale was deemed to meet the reliability criterion (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Can, 2016; Karagöz, 2019; Seçer, 2021). Furthermore, the item-total correlation coefficients for each item exceeding .30 indicated that the items in the scale possess high internal consistency (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Can, 2016; Karagöz, 2019). Another method used for item analysis involved comparing the mean scores between the upper and lower 27% groups using an independent samples t-test. The significant differences observed in the desired direction further supported the internal consistency of the test. (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Karagöz, 2019). Based on all validity and reliability analyses conducted, the scale was found to have satisfactory validity and reliability.

As a result of the research, the scale developed to measure psychological flexibility in individuals' romantic relationships consists of 6 items in a unidimensional structure. A 5-point Likert scale was used for rating the items. The minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 6, while the maximum score is 30. There are no reverse-coded items on the scale. Higher scores indicate greater psychological flexibility in romantic relationships.

Psychological flexibility, the foundation of the developed scale, has emerged as a widely used concept and a frequent subject of research in recent years. Psychological flexibility is central to psychological health and healthy emotional functioning in the context of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT (Alrefi, 2019; Doorley et al., 2020; Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010; Stoddard & Afari, 2023)). This approach focuses not on solving a single issue or situation in an individual's life, but rather on acquiring skills that affect all areas of life. Therefore, ACT has a broad scope, addressing a wide range of both clinical and non-clinical conditions. One of the areas where this approach has been shown to be effective is relationships, particularly issues that arise within them, which hold great significance in an individual's life (Daks & Rogge, 2020; Dimidjian et al., 2016; Harris, 2023; Hayes et al., 2023; Twiselton, 2021). Research has demonstrated that Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) interventions, which focus on enhancing psychological flexibility, lead to improvements in couples' marital adjustment, satisfaction, relationship quality, and overall quality of life (Çetinkaya, 2022; Daks & Rogge, 2020; Hosseini et al., 2019; Hosseinpanahi et al., 2020; Kuşcu, 2019; Omidi & Talighi, 2017; Sabouri et al., 2020; Shahbazfar et al., 2021; Twiselton, 2021; Twiselton et al., 2020; Ziapour et al., 2017). Based on this evidence, the development of a scale designed to assess psychological flexibility within the context of romantic relationships—a domain of significant importance in individuals' lives—was deemed essential. A review of the literature revealed an absence of measurement tools specifically addressing this need within romantic relationships. While existing tools assess psychological flexibility as a broader skill, the newly developed scale conceptualizes psychological flexibility as a more specialized skill applicable specifically within the context of romantic relationships. This tool aims to measure individuals' adaptation of psychological flexibility skills in the dynamics of romantic relationships, providing a more nuanced dataset specific to this relational context. Therefore, the scale is expected to pave the way for novel research findings in the area of romantic relationships. The information obtained through the use of this scale is anticipated to offer a fresh perspective on romantic relationship processes. Additionally, the availability of measurements in this area will enable the collection of concrete evidence demonstrating the efficacy of psychological flexibility-based intervention approaches within romantic relationships. By facilitating assessments of intervention approaches that incorporate psychological flexibility, the scale is expected to support the demonstration of their effectiveness and contribute to the development of targeted interventions in this field.

The wide applicability of the scale developed within this study is considered an advantage in terms of its practical use. The scale can be administered to all individuals involved in romantic relationships, including marriage, engagement, or dating. The unidimensional structure of the scale, consisting of six items, is expected to facilitate both the administration and evaluation processes for researchers. Despite its advantages, the scale also has certain limitations. One of the main limitations is that, as a self-report measure, it may yield misleading results if individuals do not respond sincerely. Additionally, the sample group from which data were collected in this study was formed using a convenience sampling method. Therefore, it is recommended that future research utilizing the scale be conducted with different sample groups to further enhance the scale's measurement power.

Ethic

This study was conducted as a part of the doctoral thesis study conducted at Necmettin Erbakan University. For the conduct of the research, Necmettin Erbakan University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee decided that there was no ethical objection to the conduct of the research according to the decision given by the decision numbered 38, meeting number 38, decision number 11 on 01.08.2023. The study was carried out as a result of the document obtained from the research ethics committee.

Author Contributions

This article was written with the joint contributions of two authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Funding

No scholarships or payments have been received from any institution for this article.

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Appendix 1: The English version of Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale

Items No	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item 1: When I spend time with my partner, I can focus my attention on them	1	2	3	4	5
Item 2: I accept the existence of many different emotions and thoughts in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
Item 3: When I face a challenging situation in my relationship, I can recognize that my thoughts are just thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5
Item 4: I evaluate problems in our relationship based on the specific situation.	1	2	3	4	5
Item 5: My partner and I plan our lives in accordance with our values.	1	2	3	4	5
Item 6: It is important for us to act in accordance with our values in our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2: The Turkish version of Psychological Flexibility in Romantic Relationships Scale

Ölçek Maddeleri	Hiç katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
Madde 1: Eşime/sevgilime ayırdığım vakitlerde dikkatimi ona verebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
Madde 2: İlişkimdeki pek çok duygu ve düşüncenin varlığını kabul ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
Madde 3: İlişkimde zorlayıcı bir durumla karşılaştığımda düşüncelerimin neler olduğunu fark edebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
Madde 4: İlişkimizdeki bir sorunu içinde bulunduğumuz duruma göre değerlendiririm.	1	2	3	4	5
Madde 5: Eşimle/sevgilimle hayatımızı değerlerimize uygun planlarız.	1	2	3	4	5
Madde 6: İlişkimizde değerlerimiz yönünde hareket etmek bizim için önemlidir.	1	2	3	4	5

Note: The English version of the scale is provided in Appendix 1, while the Turkish version is presented in Appendix 2. The scale is unidimensional, consisting of six items. No reverse-coded items were included in the scale. The total score, calculated by summing the responses to all items, ranges from 6 to 30. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher levels of psychological flexibility in romantic relationships. Researchers are permitted to use the Turkish version of the scale in their scientific research, provided that they cite it appropriately and adhere to ethical principles. No additional permission is required to use the scale in scientific research.