

# Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS): A Scale Development Study

## Romantik İlişkilerde Mağdur Duyarlılığı Ölçeği (RİMDÖ): Bir Ölçek Geliştirme Çalışması

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### ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study is to develop a measurement tool that possesses both validity and reliability in order to comprehend the perception of justice sensitivity within romantic relationships among married adults. The study focuses specifically on the examination of victim sensitivity, which constitutes one of the dimensions of justice sensitivity. The participants in this research comprised a total of 325 adults for the purpose of exploratory factor analysis, while 410 adults were involved for confirmatory factor analysis. The outcomes of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) disclosed a unidimensional structure consisting of 17 items. Furthermore, the model fit indices derived from the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the suitability of the one-factor solution. To assess the construct validity of the scale, CFA and item-total correlations were employed. The item-total correlations ranged from 0.43 to 0.69. Reliability analysis of the scale involved the computation of Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient and Composite Reliability-CR. The results revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of .90 and a CR value of .90, indicating high internal consistency and reliability of the scale. In conclusion, based on the rigorous evaluation of validity and reliability, it can be deduced that the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing victim sensitivity in the context of romantic relationships within the Turkish culture.

**Keywords:** Victim sensitivity, romantic relationships, reliability, validity

### ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, romantik ilişkilerde adalet duyarlılığı kavramının evli yetişkinler tarafından nasıl algılandığını anlamak için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı geliştirmektir. Araştırma kapsamında, adalet duyarlılığının boyutlarından biri olan mağdur duyarlılığı alt boyutu incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini; açılımlı faktör analizi için 325 yetişkin, doğrulayıcı faktör analizi için ise 410 yetişkin oluşturmaktadır. Açılımlı Faktör Analizi (AFA) bulguları 17 maddelik tek faktörlü bir yapı ortaya koymuştur. Doğrulayıcı Faktör Analizi'nden (DFA) elde edilen model uyum indeksleri ise tek faktörlü çözümün doğrulandığına işaret etmektedir. Ölçeğin yapı geçerliği; DFA ve madde-toplam korelasyonları ile incelenmiştir. Madde-toplam korelasyonlarının, 0,43 ile 0,69 aralığında olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ölçeğin güvenilirlik analizleri için; Cronbach Alfa iç tutarlılık katsayısı ve Composite Reliability-CR analizleri yürütülmüştür. Bu doğrultuda, Cronbach alfa Romantik İlişkilerde Mağdur Duyarlılığı Ölçeği'nin (RİMDÖ) alfa değeri .90, CR değeri ise .90 olarak bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak, geçerlik ve güvenilirlik analizleri ışığında, RİMDÖ'nin Türk kültüründe romantik ilişkiler bağlamında mağdur duyarlılığını geçerli ve güvenilir bir şekilde ölçebildiği belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Mağdur duyarlılığı, romantik ilişkiler, güvenilirlik, geçerlik

## Introduction

Examining justice sensitivity in scholarly literature has underscored the significance of personality traits and individual differences in conjunction with social and situational factors when elucidating the emotional responses of individuals confronted with unfair circumstances (Schmitt et al. 2005). Researchers have posited that justice sensitivity operates as a personality trait within individuals, as Schmitt and Dörfel (1999) conceptualized similarly. Gollwitzer and Rothmund (2011) have suggested that certain individuals experience intense negative emotions when confronted with unfair situations, whereas others assign lesser importance to unjust outcomes or circumstances. McClelland (1985) asserts that individuals who are sensitive to justice are more perceptive of such situations, exhibit prompt action in response, and experience more pronounced emotional reactions to injustice.

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The systematic approach to measuring justice sensitivity encompasses four indicators: the frequency of encountered injustices, the intensity of anger following these injustices, the psychological strain associated with injustices, and the inclination to punish the perpetrator (Schmitt et al. 1995). Moreover, justice sensitivity is conceptualized across four dimensions: victim, offender (perpetrator), observer, and beneficiary (Schmitt et al. 2005). Victim Sensitivity (VS) is conceptualized as a personality trait wherein individuals expect to be exploited by others (Magraw-Mickelson et al. 2021). Additionally, VS manifests as self-concerns, antisocial tendencies, repetitive ruminations, and intense emotional reactions in instances of injustice (Gollwitzer et al. 2005, Schmitt et al. 2010). Gollwitzer and Rothmund (2011) posit that individuals with high victim sensitivity adopt a defensive approach to shield themselves from mistreatment, exhibit reluctance to cooperate in unjust situations, and place greater emphasis on justice pertaining to themselves (Gollwitzer et al. 2005).

Studies investigating justice sensitivity have revealed associations between victim sensitivity and negative personality traits. In contrast, observer and beneficiary sensitivity have been linked to prosocial tendencies such as empathy and social responsibility (Schmitt et al. 2005). Schmitt et al. (2005) conducted a study involving 3,170 participants, establishing a strong correlation between self-concerns such as paranoia, neuroticism, skepticism, revenge, jealousy, and victim sensitivity. Moreover, Back et al. (2013) found a significant positive relationship between victim sensitivity and narcissistic conflicts, attributed to the "inclination to forestall social failure through self-defense." Similarly, Jiang et al. (2020) noted that bullying victimization was negatively associated with defender behavior and positively associated with outsider behavior.

The evaluation of Justice Sensitivity (JS) employs the "Justice Sensitivity Scale," developed by Schmitt et al. in 1995. Specifically, VS, one of the sub-dimensions of justice sensitivity, is assessed using a 10-item, 6-point Likert-type scale. However, a measurement method has yet to be identified to evaluate justice sensitivity within the context of romantic relationships. Considering the present research objectives, it is anticipated that the perceptions of justice and justice-related dynamics between romantic partners may diverge from those in interpersonal relationships. Consequently, developing a valid and reliable scale to assess these dynamics within a romantic relationship context and gauge individuals' victimization levels within their romantic relationships would significantly contribute to studies conducted within the framework of justice sensitivity. Accordingly, the hypotheses for the current study are as follows: (1) The Victim Sensitivity Scale in Romantic Relationships (VSRRS) exhibits a unidimensional structure, and (2) confirmatory factor analysis findings will support a unidimensional structure.

## Method

### Sample

The target population for the pilot test and psychometric evaluation phases of the study of people who have been married for at least a year. The study sample consists of two different study groups obtained using snowball sampling. While determining the number of participants in exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the criteria suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) were considered. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) proposed that, in factor analysis, the minimum number of observations should be 300. In this direction, it aimed to reach a total of 700 married participants. In this direction, it was aimed to reach at least 300 individuals for EFA and at least 400 for CFA. Therefore, the study sample for exploratory factor analysis included 325 individuals (187 women, 138 men), and confirmatory factor analysis included 410 married people (250 women and 160 men). In total, the sample of the study of 735 participants.

### Procedure

First, ethics committee approval was obtained from Mersin University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Issue No: 05/03/2021-03). The research sample was comprised of 735 participants. All participants were informed about the research's purpose before collecting data online. Since the research data was collected online, no clinical interviews were conducted with the participants. They were also given information about the fact that they could leave the study at any time, that the data gathered would be anonymous, and the reasons for conducting and utilizing the data. The research was divided into two groups. The first study group comprised 325 adults, whereas the second included 410 adults. The data of the study were determined using the snowball sampling method. All participants were informed about the aim of the research with the "Informed Consent Form" determined by the Mersin University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee before participating in the study.

### ***First Study Group***

The first study group, created to determine the factorial structure of the scale, included a total of 325 participants; 187 women (57.4%) and 138 men (42.5%) who were married for at least one year. Participants were between 23 and 75 (M= 42.21, SD= 11.66).

### ***Second Study Group***

The second study group consisted of the participants who participated in validity and reliability studies. At this stage, the group included a total of 410 participants; 250 women (61%), 160 men (39%), married for at least one year, aged 23-65 (M= 40.79, SD= 10.39).

### **Development Process of VSRRS**

The procedure of the VSRRS development had four phases which are creating an item pool, development of trial form, pilot study, and psychometric evaluation of the scale. The characteristics of two study groups were presented in Table 1.

Variable	EFA				CFA			
	M	SD	n	%	M	SD	n	%
Age	42.21	11.66			40.79	10.39		
Level of Education								
Primary School			6	1.8			4	1
Secondary school			4	1.2			5	1.2
High school			29	8.9			39	9.5
Bachelor			187	57.5			271	66.1
Graduate			99	30.5			91	22.2
Monthly Income								
1000TL and below			1	0.3			2	0.5
1001-2500TL			4	1.2			6	1.5
2501-3500TL			11	3.4			17	4.1
3501-4500TL			15	4.6			36	8.8
4501-5500TL			30	9.2			28	6.8
5501TL and above			264	81.2			321	78.3
Duration of Marriage								
1-10 years			149	45.8			204	49.8
11-20 years			82	25.2			114	27.8
21-30 years			56	17.2			52	12.7
31-40 years			27	8.3			34	8.3
41 years and above			11	3.4			6	1.5

### ***Phase 1: Item Pool***

At the stage of creating an item pool, first, the literature on justice sensitivity and victim sensitivity was examined, and the measurement methods used in previous research were assessed (Gollwitzer et al. 2005, Gerlach et al. 2012, Çoklar and Dönmez 2014, Maltese et al. 2016, Gollwitzer et al. 2021). Then, face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten people who had been married for at least one year. Before the draft form of the scale was sent to the experts, three open-ended questions were asked to determine one's perceptions of justice sensitivity and victim sensitivity in a romantic relationship context. For this purpose, participants asked questions such as "What do you think a justice relationship means? Please define" and "In your opinion, on what factors does a just relationship with your partner (spouse) depend?" Based on the responses from the participants, an item pool has been created for justice sensitivity. Some of the items created by applying content analysis to the answers to the survey questions were revised by the researcher, and some were removed from the item pool. Finally, the item pooling phase was completed with 64 candidate items related to victim sensitivity in romantic relationships.

### ***Phase 2: Development of Trial Form***

At this stage, the 64 items pool created by the researcher was sent to 12 experts who have been instructors in psychology and educational sciences for at least four years (five from educational sciences and seven from social

psychology) for their feedback. As part of the feedback process, 20 items deemed not to fully reflect the theory were removed from the test form, and three new items suggested by the experts were added..

Afterward, 47 revised items were sent back to five new experts in social psychology for evaluation. As a result of the evaluation of five experts, 14 more items with a content validity ratio below .99 were removed from the trial form. In 17 items, language and expression arrangements were made in line with the experts' suggestions. Thus, the final version of the trial form was created with 33 items. Finally, the instruction for the scale was written, and it was planned to evaluate the scale items with a 7-point Likert type (7: strongly agree 1: strongly disagree).

Experts reviewed each scale item in detail in terms of the relevance and intelligibility in the context of victim sensitivity in romantic relationships. They gave feedback through the "Expert Evaluation Form" prepared by the researcher. Lawshe's (1975) technique is used to calculate the content validity rates of the developing scale. According to the Lawshe technique, it is appropriate to get feedback from at least five and a maximum of 40 experts (Yurdugül 2005). Accordingly, the content validity ratios of the items were calculated according to 5 experts, and the items below .99 were excluded from the trial form.

### ***Phase 3: Pilot Study of VSRRS***

The pilot study is a stage made with the items in the trial form of the scale that is planned to be developed. Erkuş (2014) states that the pilot study, which is carried out to determine the intelligibility of the items, spelling mistakes, and the average response time, with a sample that would reflect the target audience of the research, is very beneficial for the scale development process. In this direction, the preliminary trial study was completed with the feedback received from the face-to-face study with 15 married people for at least one year.

### ***Phase 4: Psychometric evaluation of the VSRRS***

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) were conducted to test the construct validity of the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS). For the reliability of the scale, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient, criterion-related validity, and composite reliability (CR) score.

## **Data Collection Tools**

### ***Demographic Information Form***

The form consisted of information about gender, age, level of education, socio-economic status, duration of marriage, and divorce status.

### ***Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS)***

Initially, the relevant literature and previous studies were examined in the scale development study. Then, face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten people who have been married for at least one year, and three open-ended questions were asked to determine their perceptions of justice sensitivity and victim sensitivity in romantic relationships. An item pool was created with 64 candidate scale items, which are thought to be related to victim sensitivity in romantic relationships, and 12 experts in relevance and intelligibility evaluated them. Within the framework of the feedback received, 20 items that were thought not to reflect the theory by the researcher entirely were removed from the trial form, and three new items suggested by the experts were added. Afterward, the revised 47 items were sent to five new experts from the social psychology field for evaluation. As a result of the evaluation of 5 experts, 14 more items with a content validity ratio below .99 were removed from the trial form. In 17 items, language and expression arrangements were made in line with the experts' suggestions. Thus, the final version of the trial form was created with 33 items. Finally, the instruction for the scale was written, and it was planned to evaluate the scale items with a 7-point Likert type (7: I strongly agree; 1: I strongly disagree).

### ***Justice Sensitivity Scale (JSS) - Victim Form.***

The Justice Sensitivity Scale (JSS) was developed by Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Maes, and Arbach (2005). The scale, which measures justice sensitivity as a general tendency, consists of four sub-dimensions: victim, perpetrator, observer, and beneficiary. An increase in the scores obtained from the scale, evaluated with a 6-point Likert-type rating (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree), means that justice sensitivity also increases. There are 30 items in total on the scale. The victim dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of the Justice Sensitivity Scale, consists of a total of 10 items. The scores obtained from the scale vary between 10-60. The scale's adaptation to Turkish validity and reliability studies was made by Çoklar and Dönmez (2014), and Cronbach alpha coefficient

was reported as .82. In this study, only the Victim Form of the Justice sensitivity Scale was used. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the victim form for the current study was determined as .85.

### ***Marital Forgiveness Scale-Event***

Fincham et al. (2004) developed the Marital Forgiveness Scale-Event to evaluate the level of forgiveness of couples in the face of an event they were hurt during their marriage. Durmuş and Manap (2018) conducted adaptation studies into the Turkish language. Firstly, participants were asked about the event they had experienced in the last 12 months that they considered hurtful. The scale items were expected to be answered in line with this event. Participants then asked the incident, "How much hurt or upset did you experience when this event happened?" they are expected to evaluate the question with a rating from 1 to 9 (1 = very little hurt, 9 = most hurt ever felt). The scale consists of nine items and three sub-dimensions which are benevolence (items 2, 7, and 9), avoidance (items 1, 4, and 5), and retaliation (items 3, 6, and 8). Scale items are evaluated with a 5-point Likert-type rating (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). No total score is obtained in the Turkish version of the scale, similar to the original form. Each sub-dimension of the scale is evaluated independently of each other. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .76 for benevolence, .63 for retaliation, and .81 for avoidance. For this study, the Cronbach Alpha was found to be .82 for avoidance, .77 for benevolence, and .66 for retaliation.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The current data were analyzed on SPSS21 and LISREL8.80 programs. First, skewness and kurtosis values were examined to determine whether the data showed a normal distribution. Accordingly, the skewness score (-.321/.135) and kurtosis score (-.460/.270) for 33 items were between -1.5 and +1.5. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), kurtosis and skewness values should be between -1.5 and +1.5 for a normal distribution. Therefore, the data indicated a normal distribution. The correlations between VSRRS, Justice Sensitivity Scale (JSS)-Victim sub-dimension, and Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event sub-dimensions (avoidance, benevolence, and retaliation) were calculated by Pearson Correlations Coefficients. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to estimate the scale's construct validity. Accordingly, items with a factor load above 0.30 were included in the analysis. Before conducting EFA, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Sphericity Test were performed to determine the suitability of the data obtained from the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS). The KMO value was at an excellent level ( $0.94 > 0.50$ ). The sphericity test chi-square value is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 6656.853$   $p < .001$ ). Thus, it was determined that the data from the 33-item pilot form were appropriate for the EFA.

Finally, to confirm the structure revealed according to the EFA findings, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was carried out. CFA is an analysis method that aims to verify the predetermined factor structure (Şimşek, 2007). Confirmatory factor analysis is also used for various purposes, such as psychometric assessment, structure verification, and assessment of measurement invariance (Brown and Moore 2012). More than one goodness-of-fit indices are considered in the evaluation of model fit (Gizir 2005). Brown and Moore (2012) stated that it is crucial to consider and report each fit indices because they provide different information about the model fit. In this direction, confirmatory factor analysis was reported to consider Chi-Square Value, RMSEA, GFI, and CFI fit indices. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient, composite reliability (CR), and item-total correlation coefficients were calculated for analysis.

## **Results**

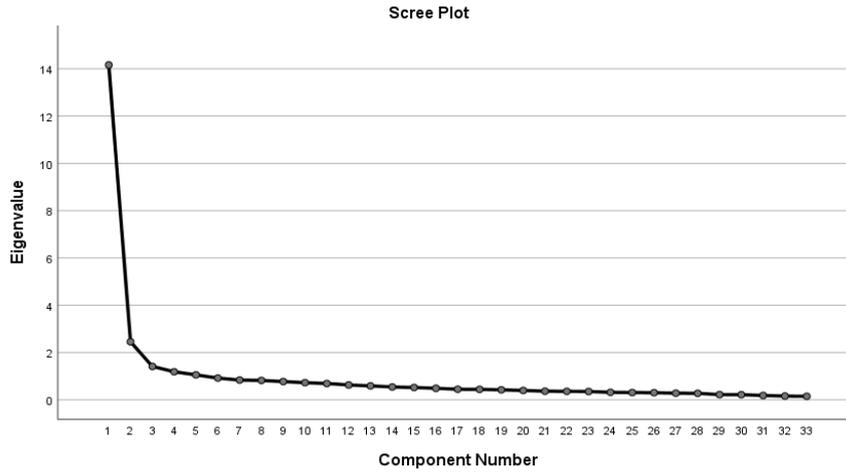
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### **Validity**

#### ***Exploratory Factor Analysis***

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was carried out with "Quartimax" vertical rotation fundamental axis analysis, and the threshold value for factor loadings of candidate scale items was determined as .30. The criterion was that the difference between items loaded on more than one factor did not exceed .10. Findings of the first-factor analysis carried out with 33-items point to a 5-factor structure in which the total variance explained is 61,43%. After that, the factor analysis was carried out again by removing the four items loaded on more than one factor and with a difference of less than .10 from the data set. Moreover, it was found that four more items were loaded on more than one factor, and the difference was less than .10. Therefore, it was appropriately deemed to exclude four more items from the data. In the third analysis, since an item in the scale was loaded on more than one factor, and the difference between the factors was less than .10, this item was also removed from the data set.

Figure 1 indicates that the scree plot obtained from the EFA pointed out a two-factor structure. When the eigenvalues of the factors were examined, it was determined that the ratio of the eigenvalue of the first factor (14,162) to the eigenvalue of the second factor (2,455) was 5.77 (Figure 1). However, the ratio of the first factor's eigenvalue to the second factor's eigenvalue was considered to examine the level of meeting the unidimensionality assumption of VSRRS. Reise and Revicki (2015) stated that the ratio of the first factor's eigenvalue to the second factor's eigenvalue should be above 3. In this direction, the eigenvalue ratio obtained above 3 indicated that the final factor structure supported the unidimensionality assumption. At the same time, it was aimed to increase the loads given by the items to a single factor rather than performing principal component analysis on the multi-factored structures.



**Figure 1. Scree plot**

As the relevant literature was assessed, examining the items under a single-factor structure was appropriate for being theoretically justified. Erkuş (2014) argues that while deciding the number of factors in the scale development process, the relationship between the sub-dimensions obtained and the theoretical structure should also be considered, rather than the eigenvalues and the scree plot. Therefore, while deciding on the factor structure in the scale development process, the final factor structure was revealed by considering the unidimensionality assumption and the theoretical structure. As a result, the structure obtained from the exploratory factor analysis was fixed to a single factor, and the analysis continued.

**Table 2. Factorial structure of VSRRS**

Item	Factor Loading
Item17	.812
Item4	.792
Item10	.786
Item8	.780
Item13	.777
Item15	.763
Item14	.747
Item12	.740
Item16	.730
Item6	.702
Item3	.695
Item9	.695
Item7	.682
Item5	.657
Item11	.653
Item2	.646
Item1	.621
Explained variance: 52.470; Eigenvalue: 8.920; Cronbach Alpha: 0.94	

In the factor analysis carried out with principal component analysis in a single-factor structure, the shared variance values (communality) of two items (item 1 and item 7) were below .30, so they were excluded from the analysis. In addition, five items (item 5, item 9, item 11, item 16, and item 21) were excluded from the analysis because they violated the meaning-wise integrity of other scale items. The findings obtained from the last factor analyses reveal that the total variance is explained at 52.470%, and it is a one-dimensional structure with 17 items.

Büyüköztürk (2017) suggested that at least 30% of the variance explained in the single-factor structure is sufficient. Therefore, it was determined that the variance explained for the 17 items' one-dimensional structure was excellent. On the other hand, factor loads of VSRRS were found to be between 0.621 and 0.812. In line with all this information, the scale's factor structure is determined by considering the theoretical structure and the total variance value explained. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the scale is .94. Relevant factor loads of VSRRS are presented in Table 2.

### **Construct Validity: CFA**

In the exploratory factor analysis carried out, the single-factor structure of the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale was tested with Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). According to the findings of the first confirmatory factor analysis carried out, it is seen that all 17 scale items in the model were loaded significantly. However, when the fit indices obtained from the model were examined [ $\chi^2$  (119, N= 410) =654.99,  $\chi^2/df=5.50$ , RMSEA= 0.105, CFI= 0.84, GFI= 0.84], it was found that the values obtained were not at a satisfactory level. In this direction, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out again by applying the suggested modifications as a result of the analysis. Findings obtained from the results of the final confirmatory factor analysis [ $\chi^2$  (111, N= 410) = 279.17,  $\chi^2/df= 2.51$ , RMSEA= 0.061, CFI= 0.94, GFI= 0.93] show that the fit indices in the model are at an excellent level (see Table 3). In conclusion, the single-factor structure of the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS) was confirmed (Figure 2).

Fit Index	Acceptable Fit Index	Obtained Value
$\chi^2/df$	$2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$	2.51
RMSEA	$.90 \leq RMSEA \leq .80$	.06
GFI	$.90 \leq GFI \leq .95$	.93
CFI	$.90 \leq CFI \leq .95$	.94
AGFI	$.90 \leq AGFI \leq .95$	.90
NFI	$.90 \leq NFI \leq .95$	.90

RMSEA: Root Mean Square of Approximate Errors; GFI: Goodness of Fit Index; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; AGFI: Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index; NFI: Normed Fit Index

### **Criterion-Related Validity**

Criterion-related validity is a method that allows to compare and evaluate the relationship of the scale, which is aimed to be developed during the scale development process with other scales (Şencan 2005). In this direction, two measurement tools were used to test the criterion-related validity: the "Justice Sensitivity Scale-Victim Form" and the "Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event." In criterion-related validity studies, the correlations between VSRRS, Justice Sensitivity Scale (JSS)-Victim sub-dimension, and Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event sub-dimensions (avoidance, benevolence, and retaliation) were examined by calculating Pearson Correlations Coefficients. Pearson Correlations Coefficients, which pointed out the relationships between VSRRS and other variables, are presented in Table 4.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. VSRRS	-	.485**	-.341**	.334**	.422**
2. Avoidance	.485**	-	-.443**	.391**	.242**
3. Benevolence	-.341**	-.443**	-	-.204**	-.075
4. Retaliation	.334**	.391**	-.204**	-	.236**
5. Victim Sensitivity	.422**	.242**	-.075	.236**	-

\*\*p<.01

When the relations between the victim sub-dimension of the Justice Sensitivity Scale (JSS) and the VSRRS regarding the criterion-related validity of the scale were examined, it was found that there was a significant positive correlation between VSRRS and JSS-Victim ( $r= .42$ ,  $p<.001$ ). In this respect, it can be said that the level of victim sensitivity showed similar patterns in both one's social and romantic relationships. In other words, as

the level of victim sensitivity of an individual in one's social relationships increase, the level of victim sensitivity in a romantic partner also increases. Furthermore, it was also found that there was a significant negative correlation between VSRRS and Benevolence ( $r = -.34, p < .001$ ), significant positive correlations between VSRRS and Avoidance ( $r = .48, p < .001$ ), and a significant positive correlation between VSRRS and Retaliation ( $r = .33, p < .001$ ). Therefore, it can be interpreted that as the level of victim sensitivity of a romantic partner increases, avoidance and retaliation towards the partner increase, but benevolence decreases.

## Reliability

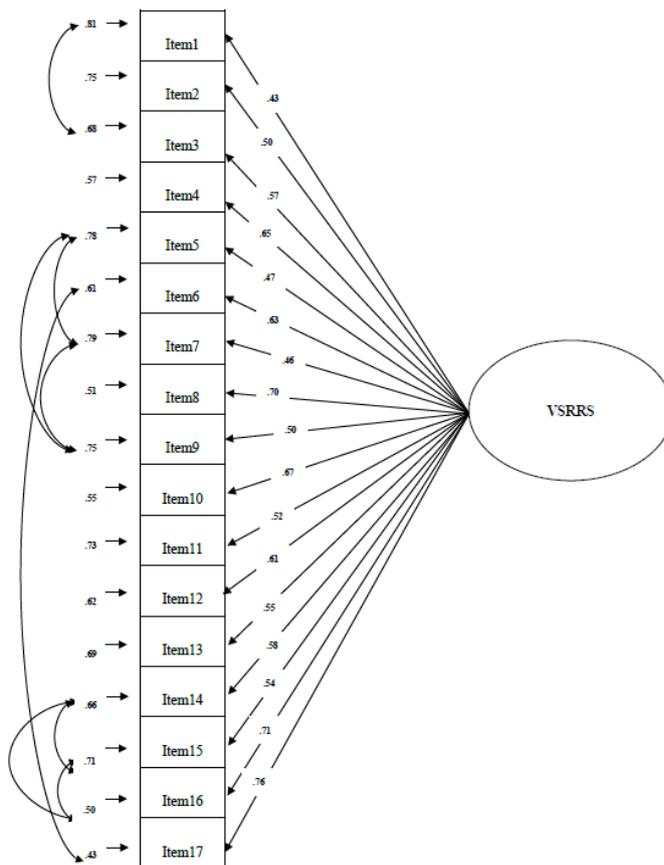
Reliability studies of the VSRRS were carried out by calculating the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient, composite reliability (CR), and item-total correlation coefficients. Cronbach's alpha value is a value that has internal consistency and reliability coefficients and indicates the relationships between the items in the scale and how much the items measure the concept that is intended to be measured (Gürbüz & Şahin, 2015: 157). Accordingly, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient regarding the confirmatory factor analysis findings obtained from the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationship Scale (VSRRS) was found to be .90, and the Composite Reliability-CR value was found to be .90. On the other hand, the item-total correlations of the scale are between .43 and .69.

## Comparison of VSRRS on gender

The independent group's t-test was conducted to determine whether the participants' scores of the VSRRS differed in gender. The t-test analysis results indicated that women ( $M = 4.92, SD = 1.17$ ) had significantly higher scores than men ( $M = 3.31, SD = 1.19$ ) (see Table 5).

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	t	p
VSRRS	Female	230	4.92	1.17	13.394	.000**
	Male	168	3,31	1.19		

\*\* $p < .001$



**Figure 2. Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale single factor model**

## Discussion

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The present study focuses on the victim dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of justice sensitivity, in an academic context. Through extensive analysis, a reliable and valid scale has been developed to measure victim sensitivity specifically within the context of romantic relationships. In order to achieve this, existing studies and measurement methods related to justice sensitivity and victim sensitivity were thoroughly reviewed. Based on the feedback from 12 experts, an initial item pool consisting of 64 items was created. After careful consideration, 20 items were removed, and three new items were added. The revised pool of 47 items was then evaluated by five additional experts, leading to the exclusion of 14 items with content validity rates below 0.99. Furthermore, 17 items were revised to improve their language and expression as suggested by the experts. Consequently, a pilot form consisting of 33 items was developed.

To determine the factor structure of the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using data from 320 married adults who completed the pilot form. The principal axis analysis was employed as the factor extraction technique, aiming to obtain a single-factor structure rather than a multi-factor one. The EFA yielded a single-factor solution, with the 17 items explaining a total variance of 52.470%.

For the assessment of construct validity, both confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and model fit indices were utilized. The CFA confirmed the structure obtained from the EFA, consisting of 17 items and a single factor. In terms of criterion-related validity, the relationships between the VSRRS, the Victim sub-dimension of the Justice Sensitivity Scale, and the Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event were examined. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the VSRRS and the Justice Sensitivity Scale, indicating that an increase in general victim sensitivity is associated with higher victim sensitivity within the context of romantic relationships. It can be inferred that victim sensitivity in both social and romantic relationships follows similar patterns, as emphasized by previous research (Schmitt et al., 2005). Additionally, the relationships between the VSRRS and the sub-dimensions of the Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event were explored. The findings demonstrated negative associations between the VSRRS and benevolence, as well as positive associations between the VSRRS and avoidance and retaliation. In other words, higher levels of victim sensitivity were related to decreased benevolence and increased avoidance and retaliation behaviors towards one's partner.

Reliability analyses of the VSRRS were conducted, including calculations of Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and item-total correlation coefficients. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be 0.90, indicating high internal consistency. According to Şencan (2005), a Cronbach's alpha value of at least 0.70 is required for a measurement tool to be considered reliable. Additionally, the scale demonstrated a composite reliability of 0.90, which is an acceptable value according to Hair et al. (1998). The item-total correlations ranged from 0.43 to 0.69, suggesting that the items in the scale are at a good level of reliability. Researchers have previously established that item-total correlation values of 0.30 and above indicate satisfactory levels of reliability (Taşancıl 2002, Büyüköztürk, 2017). Overall, these findings support the reliability of the VSRRS as a measurement tool.

Furthermore, Pearson correlation coefficients were examined to assess the relationships between the scales and determine the reliability of the structure. The results indicated a statistically significant positive correlation between the VSRRS and Victim Sensitivity (VS). Moreover, within the sub-dimensions of the Marriage Forgiveness Scale-Event, a negative significant relationship was observed between the VSRRS and benevolence, while positive significant relationships were found between the VSRRS and avoidance and retaliation. These findings suggest that individuals who are sensitive to being victimized may display uncooperative or antisocial behaviors as a means of self-protection against potential exploitation. Previous research by Gollwitzer and Rothmund (2011) supports these results, indicating that victim-sensitive individuals tend to experience anger, moral outrage, and annoyance when faced with an egoistic partner. However, they do not experience these emotions in response to mere bad luck. Victim-sensitive individuals tend to withdraw their cooperation rapidly when they perceive signs of potential exploitation. Their cautious and wary nature makes them less willing to cooperate in social situations when confronted with "meanness cues" (Gollwitzer et al., 2012). Consequently, this study contributes to our understanding that victim sensitivity exhibits similar patterns in both social and romantic relationships.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the current study and address them in future research. Firstly, the sample used in the study consisted solely of married individuals, limiting the generalizability of the findings. It is recommended to include participants from different relationship statuses to adapt the scale accordingly. Additionally, the educational background of the participants was skewed towards

individuals with graduate-level education, potentially impacting the research outcomes. Future studies should aim to include participants with diverse educational backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive perspective. Lastly, since the sample for the VSRRS was specific to married individuals in Turkey, it is crucial to conduct studies in different cultural contexts to reveal potential cross-cultural differences. Furthermore, testing the existing structure in various subgroups would help determine if measurement invariance exists.

## Conclusion

The lack of a measurement tool assessing the victim dimension of justice sensitivity, specifically within the context of romantic relationships, has been observed. Hence, developing a novel scale facilitates the valid and reliable measurement of victim sensitivity in romantic relationships. The scale development process involved statistical and theoretical investigations, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. These data sources provided valuable insights into the dynamics surrounding partners' perceptions of justice sensitivity and victim sensitivity in romantic relationships. In particular, the qualitative study findings were instrumental in identifying the specific dynamics influencing victim sensitivity within romantic relationships.

In summary, the Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS) offers a means to comprehend and evaluate how adults perceive the concept of justice sensitivity within the context of their romantic relationships. It represents a culturally reflective and dependable measurement tool within the Turkish context. Moreover, the new scale can potentially explore the associations between victim sensitivity and other relevant variables. Consequently, the VSRRS is expected to contribute to future research endeavors in close relationship studies.

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## Addendum. Victim Sensitivity in Romantic Relationships Scale (VSRRS) (Turkish)

### Instruction

Dear Participant

Justice sensitivity is defined as the reactions and intensity of anger people show when they are treated unfairly or encounter unfair situations. Below are some events that may occur in your relationship with your partner/spouse.

You are asked to respond to these sentences considering **your relationship with your partner** by marking one of **7: strongly agree, 1: strongly disagree**.

Thank you very much for your participation..

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>

1. Partnerimin/eşimin dikkatsizliği yüzünden zarar gördüğümde ona öfkelenirim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Partnerimle/eşimle fikir ayrılığına düştüğümde düşüncelerimi önemsememesine tahammül edemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Partnerimin/eşimin yaptığı bir hatanın bedelini ödemek zorunda kalmak beni öfkelenendirir.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Partnerim/eşim benim ihtiyaçlarımı kendi ihtiyaçlarından daha az önemsedüğünde kötüye kullanılmış hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Partnerim/eşim tarafından haksız yere suçlandığımda bunu kabullenemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Partnerimle/eşimle evde iş bölümü yaparken sorumluluğun çoğu bende olduğunda sömürülmüş hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Partnerimin/eşimin ilişkimizi ilgilendiren bir karar alırken fikrimi sormamasını kabul edemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Partnerim/eşim ilişkimiz ile ilgili konulara benden daha az emek verdiğinde kendimi kötüye kullanılmış hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Partnerim/eşim haksız olduğunda yaşadığımız bir problemi düzeltmek için çaba harcamamasını kabullenemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Partnerim/eşim yüzünden karşıma çıkan fırsatları değerlendiremediğim zaman kendimi haksızlığa uğramış hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Partnerim/eşim tarafından haksızlığa uğradığımda ona olan öfkemi kontrol etmekte zorlanırım.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Partnerimin/eşimin yapmayı göz ardı ettiği şeyleri ( <i>faturayı zamanında ödememesi, temizliğe yardım etmemesi gibi</i> ) ben yapmadığım zaman partnerim/eşim tarafından eleştirilmeye katlanamam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Partnerimin/eşimin bir konuda kendi düşüncelerini kabullenmem için ısrar etmesine tahammül edemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. İlişkide partnerimden/eşimden daha az söz hakkına sahip olmaya katlanamam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Partnerimin/eşimin bir konudaki kişisel kararlarını kabul etmem için ısrar etmesine tahammül edemem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Partnerim/eşim ev işlerinde üstüne düşen sorumlulukları sadece istediği zaman yerine getirdiğinde kendimi kötüye kullanılmış hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Partnerimle/eşimle olan ilişkimizde çoğunlukla onun ihtiyaçları karşılanırsa kendimi kötüye kullanılmış hissederim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### Scoring

The scale consists of a single-factor structure. The one-factor structure can be reached by summing all items and dividing by the number of items. There are no reverse-coded items in the scale.