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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Turkish version of the Masculine Gender Role Stress Questionnaire: Dimensions of fears and their correlates in young adults

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Studying Gender Role Stress (GRS) is important to understanding how gender norms and related fears impact individuals' well-being, relationships, and societal dynamics, including gender equality. This study investigated the validity, reliability, and utility of the Masculine Gender Role Stress (MGRS) questionnaire among young adults in Turkiye to obtain a standardized instrument suitable for future research.

Method: Participants were recruited from students at three colleges in Istanbul through a convenient online sampling method. All participants completed the MGRS, Experiences of Shame, and Childhood Trauma Questionnaires. Due to gender-specific formulations in several items of the MGRS scale, participants identifying as female were excluded. The final sample comprised 110 male-identified participants and 26 individuals who identified as gender-queer or chose not to declare their gender.

Results: Confirmatory factor analyses statistically rejected the MGRS questionnaire's original five-factor structure as shown by Comparative Fit Index. However, an exploratory factor analysis of the current data yielded the most interpretable five-factor solution, representing fears of subordination, sexual inadequacy, performance failure, emotional expressiveness, and vulnerability. The MGRS questionnaire exhibited significant correlations between shame and childhood trauma scores. The revised version demonstrated excellent internal structure and test-retest consistency.

Conclusion: This preliminary study suggests that the Turkish version of the MGRS questionnaire is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing gender role stress in young adults. This tool is expected to be useful in clinical and community research studies on the correlates of gender role stress in Turkiye.

Keywords: Assessment, childhood trauma, gender role stress, masculinity, shame

INTRODUCTION

Gender roles are shaped by socially constructed norms that define the expected behaviors associated with an individual's biological sex within a particular society. When individuals feel unable to meet societal or personal standards related to these gender roles, it can lead to Gender Role Stress (GRS).

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Within the framework of societal expectations, GRS refers to a specific form of emotional distress arising from the perception of deviating from conventional gender role norms (1).

The Feminine Gender Role Stress (2) and the Masculine Gender Role Stress (MGRS) (3) scales were developed in the United States to measure the level of stress associated with gender role expectations. The MGRS scale focuses specifically on assessing distress stemming from situations where individuals fail to meet standards related to masculine gender roles, such as "not earning enough money" and "others commenting that you are too emotional." In their original research, Eisler and Skidmore identified five dimensions within the MGRS scale: physical inadequacy, emotional inexpressiveness, subordination to women, intellectual inferiority, and performance failure (3). Despite evolving perceptions of gender roles over time, influenced by cultural factors, the MGRS scale continues to be used in numerous studies globally, including those exploring the social and clinical implications of GRS (4, 5).

Understanding the impact of MGRS on males is crucial, as existing literature suggests a connection between gender-based violence and men's struggles to conform to societal expectations of masculinity and the challenges associated with adhering to rigid gender norms (6). Research involving individuals engaged in intimate partner violence, particularly perpetrators, reveals that some men resort to violence to reaffirm their perceived masculinity (7). Moreover, studies in college settings support the association between gender-based violence and MGRS (8). In situations where there is a perceived threat to one's sense of manhood, the boundaries regarding the acceptability of violence in intimate relationships can become increasingly blurred (9). Understanding societal norms regarding the positioning of men and women relative to each other is crucial for comprehending and addressing issues such as femicide (9). This knowledge is vital in guiding efforts to prevent and combat gender-based violence.

Turkiye ranks 133rd out of 156 countries in the Global Gender Inequality Gap, according to the World Economic Forum (10). Among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, Turkiye has the highest reported rates of gender-based violence experienced by women. (11). Alarmingly, data from non-governmental organizations suggest that approximately 3,035 women were victims of fatal violence from 2013 to 2021 in Turkiye (12). Given the well-documented link between MGRS and violence against women, investigating and addressing the prevalence of MGRS in Turkish society is critical. Such research efforts could potentially guide the development of interventions to reduce gender-based violence and promote gender equality.

MGRS is shaped by cultural, temporal, and evolving societal norms, making the assessment of its cross-cultural validity crucial before using these scales for research and clinical purposes. Several studies have investigated the cross-cultural validity of the MGRS scale in different countries, including China, the Netherlands, and Poland (13–15). Tang and Lau's study (13) in China revealed that the original five-factor model of the MGRS scale needed to be a better fit for the Chinese sample. They developed a GRS scale with a three-factor solution that was more appropriate for their cultural context (13–15). In contrast, research by Arrindell in the Netherlands and Kazmierczak in Poland supports the five-factor structure of GRS scales, confirming its suitability for their respective cultural contexts (14, 15). Additionally, these cross-cultural studies have identified interesting associations. Arrindell, for instance, noted a correlation between GRS and daily hassles, Tang and Lau discovered a link with psychological distress, and Kazmierczak found connections with personality disorders (13–15). These findings highlight the importance of accounting for cultural variations when examining gender role stress and its effects on psychological health and well-being.

Although the MGRS scale has not been adapted to Turkish, research on MGRS has been conducted using alternative measures, such as the "Masculine Gender Stress Scale" developed by Bayar et al. (16). This tool has been used in various studies that indicate experiencing masculine gender stress (MGS) can deter individuals from seeking psychological help (17). Moreover, there is evidence that childhood trauma can contribute to an increase in MGRS (18). Turkoglu's (19) findings further support the connection between GRS, particularly feelings of subordination to women, and the heightened risk of gender-based violence within Turkish culture. Despite significant efforts to develop instruments for assessing GRS in the Turkish context, validating of the MGRS scale is regarded as a crucial next step, as this instrument has already been validated in many other cultures.

MGRS has been associated with various mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and childhood psychological trauma (18, 20).

Studies have revealed a positive correlation between childhood trauma and a greater tendency to adhere to traditional gender roles, alongside a negative association with more egalitarian gender role perspectives (18, 21). Individuals with a history of childhood trauma tend to perceive gender roles through a traditional lens and may exhibit an increased inclination toward violent behavior (22). One possible explanation for this correlation is that elevated levels of MGRS can impede emotional processing and deter individuals from seeking treatment (23). A comprehensive review (20) examining contributors to Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) found both GRS (including MGRS) and adherence to masculine ideals to be positively associated with the severity of PTSD symptoms. However, recent studies have yielded inconclusive results regarding the relationship between masculinity and PTSD (20).

Interestingly, a specific component of MGRS, the emotional inexpressiveness subscale, has been uniquely linked to the severity of PTSD symptoms in male veterans, suggesting that emotional processing may contribute to the development of PTSD (24). Furthermore, recent research has highlighted the connection between sexism, which is related to MGRS, and adverse mental health outcomes, including depression and anxiety (25). These findings underscore the importance of considering the psychological impact of GRS and traditional masculinity ideals in understanding mental health outcomes and may provide insights for interventions and support strategies.

Shame is a potent emotion with moral dimensions that plays a pivotal role in regulating appropriate social behavior (26). Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong link between shame and adherence to traditional gender roles (27–29). For instance, Efthim et al. (27) investigated the complex relationship between MGRS and self-awareness, particularly focusing on shame. Their research found a significant correlation between shame-proneness and MGRS. In a separate study, Reilly et al. (29) examined the role of shame in adhering to masculine norms and its impact on self-compassion. They discovered that shame correlates with adherence to masculine norms and predicts self-compassion, which involves a positive and forgiving attitude toward oneself (29). Importantly, the maladaptive regulation of shame is linked to increased aggression, heightened sensitivity to rejection, and challenges in self-esteem (30). Understanding the complex relationship between shame and MGRS can thus provide valuable insights into the connections among MGRS, aggression, and violence.

The primary goal of this study is to examine the psychometric properties of the MGRS scale within a group of Turkish college students. This analysis evaluates the consistency and variations in factor structures observed across two cultures and over different periods. This research aims to assess the validity and reliability of the MGRS scale in the specific cultural context of Turkiye. Given the relevance of shame and traumatic antecedents to GRS, their assessments were included in this study to support the external validity of the instrument.

METHODS

Participants

The inclusion criteria for selecting participants were as follows: (i) Being older than 18; (ii) Not having a significant psychiatric condition, including depression, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. The exclusion criteria included: (i) Being identified as female; (ii) Having a significant psychiatric condition. In total, 136 college students participated in the study. Of these, 110 students identified as male, and 26 as gender-queer or preferred not to declare. The mean age of the participants was 22.9 years (standard deviation, SD=3.34). Among the group, 123 students (91.8%) belonged to the middle or upper-middle socioeconomic class on a 5-level scale.

Instruments

Masculine Gender Role Stress Questionnaire (MGRS)

This 40-item self-report instrument assesses masculine fears, and each item is scored on a scale from 0 to 7. The questionnaire was originally developed by Eisler and Skidmore (3) and was meticulously translated into Turkish by the authors of this study. Two independent authors translated the English version of the scale into Turkish, after which the primary investigator reached a consensus. A native English speaker then back-translated the scale into English to ensure that the intended meaning was accurately captured in the Turkish translation of the MGRS questionnaire. A pilot study was then conducted on 30 college students to evaluate the appropriateness of the translation of the initial Turkish version. Items were revised based on feedback until all co-authors agreed upon a finalized version, ensuring the reliability and validity of the instrument.

Table 1: Fit indices of MGRS scale

SCALE	χ2	df	χ2/df	CFI	TLI	IFI	RMSEA	AIC
	1596.89	730	2.19	0.52	0.46	0.54	0.094	1856.89

AIC: Akaike Information Criterion; CFI: Comparative Fit Index; IFI: Incremental Fit Index; MGRS: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale; RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index.

Experiences of Shame Scale (ESS)

This is a 25-item self-report instrument that explores various aspects of shame: characterological, bodily, and behavioral (31). Each item is scored from 1 to 4, with a total possible score ranging from 20 to 100. The sum of the three subscales represents the total shame score. Separate evaluations of the data from this study revealed that the Turkish version of the ESS demonstrates high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha=0.97) and significant correlations between the item-deleted total scores and individual items (r=0.47-0.72).

Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ)

The CTQ is a 28-item self-report instrument developed by Bernstein et al. (32) that assesses childhood emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as physical and emotional neglect. It also includes a minimization (denial) scale for trauma. The possible scores for each type of childhood trauma range from 5 to 25, with the combined scores from each trauma type ranging from 25 to 125. A validity and reliability study conducted with Turkish patients demonstrated good results (33).

Procedure

Participants were recruited via electronic invitations sent through social media platforms such as Facebook, Gmail, and WhatsApp to students at three colleges in Istanbul. The invitation included a brief introductory text explaining the study's rationale. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical approval (number: 095.IR82.035) was obtained from an urban university on April 16, 2015. Written informed consent was secured from all participants during the electronic session. Due to the study's design, the total number of contacted students cannot be identified, and therefore, the actual rejection rate is unknown. The participants were asked to indicate their gender to prevent bias in reporting on GRS. Options included gender-queer, unclear about gender, or preferring not to identify. Participants who identified as female were asked to skip the MGRS portion of the study.

Statistical Analyses

Data analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 28.00 and SPSS AMOS 28.00. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to verify the internal consistency among the items for reliability analyses (34). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and the significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were employed to determine the suitability of the data for factor analysis (35, 36). Confirmatory factor analyses using the maximum likelihood estimation method were conducted with SPSS AMOS 28.00 to investigate whether the original factor structure derived from the North American sample was similar to that in the Turkish sample (37). Since the items are assumed to be correlated, principal component analysis with Promax rotation was used to explore the factor structure in the Turkish population (38).

RESULTS

Initial Analyses of Reliability

The initial reliability analyses of the study were conducted using the original version of the questionnaire, which covers all items. The Cronbach alpha scores were 0.88 for the MGRS scale, suggesting good internal consistency. Test-retest inquiries were conducted electronically with 24 male college students for two weeks. These 24 participants were separate from those in the validity study; their contact information was collected to ensure the same individuals could be reached two weeks later. The Spearman correlation coefficients for all items ranged from 0.41 to 0.90 (for 33 of 40 items, $p<0.05$) for masculine fear items. All subscales of the original MGRS were positively intercorrelated.

Factor Analysis of the MGRS

The sample was suitable for factor analysis, as demonstrated by the significant result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2=2242.653$, df=780, $p<0.001$) and a high Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value (0.710).

The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model hypothesized a priori that the original five-factor structure could explain the MGRS in the current Turkish sample. The diagram of the CFA is displayed

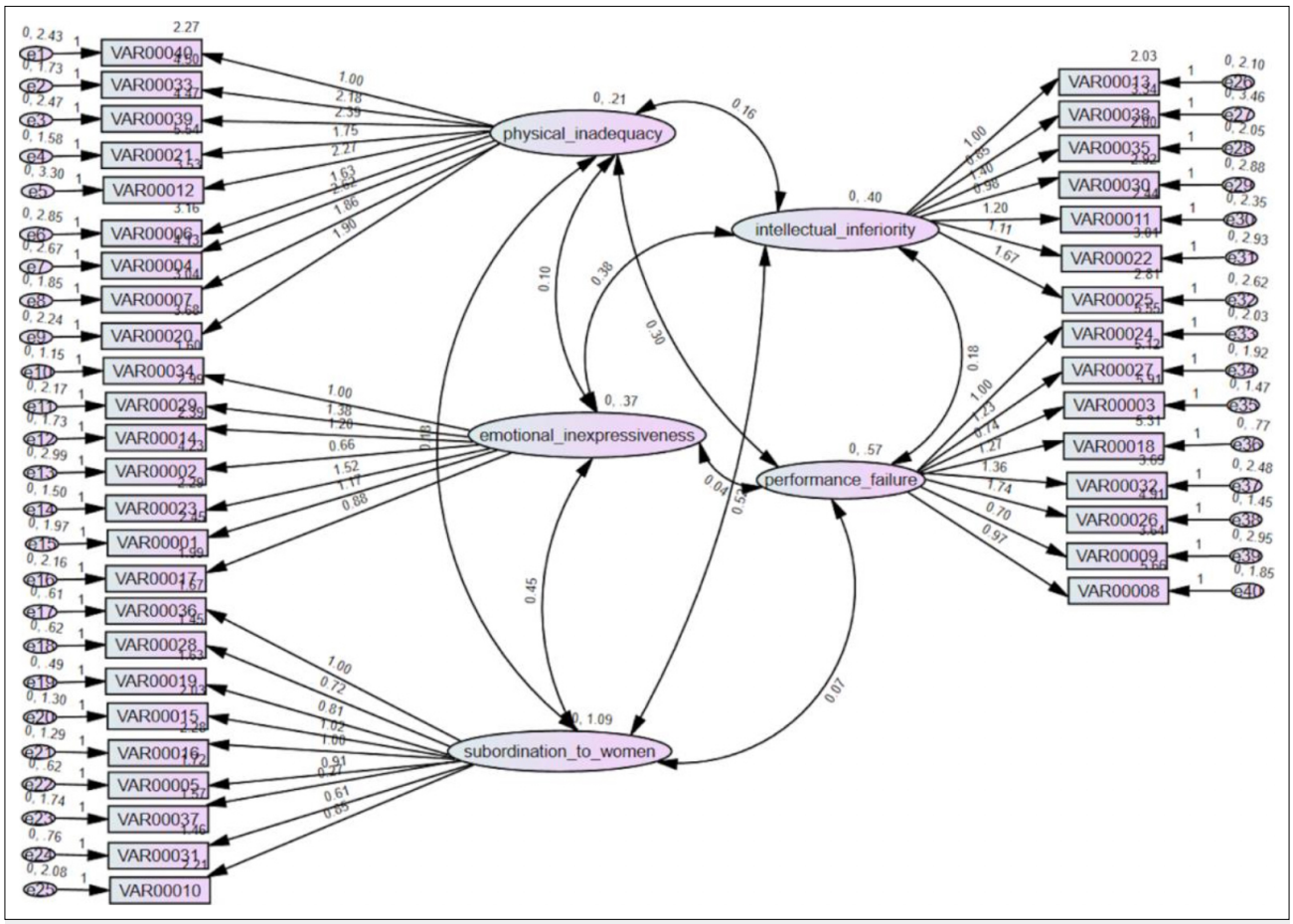

Figure 1. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) diagram.

in Supplementary Figure 1. The results of a CFA conducted with 50 iterations are displayed in Table 1. The CFA results indicated that the MGRS scales did not fit the present sample (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)=0.094, Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.52, χ^2=1596.89). Consequently, the scales could not be used with the original model.

A Principal Component Analysis with Promax rotation was performed on 40 MGRS items involving 136 participants. This analysis yielded a 13-factor solution, each with an eigenvalue above 1.0. A five-factor solution was selected to assess the compatibility between the Turkish version of the questionnaire and the original factor structure developed in North America (2, 3). These five factors accounted for 47.8% of the total variance. Following the same procedure the original questionnaire's authors used, nine items with a coefficient of 0.35 or higher on more than one factor or that exhibited a low factor coefficient (less than 0.35) were removed. This refinement resulted in a final Turkish version of the questionnaire comprising 31 items. The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 2.

Components of Masculine Fears

The first three factors encompassed men's fears of subordination, sexual inadequacy, and performance failure, contributing to 20.1%, 12.3%, and 5.7% of the total variance, respectively. They converged around the archetype of maintaining a firm status as a "strong man" (potency), demonstrating capability in performing and competing in social life, including sexual matters. The Fear of Subordination comprised items that reflected the anxiety of being outperformed by both women and men, an expansion of the original factor of Fear of Subordination to Women. The Fear of Sexual Inadequacy was more narrowly defined than the broader Fear of Physical Inadequacy, with certain items concerning sexuality and gender perception shifted from the original factor, Fear of Performance Failure, to a more specified domain. The third factor, Fear of Performance Failure, aligned closely with the original dimension, covering work, income, and intellectual capacity.

The remaining two factors, Fear of Being Vulnerable and Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive, accounted for 5.2% and 4.6% of the total variance,

Table 2: Principal component analysis pattern matrix and prevalence of items in the MGRS questionnaire

	Factor load	Mean	SD	≥4 (%)	Original factor
Factor 1: Fear of subordination					
Letting a woman take control of the situation.	0.73	1.64	1.10	7.1	Subordination to women
Having a female boss.	0.70	1.45	1.09	5.4	Subordination to women
Being outperformed by a woman in a game.	0.64	1.72	1.24	5.3	Subordination to women
Being with a woman who is more successful than you.	0.67	2.28	1.55	11.6	Subordination to women
Losing in a sports competition.	0.67	3.16	1.86	26.2	Physical inadequacy
Being with a woman who is much taller than you.	0.71	2.21	1.70	15.8	Subordination to women
Being married to someone who makes more money than you.	0.60	2.04	1.57	9.7	Subordination to women
Admitting to your friends that you do housework.	0.51	1.47	1.09	8.0	Subordination to women
Having a man put his arm around your shoulder.	0.47	2.00	1.57	8.9	Emotional inexpressiveness
Factor 2: Fear of sexual inadequacy					
Being unable to become sexually aroused when you want.	0.75	4.90	1.79	60.1	Performance failure
Being unable to perform sexually.	0.68	5.30	1.31	70.9	Performance failure
Being too tired for sex when your lover initiates it.	0.70	3.68	1.89	39.8	Performance failure
Being perceived as having feminine traits.	0.69	4.13	2.04	44.7	Physical inadequacy
Having your lover say that they are not satisfied.	0.64	5.53	1.50	79.7	Physical inadequacy
Not being able to find a sexual partner.	0.49	4.47	1.93	51.8	Physical inadequacy
Factor 3: Fear of performance failure					
Getting fired from your job.	0.79	5.66	1.55	84.2	Performance failure
Working with people who seem more ambitious than you.	0.56	3.35	1.94	31.3	Intellectual inferiority
Not making enough money.	0.67	5.12	1.68	69.9	Performance failure
Being unemployed.	0.64	5.55	1.62	78.7	Performance failure
Finding you lack the occupational skills to succeed.	0.59	5.91	1.34	87.7	Performance failure
Working with people who are brighter than yourself.	0.46	3.02	1.86	23.8	Intellectual inferiority
Factor 4: Fear of being vulnerable					
Having people say that you are indecisive.	0.71	2.93	1.82	16.9	Intellectual inferiority
Knowing you cannot hold your liquor as well as others.	0.63	2.27	1.63	13.4	Physical inadequacy
Telling someone that you feel hurt by what they said.	0.49	3.00	1.70	25.7	Emotional inexpressiveness
Having others say that you are too emotional.	0.44	2.44	1.72	14.1	Intellectual inferiority
Telling your spouse that you love them.	0.38	1.60	1.24	5.4	Emotional inexpressiveness
Being compared unfavorably to other men.	0.37	3.67	1.75	34.5	Physical inadequacy
Factor 5: Fear of being emotionally expressive					
Talking with a woman who is crying.	0.64	2.30	1.54	11.5	Emotional inexpressiveness
Staying home during the day with a sick child.	0.63	2.81	1.94	23.8	Intellectual inferiority
Comforting a male friend who is upset.	0.58	2.46	1.58	12.3	Emotional inexpressiveness
Having to ask for directions when you are lost.	0.55	2.04	1.59	11.3	Intellectual inferiority

≥5 indicates participants who rated the stressfulness of the item as 5 or higher on a 1–7 Likert scale, where 1=not at all stressful and 7=extremely stressful. MGRS: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale.

Table 3: Coefficient alpha, means, and correlation results of the revised MGRS

Factors	1	2	3	4	5
Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS)					
1. Fear of subordination	–				
2. Fear of sexual Inadequacy	0.40	–			
3. Fear of performance failure	0.37	0.39	–		
4. Fear of being vvulnerable	0.43	0.48	0.29	–	
5. Fear of being emotionally expressive	0.20	0.19	0.38	0.29	–
Mean scores	17.73	28.77	28.71	15.47	9.85
Standard deviation	7.81	7.22	6.13	5.19	4.72
Coefficient alpha	0.801	0.80	0.82	0.59	0.55

MGRS: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale.

Table 4: Correlations of experience of shame and MGRS

	Fear of sexual inadequacy	Fear of being vulnerable	Fear of subordination	Fear of Being emotionally expressive	Fear of performance failure	Total
Characterological	**0.26***	**0.34****	0.12	0.16	**0.31***	**0.35****
Behavioral	**0.33****	**0.33****	**0.23***	**0.20***	**0.44****	**0.45****
Bodily	**0.20***	**0.20***	0.08	0.13	**0.29***	**0.25***
Self-directed	**0.32****	**0.36****	**0.22***	**0.21***	**0.39****	**0.43****
Other-directed	**0.30****	**0.34****	0.14	0.17	**0.39****	**0.39****
Total	**0.32****	**0.36****	0.17	0.19	**0.40****	**0.42****

Pearson correlation coefficients; *: $p<0.05$; **: $p<0.01$; MGRS: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale.

respectively. In the original factor structure, tender emotional situations were grouped under Fear of Emotional Inexpressiveness. In this study, several items from the Fear of Emotional Inexpressiveness, Fear of Physical Inadequacy, and Fear of Intellectual Inferiority were integrated into these new dimensions (Fear of Being Vulnerable and Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive), highlighting aspects of men's fragility.

Table 3 displays the revised MGRS scale's intercorrelation matrix, internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha values), means, and standard deviations.

Shame and Childhood Trauma as Correlates of MGRS

Significant positive correlations (Pearson) were observed between physical neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse, and the dimensions of fragility (Fears of Being Vulnerable and Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive), as well as Fear of Subordination. Additionally, Fear of Subordination was also correlated with sexual abuse as the only GRS factor associated with this type of childhood trauma. Conversely, Fear of Sexual Inadequacy and Fear of Performance Failure showed negative correlations with childhood physical abuse and physical neglect (Table 4). Childhood emotional neglect did not predict any of the MGRS components. Additionally, the denial (minimization) of childhood trauma correlated with a reduced Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive.

Positive correlations (Pearson) were found between all types of shame experiences and the Fears of Sexual Inadequacy, Performance Failure, and Being Vulnerable (Table 5). Fear of Subordination and Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive were associated with both behavioral and self-directed shame.

Reliability Analyses of the Revised Turkish Version

Following the removal of some items based on the initial test-retest and factor analysis, a re-analysis of the test-retest data for the final Turkish versions of the questionnaires yielded better scores than the original versions. For these final Turkish versions of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha scores were 0.85 for the MGRS scales. The Spearman correlation coefficients for all items ranged between 0.45 and 0.89, with 25 of the 31 items showing significant results ($p<0.05$) for masculine fear items.

Table 5: Correlations of CTQ and components of MGRS

Childhood trauma types (CTQ)	Fear of sexual inadequacy	Fear of being vulnerable	Fear of subordination	Fear of Being emotionally expressive	Fear of performance failure	Total
Sexual abuse	-0.12	0.16	**0.22***	0.17	-0.12	0.09
Physical neglect	**-0.22***	**0.21***	**0.22***	**0.25***	**-0.28***	0.03
Physical abuse	**-0.22***	**0.34****	**0.39****	**0.29***	**-0.20***	0.18
Emotional abuse	-0.04	**0.41****	**0.22***	**0.22***	-0.02	**0.23***
Emotional neglect	-0.16	0.15	-0.02	0.17	-0.19	-0.05
Total trauma	-0.20*	**0.34****	**0.23***	**0.30***	**-0.22***	0.11
Minimization	0.02	-0.16	-0.05	**-0.30***	0.10	-0.08

Pearson correlation coefficients, *: p<0.05; **: p<0.001; CTQ: Childhood Trauma Questionnaire; MGRS: Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study supported the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the MGRS in Turkiye. Five dimensions have been derived through factor analysis which represented main components of MGRS among young adults: Fears of subordination, sexual inadequacy, performance failure, being vulnerable and emotionally expressive. These components seem to represent concerns about power, which is perceived as part of masculine gender role. Developmental traumatization and experience of shame are in relationship with these fears, while further research is needed to illuminate the nature of this association.

While a translated version of the MGRS has been used in previous research, including studies on men's attitudes toward cosmetic surgery and an unpublished dissertation exploring the relationship between self-compassion, MGRS, and intimate partner violence, it is important to note that, to our knowledge, our study represents the first formal validity study of the Turkish version of the MGRS scale (39, 40). This research aims to comprehensively evaluate the scale's validity within the Turkish context, contributing valuable insights to the field of GRS assessment in this specific cultural setting.

The structures and content of the factors representing fears associated with MGRS in contemporary Turkiye exhibit similarities and differences compared to those identified in the original study (3). These variations can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, global shifts in the perception of gender roles over the years between the administration periods of these studies may have played a significant role. Secondly, cultural differences between countries also contribute to these disparities. However, despite these discrepancies, striking similarities suggest that some aspects of GRS are relatively universal and enduring over a more extended period. This observation paves the way for discussions about the elements of MGRS that may transcend cultural and temporal boundaries, thereby enriching our broader understanding of this phenomenon.

In adapting the original questionnaire to its Turkish version, it was necessary to remove certain items due to their psychometric weaknesses. This step was taken to ensure the internal consistency of the instrument. Although no new items were introduced, the responses from the Turkish population led to the emergence of new dimensions and modified versions of the original ones. Despite its abbreviated and structurally re-designed format, the resulting Turkish version of the questionnaire demonstrates satisfactory internal consistency and strong correlations between its factors. This finding suggests that the adapted questionnaire could serve as an effective tool for future studies focused on Gender Role Stress (GRS) in Turkiye. Its ability to capture relevant dimensions of GRS within the Turkish cultural context makes it a valuable resource for further research in this area.

The study also revealed that the Fear of Performance Failure remains a significant stress factor for men, even in a changing landscape where gender role perceptions are evolving toward greater equality. This finding is significant as it indicates that anxieties related to performance expectations persist despite societal progress. Additionally, there were notable changes in the organization of the dimensions within the questionnaire. Specifically, items previously associated with Fears of Emotional Inexpressiveness and Intellectual Inferiority have been reorganized into two new factors: Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive and Fear of Being Vulnerable. This reconfiguration appears more specific than the original factors, as it reflects a more homogenous interpersonal concern: the fear of potential harm in conflictual situations resulting from full emotional engagement.

Moreover, the study indicated that the factors previously categorized as Fears of Intellectual Inferiority and Physical Inadequacy are no longer distinct and independent. Instead, some items from the Intellectual Inferiority factor have been integrated into the new factors of Fear of Being Vulnerable and Fear of Being Emotionally Expressive. These changes in factor organization highlight the evolving nature of GRS and how it manifests in contemporary society.

The exploratory factor analysis conducted in this study revealed that the five identified factors can be grouped into two overarching domains: power conflict and the experience of fragility. Within the power conflict domain, factors such as Fears of Subordination, Sexual Inadequacy, and Performance Failure encompass items that depict scenarios where a man's sense of power and control is compromised. These scenarios may involve interactions with a boss, a partner, a competitor, or during sexual encounters. The common thread among these fears is the perceived threat to a man's authority and dominance in various life aspects.

Conversely, the domain of the experience of fragility is characterized by factors such as Fears of Being Vulnerable and Being Emotionally Expressive. This domain includes items that portray situations where a man feels vulnerable, emotional, and compassionate, traits often viewed as signs of male fragility in society. Both domains of masculine fears seem to center on maintaining a self-perception as a "strong" or "potent" man, capable of performing well and competing effectively in society. Men who struggle to meet societal norms may experience a diminished sense of power, difficulty in managing their emotions, and a perceived threat to their self-esteem. These factors may, in turn, increase the risk of engaging in violent behaviors, a pattern that is consistent with previous research findings (41).

In the current study, the subscales of the MGRS scale demonstrated satisfactory external validation. Specifically, the Fears of Being Subordinated, Vulnerable, and Emotionally Expressive were found to correlate with reports of physical neglect, physical abuse, and emotional abuse during childhood. These findings align with existing research that indicates childhood abuse can lead to the dysregulation of emotional processing. Often, children who have experienced maltreatment exhibit a reduced capacity to express their own emotions and understand the emotions of others. They may also tend to react with a quick temper and disengage from emotionally charged situations (42). Childhood sexual abuse was only associated with the Fear of Subordination, among the five components of fears. A destructive effect of childhood abuse is the harm it does to the survivor's self-esteem (43). Almost all cases of childhood sexual abuse stem from the experience of having one's will and boundaries overridden by a more powerful person, which causes hypersensitivity to rejection and perceived insults and could explain the correlation between sexual abuse and fear of subordination (43). Whether childhood sexual abuse of men is specifically associated with violence against women (through Fear of Subordination) remains uncertain, a situation currently escalating in Turkiye.

Consequently, individuals who have endured childhood abuse are more likely to harbor fears about being emotionally expressive and vulnerable, as observed in this study. These factors include expressing emotions, giving and receiving affection, and risking the appearance of fragility. The findings of this study further support the research conducted by Jewkes and Morrell (44), which demonstrated that childhood trauma can predict the adoption of violent masculinity traits.

The observed negative correlations between Fears of Sexual Inadequacy and Performance Failure and experiences of childhood physical neglect and abuse may initially seem paradoxical. However, these findings can be seen as reflective of the complex struggle that survivors of childhood abuse face. Often caught in a contradictory situation, survivors grapple with feelings of worthlessness and a fractured inner sense of masculinity while societal expectations compel them to display a tough, macho exterior. They may endeavor to uphold an outward semblance of "masculinity," marked by traits like calmness, confidence, and emotional restraint, even as they struggle with profound feelings of inadequacy and powerlessness. This internal conflict aligns with observations made by Lisak, who notes that many men who have experienced childhood abuse neither fully accept nor completely reject traditional masculine norms. Instead, they fluctuate between these two extremes (43). Lisak emphasizes the importance of addressing gender role socialization in psychotherapy for male survivors of childhood abuse, acknowledging their continuous struggle to reconcile their experiences with societal gender expectations (43). The psychological repercussions of abuse, characterized by intense feelings of vulnerability, helplessness, dread, and powerlessness, severely challenge the culturally defined ideals of masculinity that abused males internalize (43).

In this study, the total score of the MGRS was positively correlated with all types of shame experiences. The link between MGRS scores and experiences of shame is significant and may have implications for understanding certain behaviors. Shame is known to trigger intense anger and aggressive behaviors, likely due to maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (30). The aggression triggered by feelings of shame could act as a mediator in the relationship between MGRS scores and violent tendencies. When individuals experience shame, it often stems from the fear and stress of one's self-image being jeopardized (45). Feeling that meeting the expectations of traditional MGRS can contribute to this experience of shame (27). Non-conformity to socially prescribed gendered behaviors can put individuals at risk of facing negative judgments from others and themselves, leading to the experience of shame.

The present study has several limitations that need to be considered. Firstly, it exclusively involved college students, which restricts the extent to which the findings can be generalized to young adults in the broader population. Additionally, excluding females from the MGRS assessment prevented a comparison of gender-related experiences. This comparison could shed light on the degree to which each subscale of the MGRS is gender-specific. Unfortunately, incorporating both genders would have necessitated a more comprehensive adaptation of the questionnaire due to certain items needing to be more conducive to gender-neutral administration.

Moreover, the study primarily focused on associations using binary gender concepts, and there is potential for future research to include a larger nonbinary sample for a more inclusive exploration of these relationships. The decision not to introduce additional questionnaire items was made to facilitate comparability with the original version used in a different cultural context and time. However, future studies may consider expanding the questionnaire to gain a more comprehensive understanding of GRS in the Turkish context. Lastly, the study's limited sample size could be strengthened by including a larger and more diverse participant cohort, which would enhance the validity and applicability of the findings.

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully established the reliability and validity of the Turkish version of the MGRS scale. It has also provided preliminary insights into the associations between MGRS scores and factors such as childhood psychological trauma and experiences of shame. Future research is anticipated to explore additional influences on MGRS, including marital conflicts, dysfunctional family dynamics, inadequate child-rearing practices, and challenges related to sexuality and intimacy. Additionally, this research may extend to organizational psychology and leadership issues. In a country grappling with the significant issue of gender-based violence, the validated version of the MGRS scale serves as a crucial foundation for further research. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the development of more effective psychiatric and psychological interventions. As understanding of this critical societal concern deepens, it may also facilitate the implementation of preventive strategies on a nationwide scale.

Contribution Categories		Author Initials
Category 1	Concept/Design	C.M.K., A.S.K., V.S.
	Data acquisition	C.M.K., A.S.K., V.S.
	Data analysis/Interpretation	A.S.K., C.N.B.
Category 2	Drafting manuscript	C.N.B., C.M.K., A.S.K.
	Critical revision of manuscript	V.S.
Category 3	Final approval and accountability	C.N.B., C.M.K., A.S.K., V.S.
Other	Technical or material support	V.S.
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Supplementary Digital Appendix: https://dusunenadamdergisi.org/storage/upload/files/1716473506-appendix-en.pdf

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