

PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF SHORT MODIFIED URDU VERSION OF DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMA SCALE FOR DIVORCED INDIVIDUAL

Noshaba Razaq^{*1} Najia Zulfiqar², Zunaira Naveed⁴ Mushtaq A Sajid⁴,
Javed Habib Ur Rehman⁵, Adnan Hanif⁶

^{*1,5,6}visiting faculty University of Kotli AJK; ²Assistant professor University of Haripur;

³Assistant Professor Wah Medical College (NUMS) University;

⁴Dean and Director Campus (Mohi-u- Din Islamic University Nerian Sharif Trarkhal AJK)

Corresponding Author: ^{*1}noshabarazaq123@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Objective; The Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) originally designed to assess behavioral and experienced stigma in depressive disorders, has been adapted for divorced individuals to evaluate their experiences of discrimination and post-divorce stigma.

Methods: This cross-sectional study included 160 divorced individuals who were assessed on the following subscales of the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC); Unfair Treatment, Stopping Self, Overcoming Stigma, and Positive Treatment. The reliability and validity of the Urdu version of (DISC) for divorced individual were assessed through established psychometric methods.

Results: All the subscales of Urdu version of (DISC) for divorced individual, demonstrated high reliability. Validity was satisfactory for the Unfair Treatment and Stopping Self subscales, though somewhat lower for the Overcoming Stigma and Positive Treatment subscales.

Conclusion; The Unfair Treatment and Stopping Self subscales of the Urdu version of Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) for divorced individual provide reliable and valid measures of stigma experienced by divorced individuals. Further research is necessary to explore the scale's validity across different contexts related to divorce.

Keywords: psychometric property, short modified, Urdu version of discrimination, stigma (DISC) scale, divorced individual

INTRODUCTION

Stigma and discrimination are pervasive issues that affect individuals and communities worldwide (Liamputtong, & Rice, 2021). Stigma refers to negative attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes that lead to the marginalization and devaluation of certain groups of people (Andersen, et.al, 2022). Across the globe, there has been increasing attention to the deleterious effects of stigma and discrimination, with calls for social worker to take on key roles in combating stigma and working toward its abolition. Stigmatized people often experience individual and structural discrimination, leading to exclusion from social and economic life (Allison,

net.al 2023). Addressing stigma and discrimination requires a multifaceted approach involving education, advocacy, policy change, and community engagement (Obeagu, & Obeagu, 2024)). Promoting empathy, understanding, and respect for diversity is essential in challenging stigma and fostering inclusive environments where everyone can thrive (Adams, & Volkow, 2020). Stigmatized individuals or groups often face discrimination, social exclusion, and negative judgment based on these characteristics, which can lead to various negative consequences on both personal and societal levels (Partow, Cook, & McDonald, 2021).

Divorce is a legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). Approximately, 40 % of marriages end in divorce, as reported by Apostolou and colleagues. The reasons for divorce are manifold, with factors such as 'intolerance' physical violence, drug problems, mistrust, extramarital affairs, infidelity, financial problems, adultery, and incompatibility being among the most significant contributors (Apostolou, Constantinou, & Anagnostopoulos, 2020). Divorce often brings with it a burden of stigma, akin to other life situations where individuals may feel shame or fear due to perceived failures to meet societal standards. In the realm of social psychology, stigma manifests as disapproval based on certain characteristics that set individuals apart. While traditionally associated with social issues like divorce, recent research has shed light on its prevalence in divorced individuals. Challenging societal norms through dialogue and empathy is crucial for fostering inclusive environments (Johnson, 2022). Divorce leaves a stigma on the minds of couples especially women which is negligible representation, and freedom of expression in society. (Matemu, 2023). The stigma of divorce causes severe pain in the life of women, especially threat to their mental health, limits their social life activities, and overloads workplace problems making post-divorce situations of women more miserable due to social unacceptance and remarriages. (Kim, Jeon, & Song, 2023).

Measuring stigma has primarily relied on assessing public attitudes toward specific situations rather than capturing the experiences of those directly affected. This approach, while valuable, may lead to an overestimation of stigma, particularly in terms of ignorance and prejudice. To address this gap, instruments like the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) have been developed, by GO Kim et al., (2020) focusing on the firsthand experiences of stigmatized individuals. The (DISC) has demonstrated reliability, validity, and feasibility, making it a valuable tool in assessing discrimination and anticipation among stigmatized populations. However, the availability of such tools in various cultural contexts for various social issues especially for divorce remains limited. For instance, before our study, there was no Urdu version of the DISC, for the Pakistani population, hindering its use in understanding the experiences of Pakistani individuals with stigmatized. Therefore, we

undertook the task of developing modifying items for divorce participants and standardizing the DISC, tailored specifically for Pakistani divorced individuals facing the challenges of divorce. By bridging this gap in measurement, we aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the stigma experienced by individuals navigating divorce within the Pakistani context. This not only enriches our comprehension of the psychological impact of divorce but also informs strategies to mitigate stigma and support those affected by it.

Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) have been developed, by Thorneycroft et.al, 2009). Includes 32 items and four subscales entitled Unfair Treatment, Stopping Self, Overcoming Stigma, and Positive Treatment. (Kim, et.al, 2020). Several studies have used the DISC to assess the overall patterns of experienced discrimination and anticipation (Reneses, et.al, 2019; GO Kim et al., 2020). In Pakistan, no studies have investigated the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) among Pakistani divorced individual. Given Pakistan's socioeconomic challenges impacting divorced individual with discrimination understanding Discrimination and Stigma becomes crucial.

The current study aims to translate the Urdu version of Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) for divorced individual, describe its psychometric properties, and assess its validity and reliability, among Pakistani divorced participants.

METHODOLOGY

This cross-sectional study was conducted in Rawalpindi Islamabad. Participants were recruited from Rawalpindi Islamabad between November 2013 and August 2017. Divorced participants were recruited for the study using a convenient sampling technique and met specific inclusion criteria, including age range and the ability to complete questionnaires and understand the study objectives. Exclusion criteria encompassed various medical and psychiatric conditions inconsistent with the study aims.

To adapt the (DISC) for divorced individuals in the Urdu version, participants underwent a translation and modification process of items, which involved modifying words, omitting and editing words, and incorporating forward and backward translation methods. The study comprised three phases: modifying items, omitting and editing, translating the DISC into Urdu, and validating its psychometric

properties. Reliability analysis and content analysis were conducted, to validate the constructs of the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC).

Phase I involved editing the term "divorced" and omitting words and sentences that did not fit into the Pakistani cultural context.

Phase II, the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) was translated into Urdu following Brislin's translation procedure (Brislin, 1976), by bilingual specialists ensuring linguistic and cultural equivalence. Back-translation and expert committee review ensured accuracy and consistency.

Phase III focused on the psychometric properties of the Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC). Reliability analysis indicated good internal consistency for all subscales Discrimination and

Stigma Scale (DISC). Content validity was established through an analysis of every item.

Sociodemographic and clinical characteristics were collected, encompassing age, education, marital status, occupation, and clinical history. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize data, with reliability and validity assessments conducted for the (DISC). Reliability was assessed through internal consistency and test-retest reliability measures.

RESULTS;

A total number of 160 participants 159(36.9%) were males and 101(63.1%) were females (table-I). About 56.5% of the participants were age 20-50, whereas 44.85% of participants were age ranged from 35-50 years.

Table-I; Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants (n = 160).

Characteristics		n	%
Age	20-30	91	56.25
	35-50	69	44.85
Gender	Male	59	36.9
	Female	101	63.1
Occupation	Unemployment	25	15.6
	Housewife	53	33.1
	Students	16	10.0
	employment	66	33.1
Education status	Illiterate	37	23.1
	matric	51	31.9
	Graduate	48	30.0
	Postgraduate	24	15.0
Living environment	Urban	90	56.3
	Rural	70	43.7
Reason of divorce	Income	2	1.3
	Not understanding	68	40.9
	Children	29	12.2
	Spouse family	26	16.3
	No awareness of his or her rights	12	7.5
	Extramarital issue	2	1.3
	Sexual demand not filled	8	5.0
	Age Factor	2	1.3

Table 1 results highlight key demographic trends and factors contributing to divorce among participants. A significant portion falls within the 30-40 age range (47.5%), with a higher representation of females (63.1%). Housewives (33.1%) and skilled workers (28.1%) are prominent occupations. Graduates

(30.0%) and matriculates (31.9%) dominate education levels. Urban living environments are more common (56.3%). Most participants earn 20.00 (39.4%) and experience joint family systems (71.9%). Arranged marriages prevail (62.5%). Common reasons for divorce include lack of

understanding (20.0%), interference from the spouse's family (16.3%), and child-related issues (13.8%). These insights provide a snapshot of the

demographic profile and divorce dynamics among the surveyed individuals.

Table-11; content Validity analysis for the modified items Urdu version of Discrimination and stigma subscale for divorced individuals (n=160).

	امتیازی سلوک اور بدنامی کا پیمانہ	
0.78	کیا آپ کے ساتھ دوست بنانے یا رکھنے میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے	1
0.56	کیا آپ کے محلے کے لوگوں نے آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے	2
0.92	کیا آپ کی موجودہ رہائش میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے	3
0.78	کیا آپ کے ساتھ طلاق میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا گیا ہے؟	4
0.91	کیا آپ کے گھر والوں نے آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟ (یعنی والدین، بھائی، بہن اور دیگر رشتے	5
0.86	کیا آپ کے ساتھ ملازمت والی جگہ میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	6
0.89	کیا پبلک ٹرانسپورٹ استعمال کرتے وقت آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے	8
0.87	کیا آپ کے ساتھ فلاحی فوائد حاصل کرنے میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	9
0.81	کیا آپ کی مذہبی عبادت میں آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	10
0.78	کیا آپ کی سماجی زندگی میں آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	11
0.76	کیا آپ کے ساتھ عدالتی کارروائی کے دوران غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جاتا رہا ہے؟	12
0.86	کیا جسمانی صحت کے مسائل کے لیے مدد حاصل کرتے وقت اسپتال انتظامیہ کی طرف سے آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	13
0.89	کیا آپ کی رازداری کی سطح میں آپ کے ساتھ غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	14
0.92	کیا آپ کے ساتھ آپ کی ذاتی حفاظت میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	15
0.93	کیا آپ کے ساتھ اپنے بچوں کے لیے بطور والدین آپ کے کردار میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	16
0.97	کیا آپ کو ایسے لوگوں نے گریز کیا ہے یا ان سے دور کیا ہے جو جانتے ہیں کہ آپ کو طلاق ہوئی ہے؟	17
0.93	کیا آپ کے ساتھ زندگی کے دیگر شعبوں میں غیر منصفانہ سلوک کیا جا رہا ہے؟	18
0.81	کیا آپ نے اپنے آپ کو کام کے لیے درخواست دینے سے روکا ہے؟	19
0.94	کیا آپ نے اپنے آپ کو قریبی ذاتی تعلقات سے روکا ہے؟	20
0.98	کیا آپ نے اپنی طلاق کے مسئلے کو دوسروں سے چھپایا ہے؟	21
0.76	کیا آپ بدنامی اور امتیازی سلوک سے نمٹنے کے لیے اپنی ذاتی صلاحیتوں کو استعمال کرنے کے قابل ہوئے ہیں؟	22

The content validity coefficients indicate the perceived validity of each item in the questionnaire. Items with higher coefficients, like Item 3 (0.92) regarding unfair treatment in the current residence, are considered highly valid, suggesting a strong consensus among respondents. On the other hand, items with lower coefficients, such as Item 2 (0.56)

about unfair treatment from neighbors, indicate more varied perceptions.

Overall, these coefficients provide insight into which items effectively measure experiences of unfair treatment in different aspects of life, aiding in the assessment of the questionnaire's validity and reliability. The rest of the 10 items have content validity below 0.50 so we omitted that items.

Table-11; Validity analysis for the subscale and modified items Urdu version of Discrimination and Stigma subscale for divorced individuals (n=160).

	Unfair treatment	Stopping self	Overcoming stigma	Positive treatment
Unfair treatment				
Stopping Self	0.529			
Overcoming stigma	-0.101	-0.203		
Positive treatment	0.123	0.088	0.015	0.123

The Spearman correlation coefficients reveal interesting connections among coping strategies and perceptions among divorced individuals. There's a moderate positive correlation (0.529) between perceiving unfair treatment and taking action to address it.

Conversely, engaging in behaviors to stop mistreatment shows a moderate negative correlation (-0.203) with efforts to overcome divorce stigma, indicating a potential trade-off.

Minimal associations exist between unfair treatment perceptions and overcoming stigma (-0.101) or adopting positive treatment strategies (0.123).

Similarly, weak correlations are observed between stopping mistreatment behaviors and overcoming stigma (0.088) or positive treatment strategies (0.015). These insights shed light on the complex interplay between coping behaviors and perceptions in response to divorce challenges.

Table 11; Reliability analysis for the subscale and modified items Urdu version of Discrimination and stigma subscale for divorced individuals (n=160).

	Unfair treatment	Stopping self	Overcoming stigma	Positive treatment
Internal consistency (n = 160) Cronbach's α	0.931	0.989	0.911	0.923
Correlations (n =160) Inter-correlation of items Corrected Item-total correlation	0.791-0.968 0.917	0.821-0.959 0.811	0.951 0.928	0.624-0.723 0.822
Inter-rater reliability (n=160) Item Level Subscale level	0.829-1.000 0.912	0.792-0.987 0.943	0.891-0.962 0.945	0.816-0.972 0.911
Test-retest reliability (n=160) Item Level Subscale level	0.723-0.912 0.828	0.681-0.721 0.630	0.731-0.824 0.841	0.728-0.814 0.748

The provided results offer a comprehensive evaluation of the psychometric properties of a scale designed to assess dimensions related to unfair treatment, stopping self, overcoming stigma, and positive treatment. Internal consistency analysis reveals high reliability across all subscales, with Cronbach's α values ranging from 0.923 to 0.989, indicating strong correlations among items within each subscale.

Item-total correlations, ranging from 0.791 to 0.968, underscore the strength of individual items' association with their respective subscales. Moreover, inter-item correlations suggest moderate to strong relationships among items within the same subscale, with values ranging from 0.624 to 0.951.

Inter-rater reliability coefficients demonstrate high agreement among different raters, both at the item level (ranging from 0.792 to 1.000) and subscale level (ranging from 0.911 to 0.945).

Test-retest reliability coefficients, indicative of scale stability over time, vary but generally show moderate to high consistency, with values ranging from 0.630 to 0.912 at the item level and from 0.630 to 0.841 at the subscale level.

These findings collectively affirm the scale's reliability and validity in capturing the targeted constructs within the study population, providing valuable insights for future research and application.

Table-111: Gender differences in the Urdu version of Discrimination and Stigma Subscale for divorced individuals.(n=160).

Variables	Female		Male		P-value
	M	SD	M	SD	
Unfair treatment	20.5	30.7	4.3	5.1	<0.001
Stopping Self	15.2	25.6	3.7	4.2	<0.001
Overcoming stigma	18.3	28.9	3.9	4.5	<0.001
Positive treatment	22.1	32.4	5.2	6.0	<0.001

In this table, the mean scores (M) for females are consistently higher than those for males across all stigma subscales. The standard deviation (SD) values indicate the variability within each gender group. The P-values suggest that the differences in mean scores between genders are statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating a significant gender difference in stigma subscale scores.

DISCUSSION:

Our standardization study of the Urdu version of Discrimination and Stigma Scale (DISC) for divorced individual found that the four (DISC) subscales had high reliability. The validity of the Unfair Treatment and Stopping Self subscales was good; however, the Overcoming Stigma and Positive Treatment subscales had only fair validity.

The original (DISC) questionnaire is frequently utilized to gauge experienced stigma among patients with mental disorders (Brohan, et.al, 2010). Despite its wide usage and translation into various languages, (Lasalvia, et.al, 2013; Thorneycroft, et.al, 2009), only a limited number of validation studies have been undertaken (Reneses, et.al, 2019). Therefore, our study contributes to this validation process.

Our findings reveal that the questionnaire's construction is consistent across its subscale items, as indicated by high Cronbach's alpha coefficients and inter-item correlations. The psychometric evaluation of a scale revealed robust properties.

The content validity coefficients, as presented, serve as crucial indicators of the perceived validity of each item within the questionnaire.

Notably, items with higher coefficients, exemplified by Item 3 (0.92) concerning unfair treatment in the current residence, reflect a substantial consensus among respondents regarding the relevance and accuracy of the item in capturing experiences of unfair treatment. Conversely, items with lower

coefficients, such as Item 2 (0.56) about unfair treatment from neighbors, signify a more disparate range of perceptions among respondents. Given these observations, it becomes evident that the items with coefficients below 0.50 lack the necessary level of perceived validity to effectively measure experiences of unfair treatment in the respective domains. Consequently, these items were deemed unsuitable for inclusion in the questionnaire, as they failed to sufficiently contribute to its content validity. As in table-III High Cronbach's α values indicated strong internal consistency reliability across all subscales, reflecting coherence in measuring coping constructs. Significant correlations between individual items and their respective subscales affirmed the scale's construct validity. Moderate to strong correlations among items and high agreement among raters underscored the scale's reliability and consistency. Moreover, moderate to high stability over time suggested consistent measurement of coping behaviors among divorced individuals. In summary, the new (DISC) is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing stigma in patients with depressive disorders. In particular, the Unfair Treatment and Stopping Self subscales have good reliability and validity.

An analysis of gender differences in coping strategies unveiled notable disparities. Females exhibited significantly higher mean scores across all stigma subscales compared to males, indicating potential gender-based variations in coping mechanisms and perceptions of divorce-related challenges. These observed gender differences were statistically significant, highlighting the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in divorce support services and interventions. The same study was conducted in Pakistan, which revealed that the divorced women experience a considerable amount of discrimination at their workplace from colleagues

and they are also offered less training opportunities (Saeed, et.al, 2022). Another study conducted by Konstam and colleagues suggests that young divorced women are more influenced by societal stigma in both clear and contradictory ways (Konstam, et.al, 2016).

CONCLUSION:

This comprehensive exploration provides valuable insights into the demographic characteristics and psychometric properties of coping strategies among divorced individuals. By recognizing the nuanced dynamics of divorce and tailoring interventions to address diverse demographic profiles and gender-specific coping mechanisms, stakeholders can effectively support divorced individuals in navigating the challenges of divorce and transitioning to post-divorce life.

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