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Psychometric Evaluation and Validation of the Persian Version of the Screen for Adult Anxiety Related Disorders (SCAARED) in a Sample of Iranian Mothers

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Hussein OMAR Alkhozahe Professor, Department of Sociology, Al-Balqa' Applied University, Salt, Jordan huss1960@bau.edu.com	**Reviewer 1:** Nadereh Saadati Department of Couple and Family therapy, Alliant International University, California, United States of America. mdaneshpour@alliant.edu **Reviewer 2:** Masoud Asadi Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, Arak University, Arak, Iran. Email: m-asadi@araku.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Introduction paragraph beginning “The assessment of anxiety is particularly important among parents…,” the rationale for focusing specifically on mothers requires further development. The discussion of parental anxiety is scientifically relevant, but the manuscript moves rapidly from “parents” to “mothers” without sufficiently explaining why only mothers were sampled. The authors should clarify whether this choice was theoretically motivated by evidence concerning maternal anxiety, determined by feasibility or access through schools, or related to the broader parent–child research framework from which these data were derived. This clarification is particularly important because the findings should not subsequently be generalized to parental anxiety as a whole when fathers were not represented.

In the paragraph discussing “Several transdiagnostic psychological processes…,” the inclusion of intolerance of uncertainty, cognitive avoidance, meta-worry, and emotion regulation is conceptually useful because these constructs later appear in the validity analyses. However, their role in the psychometric validation framework should be stated more explicitly. The authors should identify a priori hypotheses regarding the direction and approximate magnitude of expected associations between

SCAARED scores and these constructs. At present, these variables appear to be introduced conceptually but not framed as prespecified external validity criteria. A stronger manuscript would explicitly state that positive relationships with intolerance of uncertainty, cognitive avoidance, meta-worry, and maladaptive emotion regulation were expected as evidence of convergent or concurrent validity.

In the paragraph describing translation and cultural adaptation, the statement that "The original English version was initially translated into Persian, after which an independent back-translation was performed" does not provide sufficient methodological detail for reproducibility. The authors should report the number and qualifications of translators, whether forward translation was conducted independently by more than one bilingual translator, how discrepancies were reconciled, whether the back-translator was blinded to the original questionnaire, and whether an expert committee reviewed semantic, idiomatic, experiential, and conceptual equivalence. If a pilot or cognitive debriefing phase was undertaken with members of the target population, it should be described; if it was not undertaken, this should be acknowledged as a limitation of the adaptation process.

The Data Analysis paragraph requires substantially more detail regarding factor-analytic prerequisites and decision rules. The manuscript states that exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted, but does not report the extraction method, Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin statistic, Bartlett's test of sphericity, factor-retention criteria, scree plot interpretation, parallel analysis, minimum factor loading criterion, or cross-loading threshold. These details are necessary to evaluate the rigor of the EFA. Reliance solely on eigenvalues greater than 1 or percentage of explained variance may overextract factors, so the authors should report the exact retention strategy and, preferably, include parallel analysis if the raw data remain available.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the final Introduction paragraph stating, "Accordingly, the aim of the present study was to evaluate the psychometric properties, factor structure, reliability, and validity…," the study objective remains too general given the breadth of the analyses subsequently reported. The aim should specify the principal psychometric domains examined, including content validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor structure, internal consistency, composite reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and criterion-related associations. In addition, the authors should distinguish clearly between "validation" and "psychometric evaluation," because the study assesses multiple sources of validity evidence rather than establishing validity as a single global property of the instrument.

In the Methods paragraph beginning "The present study employed a descriptive-correlational design with a psychometric approach…," the sampling description requires clarification concerning the actual unit of analysis and population definition. The manuscript states that the statistical population consisted of "mothers of lower-secondary school students and their children," whereas the SCAARED was administered to mothers and the principal psychometric analyses concern maternal anxiety. The authors should specify whether children were formal study participants, whether they independently completed measures, and whether dyadic data were collected. If the primary psychometric population was mothers, the population and sampling frame should be described accordingly to prevent ambiguity about whether the sample size of 296 refers to mothers, mother–child dyads, or all individuals combined.

In the same Methods paragraph, the inclusion criterion specifying "having at least one child aged 8 to 16 years" appears inconsistent with the Results, where the reported child age range is 9–17 years. Likewise, the eligibility criterion gives a maternal age range of 25–60 years, whereas Table 2 reports an observed maternal age range of 26–62 years. These discrepancies are methodologically important and must be resolved. If participants aged above the prespecified maximum were retained, the authors should explain why and indicate whether this represented a protocol deviation. Alternatively, if the inclusion criteria or descriptive ranges were reported incorrectly, the relevant sections and tables should be corrected to ensure full internal consistency.

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The Methods section reports that “300 mothers… were randomly invited to participate” and that four questionnaires were excluded, resulting in 296 analyzable cases. However, no information is provided regarding the number approached, number consenting, number refusing participation, or whether all 300 selected mothers returned questionnaires. The authors should provide a transparent participant flow, even in narrative form, including the response rate and reasons for exclusion. For psychometric studies, missing-data management is also important; therefore, the manuscript should specify what qualified a questionnaire as “substantially incomplete or invalid,” how sporadic missing item responses were handled, and whether any imputation procedure was used.

In the Data Collection Tool paragraph describing the SCAARED as “a 44-item self-report screening instrument,” the scoring and subscale composition should be reported more precisely. The authors should specify which item numbers correspond to each of the four factors/subscales and whether the Persian version retained the same scoring structure as the original SCAARED. The statement that “a total score of 26 or higher has been proposed as indicative of a probable anxiety disorder” should also be qualified by identifying the population in which that cutoff was established and clarifying whether its diagnostic performance has been validated in Iranian community samples. A cutoff derived from another population should not automatically be treated as diagnostically equivalent in Iranian mothers.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.
Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.

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