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Araştırma Makalesi * Research Article

Development, Validity and Reliability Study of the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale

Nevrotik Liderlik Algısı Ölçeğinin Geliştirilmesi, Geçerlilik ve Güvenilirlik Çalışması

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to develop the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale and to test its validity and reliability. A total of 848 teachers working in a province in the eastern part of Türkiye during the 2022-2023 academic year participated in the study. Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, Cronbach's Alpha values for criterion validity and reliability were used to analyze the validity and reliability of the data. Exploratory factor analysis showed that two factors explained 65% of the total variance. Confirmatory Factor Analysis demonstrated acceptable goodness of fit for the two-factor model for the 24-item scale. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test the criterion validity of the scale, and the findings indicated a moderately positive significant relationship between neurotic leadership perception and burnout, as well as a moderately negative relationship with empowering leadership. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .95 for Factor 1; .95 for Factor 2, and .97 for the overall scale, indicating a high level of reliability. The analyses and findings suggest that the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale exhibited a valid and reliable structure at a general level.

Keywords: Neurotic leadership, dark leadership, scale development.

Öz: Bu çalışmanın amacı, Nevrotik Liderlik Algısı Ölçeği'ni geliştirmek ve geçerliliğini ve güvenilirliğini test etmektir. Çalışmaya, 2022-2023 akademik yılında Türkiye'nin doğu kesimindeki bir ilde çalışan toplam 848 öğretmen katılmıştır. Verilerin geçerliliğini ve güvenilirliğini analiz etmek için keşifsel faktör analizi, doğrulayıcı

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faktör analizi ve Cronbach Alfa değerleri kullanılmıştır. Keşfedici Faktör Analizi, iki faktörün toplam varyansın %65'ini açıkladığını göstermiştir. Doğrulayıcı Faktör Analizi, 24 maddelik ölçek için iki faktörlü modelin kabul edilebilir bir uyum gösterdiğini ortaya koymuştur. Ölçeğin ölçüt geçerliliğini test etmek için Pearson Korelasyon Analizi kullanılmış ve bulgular, nevrotik liderlik algısı ile tükenmişlik arasında orta derecede pozitif anlamlı bir ilişki ve güçlendirici liderlik ile orta derecede negatif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Faktör 1 için Cronbach Alfa katsayısı .95 olarak bulunmuştur; Faktör 2 için .95 ve genel ölçek için .97 değerleri, yüksek düzeyde güvenilirliği göstermektedir. Analizler ve bulgular, Nevrotik Liderlik Algısı Ölçeği'nin genel düzeyde geçerli ve güvenilir bir yapı sergilediğini göstermektedir..

Anahtar Kelimeler: Nevrotik liderlik, karanlık liderlik, ölçek geliştirme.

Introduction

In the normal course of life, the negative emotions we encounter can become overwhelming for some individuals. Neuroticism, defined as the personality domain symbolizing negative affectivity (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975), constitutes one dimension of personality inventories known as the five-factor model or the Big Five in the literature (Goldberg, 1993). Neuroticism involves the tendency to experience negative emotions such as anger, sadness, guilt (Basim et al., 2009), instability, trait anxiety, adjustment, well-being, and stress reaction (Watson and Clark, 1984) within cognitive and behavioral styles (Bolger and Zuckerman, 1995; Costa and McCrae, 1980; Mooradian et al., 1994; Ormel and Wohlfarth, 1991). Measuring neuroticism is related to assessing an individual's communication and adaptation skills with their environment. Individuals with low neuroticism are often described as harmonious and stable by those around them (Weiting, 2015). On the contrary, neurotic individuals, triggered by a warning system activated by environmental uncertainty perceptions (Tellegen, 1985), may assume an anxious, insecure, irritable, and introverted mood (Costa and McCrae, 1995). They may also exhibit obsessive behaviors, such as an advanced desire for control and attributing the source of external events to themselves. Individuals with neurotic tendencies, characterized by negative affect conflicting with adaptability or emotional stability (Costa and McCrae, 1992; Watson and Clark, 1984), often had negative emotions when faced with a problem, which in turn leads them to focus on past unfavorable situations (Suls et al., 1998), and react aggressively to events and people (Deniz and Unsal, 2010).

Personality traits play a significant role in shaping how individuals interact with others and direct their external environment. Research suggests that certain personality traits, such as extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness, have a positive impact on leadership skills (Daly et al., 2014). On the contrary, individuals with high neuroticism often exhibit caution in fulfilling leadership roles and may not effectively perform in leadership positions (Da'as et al., 2019). Leaders with high levels of anxiety, depression, and self-consciousness tend to avoid tasks that require cognitive effort and are perceived as potentially associated with negative effects, since they consider conflict as a threat (Moberg, 2001; Özdemir et al., 2013; Özdemir and Orhan, 2019).

Motamedi (2006) identified neurotic managerial styles in seven dimensions: explosive individuals easily swayed by their emotions; apprehensive who live within their emotions; impulsive individuals unable to manage their anxieties; abrasive personalities imposing themselves on others and seeing others as less competent; narcissists with a need for self-elevation; compulsive individuals with a one-sided and rigid mindset; and impulsive individuals prone to sudden actions. Neurotic leaders, causing a transition from individual pathology to organizational pathology, can shape the overall functioning of an organization, including its culture, structure, and interpersonal relationships (Kersten, 2007). Kets de Vries and Miller (1984) conceptualized five pathological organizational forms that emerge from dominant neurotic leadership styles, namely paranoid, schizophrenic, coercive, depressive, and dramatic organizations. In addition to these classifications, Kersten (2005) suggests that neurotic organizational patterns may also include negative situations such as traumatic, depressive, and obsessive-compulsive disorders, as well as a 'drunken' organizational structure that denies the existence of any problems.

The limited number of studies on neuroticism in the organizational leadership literature and the absence of any applicable scale for educational organizations emphasize the significance this study. The quality of educational organizations is closely linked to the competence of teachers. However, teachers

often contend with various workloads, burnout, and mobbing. Leaders possessing dark leadership traits can, at times, exert a destructive impact on teachers. In this context, this study is of great significance as it has the potential to be an effective instrument to shed light on these effects. Therefore, the aim of this study was to develop a scale in order to evaluate educational administrators having neurotic characteristics based on teacher perceptions.

METHOD

In the study, a post-positivist perspective was adopted as the methodological philosophy. It involves a laborious deductive approach to data collection and analysis. It acknowledges the presence of multiple realities rather than adhering to a singular reality (Creswell, 2014). In this context, the study used a quantitative research design in order to investigate teachers' perceptions of neurotic leadership. Quantitative research design is an approach that seeks to develop theory and emphasizes the exploration and understanding of social phenomena within their specific contexts (Yildirim and Simsek, 2001).

Participants

The sample consisted of in-service teachers working in a province in the eastern part of Türkiye during the academic year 2022-2023. In sample selection, a simple random sampling method was used (Buyukozturk, 2016). The study was conducted in two stages: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) stage and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) stage. Accordingly, a total of 421 teachers, 205 females (49%) and 216 males (51%) participated in the EFA stage. In addition, a total of 427 teachers, 216 females (50.6%) and 211 males (49.4%), were included in CFA stage.

Data Collection

In line with the purpose of the study, a scale consisting of 37 items was developed based on a literature review. The scale was designed in a 5-point Likert format. Each item was expressed as "1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Always" to examine the extent to which participants' thoughts are reflected in each statement. The draft version of the questionnaire was subjected to feedback from expert faculty members specializing in psychology, linguistics, and educational management. Items that were not clear were revised, and the final version of the form was obtained.

Data Analysis

In the study, EFA was employed to investigate the relationships between variables and to establish a new structure. Furthermore, CFA, as suggested by Can (2013), was used to assess the conformity of the developed structure with a predetermined hypothesis or theory. Structural validity of the scale was examined through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Sphericity test, EFA, CFA analyses, and criterion validity. In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was assessed to ensure reliability. Statistical analyses for the research were conducted using SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 23 software packages.

Findings

Structural Validity

Findings on Exploratory Factor Analysis:

EFA was conducted on data collected from 421 teachers who completed the 37-item questionnaire. Initially, the normal distribution of the data was tested, and then the suitability of the data for factor analysis was examined using KMO and Bartlett's Sphericity Test. The neurotic leadership perception scale exhibited high sample adequacy. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was found as .97, and the Bartlett's Sphericity Test produced a significant χ^2 value of 9224.575 ($p=.000$; $p<.001$). The results indicated that the data was statistically suitable for EFA, and the Bartlett's test obtained a significant result.

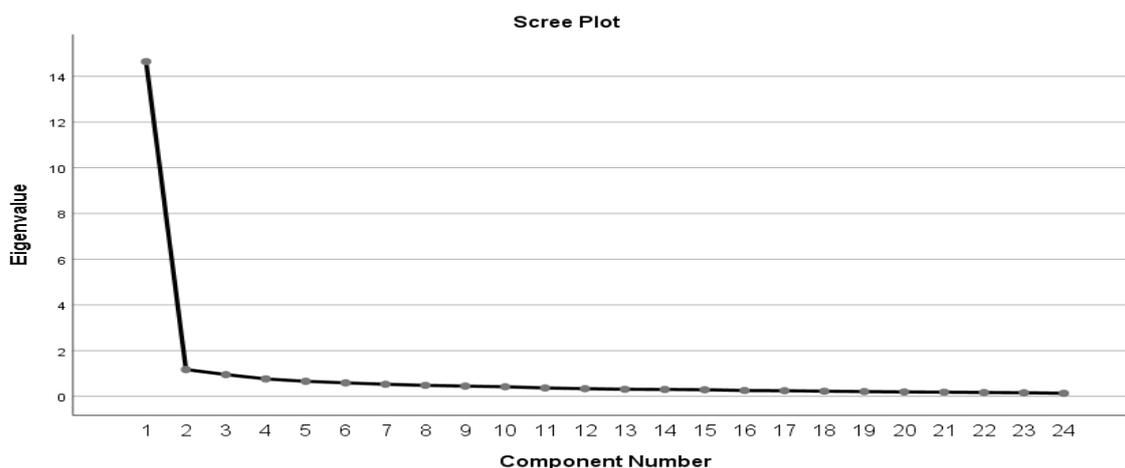


Figure 1: Scree Plot Graph for EFA

The Scree Plot graph in Figure 1 revealed that the items in the scale were clustered into two factors. The eigenvalues exceeded 1, and a break occurred after the 2nd factor, which indicated a two-factor structure for the scale. EFA was performed using the varimax rotation technique. After the analysis, 13 items with factor loadings involving multiple factors and values below .50 were excluded from the scale, and the analysis was carried on with the remaining 24 items.

Table 1: Rotated Component Matrix Table

Items	Factors	
	1.Factor	2.Factor
I1	.884	
I2	.728	
I3	.785	
I4	.775	
I5	.655	
I6	.826	
I7	.703	
I8	.679	
I9	.671	
I10	.664	
I11	.655	
I12	.735	
I13	.562	
I14	.521	
I15		.795
I16		.792
I17		.789
I18		.747
I19		.743
I20		.696
I21		.689
I22		.655
I23		.621
I24		.566
Eigenvalue	14.645	1.173

Total Variance		
Explained:	61.023	4.886
%65.908		

As shown in Table 1, the scale demonstrated a two-factor structure. The first factor comprised 14 items (1-14) and the second factor had 10 items (15-24), totaling 24 items. The factor loadings for the items ranged from .884 to .521 for the first factor and from -.795 to -.566 for the second factor. At this stage, it was observed that there was an adequate number of item factor loadings.

Table 2: Naming of NLPS Sub-Dimensions

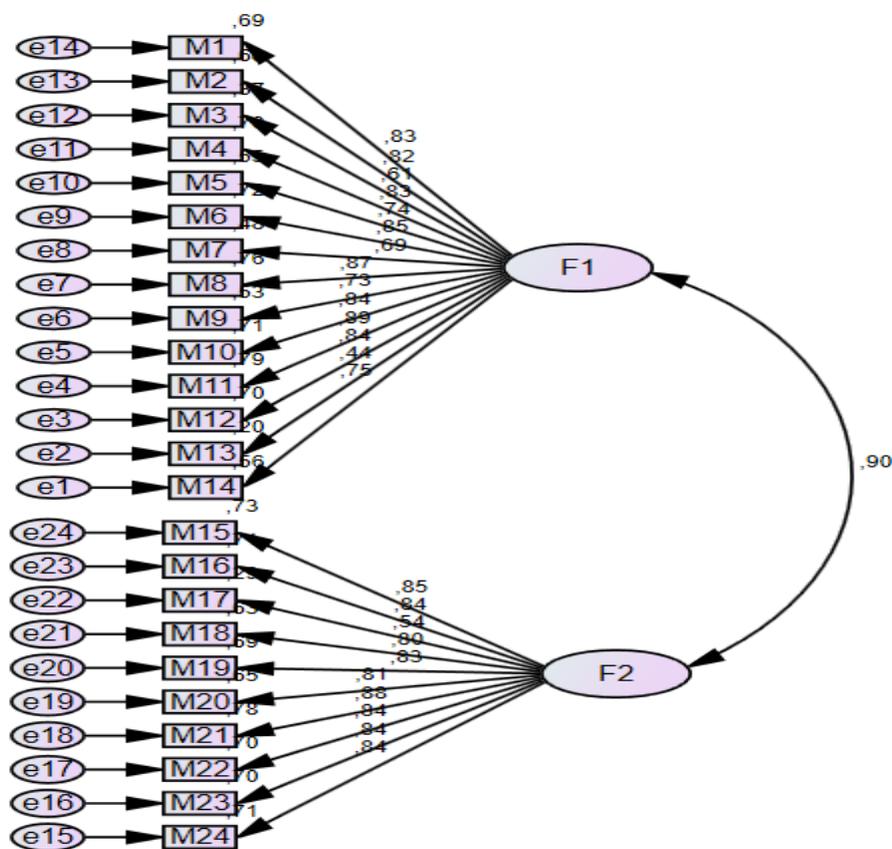
Factors	Items	Factor Loading	Variance
Manipulative and Coercive	I1	Makes unplanned and sudden changes in their actions.	.884
	I2	Acts hastily in decision-making.	.728
	I3	Avoids engaging in tasks where they might suffer harm.	.785
	I4	Attributes the negative outcomes of decisions to others.	.775
	I5	Pressures subordinates when solving problems.	.655
	I6	Views themselves as the best performer.	.826
	I7	Excessively depends on the support of others.	.703
	I8	Tends to criticize the mistakes of others.	.679
	I9	Enjoys drawing attention to themselves.	.671
	I10	Acts without thinking in the face of problems.	.664
	I11	Exhibits inconsistent reactions to similar situations.	.655
	I12	Can use everyone for their own benefit.	.735
	I13	Believes that no one is good enough.	.562
	I14	Makes us feel that our ideas are unimportant to them	.521
Excessively Emotional and Angry	I15	Experiences emotions (sadness, joy, anger) in an exaggerated manner.	.795
	I16	Faces anger issues when confronted with problems.	.792
	I17	Hears about the school principal experiencing health issues like headaches or stomachaches.	.789
	I18	Is excessively anxious.	.747
	I19	Is excessively pessimistic.	.743
	I20	Views the world as a hostile place.	.696
	I21	Has obsessive/compulsive thoughts.	.689
	I22	Tends to see the negative side of events.	.655
	I23	Harbors resentment towards the person they believe is the source of a problem.	.621
	I24	Personalizes problems that arise in the school	.566
Total			65.908

Table 2 indicates that the items were structured into two sub-dimensions, with the first dimension labeled as manipulative and coercive, and the second dimension as excessively emotional and angry. Furthermore, it was observed that the 24 items were grouped into two factors: the first factor explained 61.023% of the total variance, and the second factor explained 4.886%, resulting in a total variance explanation of 65.908%. In social science research, a total variance value between 40% and 60% is generally accepted (Sherer et al., 1998). As a result, in the initial stage, a 24-item, two-factor scale was obtained.

Findings on Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The structure provided by EFA is tested in CFA which typically relies on testing the existence of relationships between observed variables and latent variables (Meydan & Sesen, 2011). In the study, to confirm the 24-item, two-factor structure revealed by EFA, a first-order factor analysis was initially applied to the scale using the AMOS 23. It was found that the fit indices were in line with the expected values. Subsequently, a second-order CFA was conducted, and the findings are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Findings of the Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis



In the examination of the model fit indices, commonly used fit indices in scale development literature such as χ^2/df , GFI, NFI, NNFI, IFI, CFI, RMSEA, and RMR were employed. The results, based on the relevant fit indices, are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: CFA Fit Index Values

*Source	Fit Indices	Excellent Fit Index Values	Acceptable Fit Index Values	Findings
Sumer, 2000; Meydan ve Sesen, 2011	χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 3$	$3 < \chi^2/df \leq 5$	2,821
Sumer, 2000	*GFI	$\geq .95$	$\geq .90$.87
Meydan and Sesen, 2011	NFI	$\geq .95$	$\geq .90$.92
Meydan and Sesen, 2011	IFI	$\geq .95$.90 - .94	.95
Meydan and Sesen, 2011	TLI (NNFI)	$\geq .95$.90 - .94	.94
Sumer, 2000	CFI	$\geq .95$	$\geq .90$.95
Cokluk et al., 2014	RMR	$.08 \leq$	$.10 \leq$.04
Cokluk et al., 2014	RMSEA	$.05 \leq$	$.08 \leq$.06

As shown in Table 3, the model fit index results for the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale (NLPS) were as follows: $\chi^2/df = 2.821$, GFI = .87, NFI = .92, IFI = .92, NNFI = .94, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .06, and RMR = .04. Notably, the CFI and IFI values were excellent, while the χ^2/df , NFI, NNFI, and RMSEA fit indices were at acceptable levels. Additionally, the GFI and RMR fit indices were close to acceptable values. During the scale analysis, three modification processes were implemented for items I1-I2, I4-I5, and I18-I19. Based on these values, it was asserted that the scale exhibited acceptable fit indices for practical use.

Criterion Validity

To assess the criterion validity of the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale, a literature review was conducted, and its relationship with the Empowering Leadership Scale, which was adapted to Turkish by Konan and Celik (2018) from the scale developed by Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000), and the Burnout Scale, which was adapted to Turkish by Capri (2013) from the scale developed by Pines (2005), was examined using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale	Pearson r	Burnout Scale	Empowering Leadership Scale
		,449*	-,528*
	p	,000	,000
	n	421	421

* The correlation is significant at the .01 level.

The results revealed a significant correlation at the $p < .01$ level. There was a moderate and positive and significant relationship between neurotic leadership and burnout, while a moderate and negative relationship is observed between empowering leadership and neurotic leadership. Essentially, an increase or decrease in the perception of neurotic leadership corresponds to an increase or decrease in the level of burnout among employees. In addition, the findings suggest that an increase in the perception of neurotic leadership is linked to a decrease in the perception of empowering leadership, and conversely, a decrease in the perception of neurotic leadership is associated with an increase in the perception of empowering leadership. These analyses confirmed that the scale achieved the anticipated results and its criterion validity was ensured.

Reliability Study of the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to examine the reliability and internal consistency of the scale. For an instrument to be considered reliable, Cronbach's Alpha value should exceed .70 (Buyukozturk et al., 2016). It was found that the Cronbach's Alpha value was .951 for the first factor, .950 for the second factor, and .97 for the total scale. These values indicated that the scale had a highly reliable structure both at the factor level and overall.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this study was to develop a scale to measure the neurotic leadership behaviors of education administrators based on teacher perceptions. The Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale, consisting of 24 items and two factors, provided satisfactorily valid and reliable results and was found to be suitable for use. The factor loadings of the items in the first factor of the scale ranged between .89 and .52, while the factor loadings of the items in the second factor ranged from -.80 to -.57. It was found that the first factor of the scale explained 61.023% of the total variance, and the second factor explained 4.886%, totaling 65.908% of the total variance. Both the first and second-order confirmatory factor analyses were performed on the scale, and the results showed adequate consistency with acceptable fit indices. The results indicated that the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale was a valid and reliable measurement tool. In the literature, the neurotic personality structure was examined by researchers and widely accepted as one dimension of the five-factor personality inventory (Goldberg, 1993). Studies related to neuroticism mostly focused on understanding the personality dimension. It was found that neuroticism has a direct relationship with psychological distress (Ormel and Wohlfarth, 1991), and the idea of incorporating it into the psychosomatic model was supported by research showing strong positive correlations with anxiety, depression, and medically unexplained physical symptoms (Djurkovic et al., 2006). Further research revealed that neurotic individuals struggle to cope with workplace conflicts (Moberg, 2001), feel more exposed to bullying in the workplace (Deniz and Unsal, 2010), and female employees exhibit more neurotic personality traits than male employees (Altinoz et al., 2017; Weisberg et al., 2011). Neurotic leaders can contribute to the formation of dysfunctional organizational cultures. Dysfunctional institutions hinder employees' satisfaction needs and prevent them from achieving their goals, while organizations exposed to neurotic leaders are likely to experience stress stemming from neurotic leadership styles, which may ultimately result in the departure of highly productive employees (Motamedi, 2006). Given the multifaceted nature of neuroticism in leadership research, the present study adopts a perceptual approach by focusing on employees' evaluations of neurotic leadership behaviors. While this approach provides valuable insight into employees' lived experiences, it does not fully capture objective leadership practices or broader organizational and cultural dynamics. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted within the boundaries of the study's methodological and contextual limitations, as discussed in the limitations section.

Appendix

Turkish Version of the Neurotic Leadership Perception Scale

(Nevrotik Liderlik Algısı Ölçeğinin Türkçe Versiyonu)

	Nevrotik Liderlik Algısı Ölçeği	HİÇ	NADİRE N	ARA SIRA	SIK SIK	HER ZAMAN
1	Uygulamalarında plansız ani değişiklikler yapar.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Karar almada aceleci davranır.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Zarar göreceği bir işte yer almaz.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Alınan kararların olumsuz sonuçlarını başkalarına yükler.	1	2	3	4	5

5	Problemleri çözmeye astlarına karşı zorlayıcıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
6	En iyi çalışan olarak kendisini görür.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Başkalarının desteğine gereğinden fazla ihtiyaç duyar.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Başkalarının hatalarını eleştirme eğilimindedir.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Dikkat çekmeyi sever.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Problemler karşısında düşünmeden hareket eder.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Benzer durumlara birbirleriyle çelişen/tutarsız tepkiler verir.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Kendi çıkarı için herkesi kullanabilir.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Kimse yeterince iyi değildir düşüncesine sahiptir.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Fikirlerimizin onun için önemsiz olduğunu hissettiriyor.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Duygularını (üzüntü, sevinç, öfke..) çok abartılı yaşar.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Problemler karşısında öfke sorunu yaşar.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Okul müdürümün baş ağrısı ya da mide ağrısı gibi sağlık sorunları yaşadığını duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Gereğinden fazla kaygılıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Gereğinden fazla karamsardır.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Dünyayı düşmanca bir yer olarak görür.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Saplantılı / takıntılı düşüncelere sahiptir	1	2	3	4	5
22	Olaylara olumsuz tarafından bakar.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Bir sorunun kaynağı olduğunu düşündüğü kişiye karşı kin besler.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Okulda oluşan problemleri kişiselleştirir.	1	2	3	4	5

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Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no financial or non-financial interests that could be perceived as potential conflicts of interest.

Ethical Approval: Ethical approval was obtained from Fırat University and is included as a supplementary file.

Consent for publication It was implied by participants choosing to complete and submit their anonymous online questionnaire.

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