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Conceptualization of power sharing between partners in couple relationships: a scale development study in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the Power Sharing in Couple Relationships Scale (PSCRS) was developed to measure the distribution of power as experienced by individuals in heterosexual marriages or cohabiting relationships. Three sets of participants partook in the study: 27 individuals were in the pilot group; 400 individuals (female = 200, male = 200) were in the exploratory factor analysis group and 242 persons (female = 139, male = 103) were in the confirmatory factor analysis group. Factor analyses resulted in a structure consisting of 30 items and five dimensions, namely, friendship, power over, reactivity to relational stress, openness to influence, and making a relational claim. Results showed evidence for satisfactory psychometric properties.

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Feminist couple therapy; power sharing between couples; relationship equality; scale development

The concept of power sharing, which is defined in various ways by different disciplines, constitutes the very basis of the feminist and other critical social approaches with sensitivity to gender and societal context in the field of couple therapy. These approaches view gender as the determining factor shaping role distribution and power differences between sexes in close relationships and in various aspects of societal life. Furthermore, these schools of thought firmly assert that the broader social, historical, or political contexts are reflected on the dynamics of individuals' and families' relationships (McDowell, 2015). At the core of such a multifaceted viewpoint is the idea that inequalities at the social level cannot be ignored or neglected in practices by mental health professionals and other human service providers (McGoldrick & Hardy, 2008). Moreover, such contextual influences would also be reflected in couple relationships as well as in the therapist–client relationship. Therefore, the therapist should not claim an impartial role. Indeed being mindful of equality issues in the therapeutic relationship is of

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central importance to the feminist therapist (Enns, 1988; Hare-Mustin, 1978; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 1999; Parker, 1998; Parker & Almeida, 2002; Prouty Lyness & Lyness, 2007; Rampage, 2003).

Equality is closely related to how power is handled. Although used in the context of dyadic relationships the term *power* refers to a relational, bidirectional and dynamic quality that depends upon resources each partner holds in influencing the other (Knudson-Martin, Wells, & Samman, 2015; McDowell, 2015). Thus, power sharing is a fluid quality that refers to ways in which partners handle these resources. A perceived balance in the sharing of power thus promotes a sense of equality between partners. The majority of studies dealing with power tend to assume that if the sharing of power is well balanced, namely, if the relationships are equal and fair, instead of using their energy on competition and power struggles, partners will allocate their resources to supporting one another and thus promoting and empowering their relationships (Fishbane, 2011, 2013; Knudson-Martin, 2013; Knudson-Martin & Mahoney, 2009; Rabin, 1996). As such, some authors (Horst & Doherty, 1995; Rampage, 2003) see equality as one of the essential prerequisites to intimacy between partners. Indeed, studies (e.g., Gottman & Notarius, 2002; Gottman & Silver, 2000; Gray-Little & Burks, 1983; Jonathan & Knudson-Martin, 2012; Rabin, 1994; Schwartz, 1994; Steil, 1997; Zimmerman, Haddock, Current, & Ziemba, 2003) have consistently documented significant links between relationships striving toward equality and greater levels of partners' well-being as well as relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, defining and thus measuring equality or power sharing can be extremely challenging depending on the complexities of the given society's gender related discourse and structures (Knudson-Martin, 2013). Although ranking within the largest 20 economies in the world (International Monetary Fund, 2018), Turkey's ranking in gender equality is not even within the first 100 countries according to the Global Gender Gap Index of World Economic Forum (2016). As would be expected, in a societal context with such heavy inequality there has been a historical line of opposition by academics, artists, and intellectuals mainly from upper-middle and upper socioeconomic statuses. Indeed, a report by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies (2014) provides empirical confirmation for presence of such a group with strong conviction toward equality.

Turkey is often considered as a bridge between the East and West culturally and geographically. Majority of its population moved from rural areas to cities in the last several decades. In its inception Republic of Turkey set "Westernization" as its ideal in early 1920s. Thus, though it is predominantly a collectivistic culture, there has been a steady societal change toward individualism (Eraslan, Yakalı-Çamoğlu, Profeta Harunzade, Ergun, & Dokur, 2012; Sunar & Fişek, 2005). Various factors such as broadening of

educational opportunities for all children and youth and increased participation of women in the workforce contributed to this tendency. Such societal changes have on the one hand led to issues such as intergenerational conflicts (Akyıl, Prouty, Blanchard, & Lyness, 2016), on the other hand to a growing number of persons seeking equality in their relationships.

Yet there have been only several studies examining equality in the Turkish context. In her doctoral dissertation work, Akçabozan-Kayabol (2017) found a direct positive relationship between relational equity and marital satisfaction. Akgül-Gök and İl (2017) found a link between family role sharing and healthy functioning whereas İmamoğlu and Selçuk (2018) reported a relationship between egalitarian marital relationships and relationship satisfaction. In another study, Bolak-Boratav, Fişek, and Eslen-Ziya (2017) conducted detailed interviews with males from eight different cities in an effort to investigate how "masculinity" is constructed. Their findings showed that though educated males from high socioeconomic statuses stated concern about equality in their relationships with their partners, they also noted challenges in actualization of equality in their relationships. Although there are a growing number of individuals in favor of equality, only few studies on equality were found in the literature. More importantly, there is vital need for a reasonably agreed upon functional definition of *equality* that can in turn promote further research.

Parallel with the lack of clarity in defining equality, a highly limited number of measurement instruments (Black & Piercy, 1991; Haddock, Zimmerman, & MacPhee, 2000; McGeorge, Carlson, & Guttormson, 2009) have been developed in the field of feminist couple therapy. The majority of existing instruments were developed to guide therapists through the therapeutic process as opposed to measuring partners' perceived level of equality in the relationship. As the current study is grounded on theories viewing gender as an interpersonal process (i.e., Knudson-Martin, 1997), a look into literature on these theories showed that there were no self-report measures of power sharing or equality developed for partners' use. These theories claim that rules by which couple relationships operate are closely related to gender socialization (Knudson-Martin, 1995). Thus, measuring power or equality inevitably involves tapping into the influences of gender in partners' interactions. Indeed, reviewing studies examining issues of power and marital satisfaction, Gray-Little and Burks (1983) observed that the most essential limitation of these studies had to do with measuring power distribution. In measuring power sharing, these studies focused on decision-making processes, partners' controlling behaviors, or relied on researchers' observation. Hence, drawing on social-contextual theories and clinical practices in couple therapy, the current study intended to develop an instrument measuring power distribution in heterosexual relationships in an effort to promote further research on power sharing and equality.

The current study drew on several models. The first approach used in constructing the items of the scale was the Socio-Emotional Relationship Therapy (SERT) (Knudson-Martin & Huenergardt, 2010), which prioritizes mutual support between partners. This approach was developed through the work of a clinical research group, in which the latest developments in neurobiology are integrated with social constructivist perspectives on gender and power issues and specific clinical competencies for the therapeutic process are specified. The SERT therapists use a model called "the circle of care," during which they conduct case conceptualization and planning by viewing power relational, emotions as contextual and the context as shaping personal identities and relational processes. This model consists of four dimensions, namely, shared relational responsibility, mutual vulnerability, mutual attunement, and mutual influence. Of these dimensions, shared relational responsibility involves caring about what it takes to maintain the relationship and sharing practical and emotional responsibilities brought by living together; mutual vulnerability involves approaching one's partner with openness, curiosity, self-honesty, and reassuring way, accepting him or her with faults and weaknesses. Mutual attunement has to with being aware of each other's needs and feelings, and acting accordingly; mutual influence refers to openness to being changed by the partner and to accommodating for the sake of the relationship (Knudson-Martin, Wells, et al., 2015). Specific information on these dimensions provided grounds for conceptualization of power sharing in a concrete way for the current study.

Another major model utilized was the skills-based approach of Fishbane (2011, 2013), which creates elements of the process referred to as the relational empowerment against the power struggle. Fishbane extended the concept of power that typically involves establishing dominance of power and creating conflict, in a way that allows for an egalitarian relationship. She used alternative terms of "power over," "power with," and "power to" instead. If the relationship involves dominance of one partner it is referred to as "power over." Similar to differentiation skills brought up by followers of Murray Bowen (1978) the term *power to* is used to refer to partner's acting in accordance with one's values and being able to regulate one's feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Lastly, "power with" is about partners' cooperating, caring, sharing, and acting as a team for the welfare of the relationship. The approach claims that cultural values such as individualism and competition often lead to behavioral patterns of humiliation, contempt, and domination in the couple relationship. It instead recommends utilization "power to" skills (such as emotion regulation, self-soothing, differentiation of self, and making a relational claim) to strengthen and empower the person as well as "power with" skills (such as shared relational responsibility, respect, nurturing the "we") to strengthen the relationship. The model specifies neurobiological responses accompanying partners' behaviors involving the three different

uses of power during conflict and tension. These descriptions guided specification of behaviors (scale items) indicative of the three uses of power in this study.

Another equality and empowerment based approach incorporated into this study was the model by Rabin (1996) that emerged from the author's interviews with couples in England, United States, and Israel. In the model she claims that equality in relationships can only be realized through establishing friendship between partners based on mutual respect and interest without resorting to authority and dominance. In her work, Rabin places equality in the center of the therapy and frames the process by addressing gender-related issues to help partners become friends. A similar emphasis on friendship also draws attention to the common respect, sharing and closeness-based marriages that Schwartz (1994) calls "peer marriage." The elaborate descriptions of friendship by Rabin and Schwartz had indispensable contribution to defining the dimension of friendship of the Power Sharing in Couple Relationships Scale (PSCRS). In addition to the summarized approaches, the dimensions of the Power Equity Guide (such as decision making, relationship maintenance) that Haddock and Zimmerman (2001) developed as an activity, homework, or handout to couples have been used to determine in what areas of couple relationships issues of power often surface.

Given that all these Western-based ideas on power sharing would be best understood within each given cultural contexts, how the issue of power sharing takes place in Turkish couples needed to be explored. Thus, the first author conducted interviews with 15 heterosexual unmarried couples who had been together for at least 6 months to address the needs of the couples for another study before the scale development process (Arıcı-Şahin, 2017; Knudson-Martin, Quek, Glebova, Arıcı-Şahin, & Moghadam, 2016). Some of the questions used in these semistructured interviews were adapted from questions cited by Knudson-Martin and Mahoney (2009) in their Contemporary Couples Study. On the one hand, the results show that what partners do on an ordinary day, how they resolve conflicts, how they manage their relationships, and how open they are to each other's influence can be considered as concrete indications of power sharing between partners. On the other hand, an important issue came up that changed the plans about the sampling of the study. In the literature, one of the most significant indicators of ways in which a couple shares power is how they allocate responsibilities between themselves and how they go about making decisions. Interviews with couples who were not cohabiting showed that regardless of the length of their relationships they spoke of sharing responsibilities in simpler terms and had difficulties expressing their answers. Likewise, when asked about decision making, they often mentioned their personal decision making and provided examples that were more personal as opposed to relational. After repeatedly observing these couples, the researchers concluded that they did

not have enough experiences with shared responsibilities and lacked a mutual decision-making repertoire. Although there are scarce exceptions, a vast majority of couples in Turkey begin living in the same household after marriage. Thus, the target group of the developed scale was kept limited to married or cohabiting couples. It is envisioned that making such a measurement instrument available will stimulate empirical work on exploring power sharing with a variety of other variables as well as aiding to gender sensitive couple therapy in Turkey.

Method

Characteristics of the samples

The initial form prepared for the purpose of testing the clarity of the items of PSCRS was given to a total of 27 persons; 24 teachers in a primary school, and three doctoral students all of whom were married or cohabiting with a partner. The participants were asked to read each item carefully to evaluate them as to how clear and understandable they are. They were requested to make suggestions for items they think need improvement. This first draft was revised based on the participants' responses and was then administered to a total of 400 individuals, 382 married and 18 cohabiting persons. Data from these persons were used for the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The administration of the scale to this convenience sample took place between February and June, 2016. Participants were 200 women and 200 men with an age range of 22–67 ($\bar{x}$= 35, *SD* = 8.04) and they were recruited through acquaintances working in private or public institutions or universities. The marriage duration of married individuals varied between 3 months and 44 years, whereas the duration of cohabiting with a partner of unmarried individuals varied between 6 months and 5 years. Of the participants, 147 (37%) had graduate degrees whereas 221 (55%) had undergraduate and 32 (8%) had high school diplomas.

Following the determination of the psychometric properties of the scale, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to test the validity of the obtained structure. The participants were 242 people, of whom 236 were married and 6 were cohabiting partners. Participants of this study group were 139 women and 103 men with an age range of 23–67 ($\bar{x}$ = 35, *SD* = 7.62). The marriage duration of married individuals varied between 4 months and 40 years, whereas the duration of cohabiting with a partner of unmarried individuals varied between 5 months and 7 years. Of the participants, 92 (40%) had graduate degrees, 138 (57%) undergraduate, and 12 (5%) had high school diplomas. It should be kept in mind that the participants in all samples were not paired couples but rather individuals in heterosexual marital or cohabiting relationships.

Procedure and data analysis

As a first step of the scale development process, an extensive literature review and a qualitative study were conducted. The literature review was necessary to identify boundaries of the concept of power sharing and thus to be able to generate behavioral indicators of power sharing. Identifying such behavioral indicators would guide forming a pool of candidate items for the scale. Upon review of the relevant literature, five dimensions were determined as components of the equality, namely, friendship relationship between partners, the ability to reflect on one's own and one's partner's reactions during conflicts and on ambivalent feelings regarding gender roles and to purposefully make changes in one's own behaviors accordingly, the cooperation between partners, openness to one's partner's influence, and sharing responsibilities for various tasks arising from living together. The items were written in accordance with a 5-point Likert-type rating (*completely applies, applies, partially applies, doesn't apply, doesn't apply at all*) and an item pool consisting of 62 statements was prepared. These prepared items were presented to seven experts from the field of psychological counseling and guidance and an expert from the field of measurement and evaluation to be evaluated with respect to the general purpose of the scale, principles of appraisal and wording/languaging. The form the experts were given had the 62 statements along each a 3-point Likert-type scale (*suitable, needs correction, not suitable*) and room for experts' recommendations. All the opinions obtained were merged into a single form, and the opinions were discussed and reviewed again by three experts, including the researchers. As a result of this revision, changes were made on some statements and two more items were added to the scale, creating a 64-item form. This new form was given to a group of 27 persons as a trial/pilot application to evaluate the clarity of the items for the readers. As a result of the application, unclear items were rearranged, an item was removed from the scale and a new, 63-item form emerged. This new form was then given to a sample of individuals to test the scale's psychometric properties.

Although a five-factor structure was determined initially, EFA was still conducted first for the following reasons: One, as noted above, considering that power sharing between couples is highly culture dependent, results of EFA could yield to a different set of dimensions. Second, the five dimensions were identified by incorporating several theoretical models. In other words, the dimensions were not based on a single, well-established theory. Furthermore, the authors were not firmly convinced that the predicted factors would work in the Turkish culture. Therefore, first EFA and then CFA were used. The form with 63-item was given to 400 persons to collect data for EFA. Then, the emerging form was given to a new group of 242 individuals to gather data for CFA so as to further

test and to verify the emerging structure of the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficients and item-total statistics were determined to test the reliability of the scale. SPSS 23 and LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) programs were used for the analyses of the data.

Results

Construct validity of PSCRS

Results of exploratory factor analysis

Construct validity of PSCRS was examined by performing factor analyses. Prior to factor analysis, data were examined with respect to the assumptions of sample size, missing values, normality, linearity, multicollinearity and outliers (Alpar, 2011; Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2010; Field, 2009; Kline, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to determine if the sample size was adequate for factorization. The KMO value was .93 and indicative of adequate sample size. Bartlett sphericity test resulted in a significant chi-squared value that was taken evidence that the multivariate normality assumption was met ($x^{2\ (1953)} = 11{,}572.348$, $p = .00$). There were no missing values in the data set. Linearity assumption was ensured by reviewing the scatter plot of randomly selected items. Multicollinearity and singularity assumptions were tested by examining bivariate item correlation coefficients, variance inflation factors (VIF), and tolerance values. These values showed that items were not highly correlated. Z scores and Mahalanobis distance were used respectively to identify univariate and multivariate outliers. Fifty multivariate outliers were identified and eliminated from the data set prior to running EFA.

Principal components analysis as the factorization method and promax as the factor rotation method were used to examine the factor structure of the scale. Although there are not any firm criteria regarding the selection of a rotation method, Alpar (2011) notes that some authors recommend using oblique rotation methods if the factor loadings are above .30. Considering that factor loadings were higher than .30 in the first factor solution obtained in the analysis; promax rotation was selected for being fast and practical method in oblique rotation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In excluding items from the analyses, the following criteria were kept in mind: if an item's factor loading within a given factor was lower than .40, if there was redundancy of items between factors, and if shared variance of factors explained together in any item was high (Büyüköztürk, 2011). Thus, for items loading on multiple factors a minimum difference of .10 between these loadings was required.

At first, to determine the contribution of each item to the scale the item-total test statistics were examined. Conventions of these statistics recommend

that the item-total test correlation coefficients are not negative: are larger than .25 to ensure that the summation of the scale is not impaired. Therefore, items that do not meet these conditions are suggested to be eliminated from the scale (Alpar, 2011; Field, 2009; Kayış, 2009). Thus, two items with item-total test correlation coefficients lower than .25 were eliminated. Then EFA was run which showed that the items gathered in 12 components with eigenvalue higher than one. These components accounted for 60.23% of the total variance. The number of components with an eigenvalue greater than 1.0 is an important benchmark for deciding the factor number according to the Kaiser rule (Field, 2009; Stevens, 2009). Examining the scree plot that is another of the widely used criteria for determining the number of factors based on eigenvalues, it was seen that the majority of the contribution to the variance was made by the first component and the contribution after the fifth component was considerably low and approximately the same (Çokluk et al., 2010; DeVellis, 2011; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). At this point it was predicted that the scale would have a five-factor structure that was indeed the expected number of factors. Given that the construct at hand was a culturally sensitive issue, instead of putting a limit on the number of factors, items were eliminated one at a time. In other words, items meeting the above criteria were removed from scale one at a time and EFA was repeated with each item removed. Some authors note that though there is no definite rule as to the order in which items should be removed, it is important that researchers decide within framework of circumstances such as practicality, the contributions of the factors to the variance, overlapping, and so on (Çokluk et al., 2010). Therefore, first items with factor loadings below .40 were eliminated, and then items with redundancy were removed from the scale. This resulted in elimination of 31 items from the scale. As a result of the removal of the mentioned items, the scale consisting of 30 items and five factors was formed. The factor loadings and the resulting factor structure are presented in Table 1.

When item-factor loadings of each dimension were examined, factor loadings ranged between .46 and .94 for the first dimension, between .57 and .75 for the second dimension; between .57 and .83 for the third dimension, between .55 and .81 for the fourth dimension, and between .69 and .90 for the fifth dimension. The first factor making highest contribution to the total variance with 38.30% involved items reflecting friendship relationship between partners thus it was called Friendship. The second factor that accounted for 7.12% of the total variance, consisted of statements indicting one partner's dominance over the other thus it was called Power Over, the third factor explained 5.23% of the variance, and included statements related to partners' reactive behaviors during relational distress as a result of which partners were unable to empower one another. A close look at these behaviors showed that these reactions can be better understood from gender-

Table 1. Factor loadings of the Power Sharing in Couple Relationships Scale items.

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
1. My partner is also my close friend.	.942				
3. My partner and I converse about almost anything.	.935				
2. Sharing things about myself with my partner relieves me.	.900				
12. My partner and I partake in mutual activities.	.668				
14. I feel as though my partner and I live in different worlds.	.555				
17. I feel my partner is with me in good and bad times.	.554				
9. I feel that my partner sincerely cares about my well-being.	.540				
13. I can act however I want with my partner.	.537				
10. I find it hard to act together in various circumstances.	.458				
27. One of us often leaves responsibilities to the other.		.748			
23. Usually one of us decides whom to befriend.		.731			
30. Each time we argue usually one of us wins the other loses.		.724			
26. Often one of us deals with household chores.		.695			
25. Most of time one of us fails to participate in the plans we make.		.676			
22. It seems as though the effort of only one of us keeps our relationship going.		.636			
28. The emotional burden of our relationship is more on the shoulders of one of us.		.611			
21. At the end of each dispute usually the same person wishes are realized.		.574			
19. When we argue, we cannot continue the dialogue because of the intense emotional reactions of one of us.			.834		
6. When my partner does not understand me I leave the conversation and return to my own world.			.756		
15. I often feel distant from my partner in disagreements.			.746		
20. I feel I am not able to reach my partner and as if there is a wall between us when we argue.			.737		
18. I do not feel safe when my partner and I are talking about issues I am sensitive about.			.569		
8. I care about providing room for my partner to voice his/her opinions during arguments.				.805	
29. Even if we do not have the same opinions in the face of our problems, I take into consideration my partner's suggestions for resolution.				.733	
11. I behave with care on issues sensitive to my partner.				.671	
16. I care about my partner sharing his/her views on how to improve our relationship.				.630	
24. I value opinions of my partner as well as my own's in important decisions for our relationship.				.550	
5. When we argue, I can defend my opinions against my partner.					.895
4. When my partner gets mad I become nervous and confused.					.704
7. I easily share my feelings with my partner even during heated arguments.					.690
Explained variance	38.299%	7.124%	5.232%	4.279%	4.014%
Total variance explained = %58.949					

informed perspective. Hence, the third factor was called Reactivity to Relational Stress. The fourth factor, which explained 4.28% of the total variance, was called Openness to Influence because it consisted of items indicative of the degree to which each partner allows one-self to be influenced by the other. Finally, the fifth factor explained 4.01% of the total variance and consisted of items having to do with each partner taking a stance to express his or her feelings, thoughts, and needs to the other. Thus, this factor was called Making a Relational Claim. When the five factors are considered together, their total contribution to the variance was 58.95%. Although not a definite rule, it is ideal that the cumulative variance ratio to be about 60% in the social sciences. On the other hand, a number of authors have pointed out that in practice, for various reasons it is not always possible to attain that ratio (Alpar, 2011; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Because the explained total variance in this study was close to 60%, and also because the factor structure of the emerged scale was close to the theoretically expected one, it was deemed satisfactory.

Confirmatory factor analysis results

The construct validity of the five-factor model created by EFA was examined by CFA with data obtained from a study group of 242 individuals. First the data set was examined for assumptions of factor analysis. Five univariate and 15 multivariate outliers were eliminated. Then, Mardia's multivariate normality test was used for univariate and multivariate normality. Results showed that the data set did not meet multivariate normality assumption ($p < .05$). Mardia's normality test results are summarized in Table 2.

Although maximum likelihood (ML) is the most frequently used estimator for CFA and structural equation modeling, it requires use of continuous variables as well as multivariate normal distribution. A number of authors recommend using weighted least squares (WLS) or robust ML when multivariate normality assumption is not met or when there are ordinal variables (Brown, 2015; Hair et al., 2009; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2006). Others recommend (e.g., Chou & Bentler, 1995; Curran, West, & Finch, 1996) using WLS for small samples. Therefore, given the sample size ($N = 222$) of the current study and considering that robust ML is often preferred to WLS regardless of sample size, complexity of the model, degree of non-normality (Brown, 2015), Robust ML was used as the estimation method. Standardized parameter estimates are given in Table 3.

Table 2. Mardia's test results of multivariate normality.

Skewness			Kurtosis			Skewness and Kurtosis	
Value	Z score	*p*	Value	Z score	*p*	Chi-squared	*p*
238.287	31.584	0.00	1130.173	14.934	0.00	1220.565	0.00

Table 3. Standardized parameter estimates for the Power Sharing in Couple Relationships Scale.

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loading	*t*	R^2
Friendship	1	.61	11.56	.38
	2	.70	13.32	.49
	3	.73	12.65	.54
	9	.76	10.95	.58
	10	.68	7.97	.46
	12	.61	8.46	.37
	13	.73	7.93	.54
	14	.70	9.41	.49
	17	.78	11.05	.60
Power over	21	.73	10.95	.53
	22	.77	9.66	.59
	23	.53	7.84	.28
	25	.60	7.28	.36
	26	.52	9.28	.27
	27	.65	8.20	.42
	28	.62	10.38	.39
	30	.68	9.74	.46
Reactivity to relational stress	6	.54	9.11	.29
	15	.74	13.31	.54
	18	.57	8.09	.32
	19	.70	11.43	.49
	20	.79	13.81	.63
Openness to influence	8	.47	6.42	.22
	11	.60	9.08	.36
	16	.70	11.63	.49
	24	.74	10.97	.55
	29	.76	11.59	.58
Making a relational claim	4	.45	5.93	.21
	5	.72	10.28	.51
	7	.74	13.53	.55

Note. All *t* values were significant.

One of the conditions for a measurement model is that for it to show an acceptable structure, all parameter values should be significant at .01 level. This condition was ensured. When the relationships between the factors and the resulting items were examined, the standardized regression coefficients were .61 to .78 for friendship, for power over .52 to .77, for reactivity to relational stress .54 to .79, .47 to .76 for openness to influence, and between .45 and .74 for making a relational claim. Only two of these values, which correspond to the factor loadings, were below .50. In examining convergent validity, Hair et al. (2009) recommend that average variance extracted (AVE) as the mean variance extracted by the items loading on a factor should be over .50, construct reliability of each factor should be over .60, and the construct reliabilities should be higher than the average variance extracted estimates. The AVE estimates ranged between .41 and .49, and the construct reliabilities ranged between .68 and .90 in the measurement model of PSCRS. Although the construct reliability of each factor is acceptable and each is higher than its AVE estimate, the condition on AVE estimates could not

meet for all values. Therefore, the results show that the convergent validity of PSCRS was partially met.

In terms of the discriminant validity of the scale, the correlation coefficients between the factors were examined and the results ranged between .50 and .82. More specifically, following were correlation coefficients between the five dimensions: between friendship and power over .82, friendship and reactivity .75, friendship and influence .69, friendship and relational claim .68, power over and reactivity .81, power over and relational claim .63, power over and influence .71, reactivity and relational claim .62, reactivity and influence .50, and between influence and relational claim .63. Kline (2011) notes that if the correlation estimates between factors are not higher than .90 this is indicative of discriminant validity. Thus, the results show sufficient evidence for discriminant validity of PSCRS as a multidimensional construct.

Further examination of the model included goodness-of-fit statistics. Results are summarized in Table 4. For an acceptable goodness of fit, the chi-squared value should not be significant. However, it is generally known that because this value is highly sensitive to sample size, the chi-squared value is often significant. Therefore, a number of authors recommend dividing the chi-squared value by the degree of freedom and use the results in evaluating the goodness of fit (Çokluk et al., 2010; Şimşek, 2007). The chi-squared value for the PSCRS was also significant (p = .00); the ratio of this value to the degree of freedom was found was 1.6. When this value is lower than five, it is considered as indication of acceptable level of fit but if it is lower than two, it is considered as evidence for perfect fit (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). There are multiple and mixed opinions regarding criteria for acceptable fit statistics. Hu and Bentler (1998) suggest using Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR) by supporting with Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Confirmatory Fit Index (CFI) or Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) whereas MacCallum and Hong (1997) claim that RMSEA gives the most sensitive results to model evaluation. Yet Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) emphasize that CFI and RMSEA are the most commonly used values in the reports. Usually acceptable fit values are expected to be lower than .08 for RMSEA and SRMR, and higher than 0.90 for CFI and NNFI. In the light of all these opinions and the fit statistics it was concluded that the model was acceptable and the PSCRS had satisfactory evidence for construct validity.

Table 4. Goodness-of-fit statistics for Confirmatory Factor Analyses.

	Satorra-Bentler Scaled χ^2	χ^2/df	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI	SRMR
First level	644.68	1.6	.05	.98	.98	.06
Second level	672.64	1.7	.06	.98	.98	.06

Note. RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; CFI = Confirmatory Fit Index; NNFI = Non-Normed Fit Index; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Residual.

After confirming the five-factor structure of the PSCRS through the first-level CFAs, a second-level analysis was conducted to test if these five factors were indeed components of the higher order construct of power sharing. The path diagram showing the standardized values resulting from the analysis of the second-level model established are presented in Figure 1 and the goodness-of-fit statistics are illustrated in Table 4.

The path diagram showed all parameter values were significant at .01 level. Likewise, the values of the goodness of fit statistics were similar to those obtained at the first-level analysis (χ^2/df = 1.7, RMSEA = .06, CFI = .98, NNFI = .98, SRMR = .06). Thus, the model had acceptable degree of goodness of fit. Accordingly, it was confirmed that the dimensions of friendship, power over, reactivity to relational stress, openness to influence, and making a relational claim together constitute a higher level construct, namely, power sharing. Put differently, it was confirmed that these five factors were components of power sharing.

Reliability of PSCRS

To test reliability of the PSCRS with both samples (groups of participants for EFA and CFA), Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients for the total scale and for each of five dimensions were examined. The coefficients for the exploratory analysis sample were as follows: .94 for the total scale, .91 for the dimension of friendship, .87 for the dimension of power over, .84 for the dimension of reactivity to relational stress, .78 for the dimension of the openness to influence, and .66 for the dimension of making a relational claim. The coefficients for the confirmatory analysis sample were as follows: .90 for the total scale, .78 for the dimension of friendship, .70 for the dimension of power over, .45 for the dimension of reactivity to relational stress, .66 for the dimension of the openness to influence, and .50 for the dimension of making a relational claim. Based on coefficients from the EFA sample showed that the scale and all its dimensions were reliable to satisfactory degree ($\alpha > .60$). On the other hand, coefficients obtained from CFA sample showed that the scale and three of its dimensions were sufficiently reliable ($\alpha > .60$) whereas reliability coefficients for two dimensions (reactivity to relational stress and making a relational claim) were acceptable but low (Büyüköztürk, 2011; Kayış, 2009).

Scoring and interpretation of the PSCRS

PSCRS is a scale consisting of a total of 30 items and five dimensions that measures differences in power distribution between partners in couple relationships. There are nine items in the dimension of friendship, eight items in the dimension of the power over, five items in the dimension of reactivity to relational stress, five items in the dimension of openness to influence, and

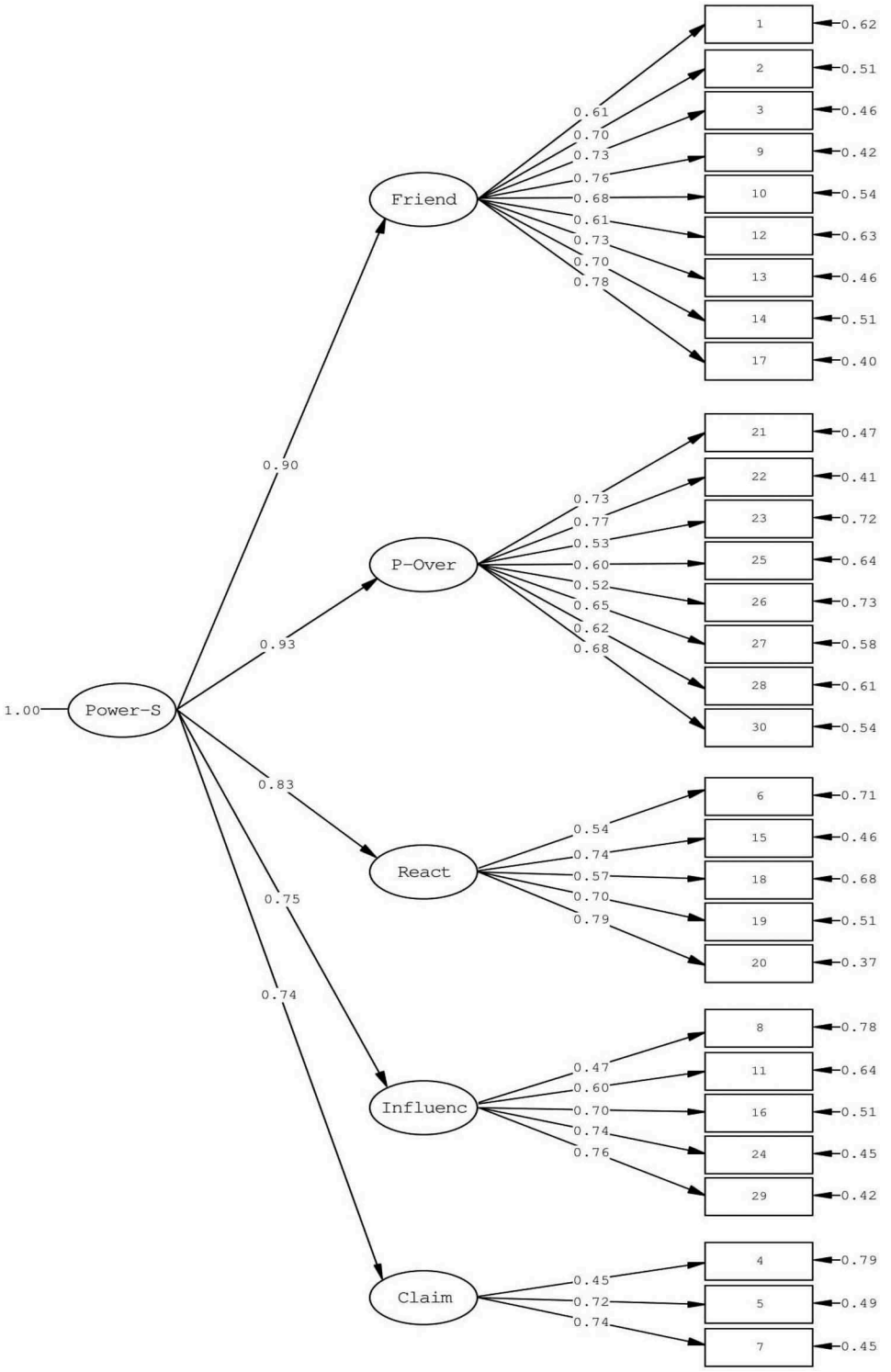

Figure 1. Results of the second-level confirmatory factor analysis.

three items in the dimension of making a relational claim. The 5-point Likert-type scale (5 = *completely applies*, 1 = *doesn't apply at all*) stating aspects of the recent experiences one might have with his or her partner. Individuals are asked to select the degree to which each statement fits their recent experience. There are 16 reversed items of the scale. All the "openness to influence" items are nonreversed whereas all the items on power over and making a relational claim dimensions are reversed. Each item is assigned a number ranging from 1 to 5 and higher scores on the total scale are indicative of higher levels of balanced power sharing (thus relationship equality) between partners.

Discussion and conclusions

In this study, a 30-item self-report measure consisting of five dimensions was developed. The scale is to be administered individually to each partner to measure power distribution between married or cohabiting heterosexual partners. Results showed satisfactory evidence that the scale can be used in studies with equivalent samples.

The following components emerged from the analyses: friendship, power over, reactivity to relational stress, openness to influence, and making a relational claim. It is noteworthy that the friendship dimension accounted for more than one half of the explained variance (38.3%). As articulated by Rabin (1996) and Schwartz (1994), friendship appears to be a pivotal determinant of equality between partners. This might be unique to Turkey because couple relationships among educated persons are in the process of evolving from traditional to more egalitarian. Indeed, considering that there has been a trend toward dissolution of extended family toward nuclear family and that almost every adult is expected to get married, young individuals in the Turkish culture tend to idealize marriage (Keklik, 2011; Yıldırım, 2007); thus for a new generation married persons a sense of being "we" might be more pronounced for this population. In other words, new generation couples in such societal circumstances might essentially view their relationship as a "comradery" for creating "their alternative story" in the context of a traditionally highly hierarchal and patriarchal society. When viewing five dimensions of the PSCRS from a theoretical lens of family therapy one could interpret this combination of dimensions as reflecting a feminist (gender sensitive) standpoint as well as incorporating other approaches (reactivity to relational stress-Bowen, 1978; openness to influence-Gottman and Silver, 2000) to couples and family therapy. A unique aspect of the current scale is that making a relational claim stood out as a stand-alone dimension. Fishbane (2013) defines *making a relational claim* as "being able to speak needs and feelings in a way that our partner can hear them" (p. 157). In other words, making a relational claim has to do "voicing" one's views and needs in ways conducive to the improvement of the relationship. In

sum, five dimensions of the PSCRS appear to reflect a combination of features highlighting mutuality and togetherness (we) in the relationship as well as encompassing a certain degree of differentiation, individuation (self-in relation).

Being the first study in the field of marriage and family therapy in Turkey to develop scale (with satisfactory reliability and validity) from a gender-sensitive standpoint is the strongest aspect of the current study. One of the intriguing aspects of living in a developing country that carries traditional and egalitarian values is the likelihood of power sharing playing out in peculiar complexities. The instrument is intended to be a practical tool in determining power sharing between couples through the therapy process as well as in research studies. Furthermore, it is hoped that the availability of the instrument will stimulate work in exploring power sharing with a variety of other variables as well as in developing culturally informed intervention programs. Likewise it might be used in pre–post test measurements in studies testing effectiveness of prevention, enrichment, and treatment programs.

Along with these strengths, there are some important limitations of this study to be kept in mind. First, the study was carried out with heterosexual individuals with high level of education. Hence, the scale should be tested with diverse samples with a variety of educational, socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and age groups to obtain evidence for wider generalizability of its use. Because no instruments measuring related constructs were available in Turkish, convergent and discriminant validity of the scale was not tested. Hence, future work should involve convergent and discriminant validity testing. Considering that reliability coefficients from CFA sample for two dimensions (reactivity to relational stress and making a relational claim) were acceptable but low, further reliability testing is needed as well. Considering the dynamic changes in the Turkish society and its values, it is a limitation of this study that possible cohort effects were not taken into account. In addition, given that the study solely relied on self-report also is another limitation. On the other hand, considering that power in relationships, whether they be personal or therapeutic relationships, is rather invisible (Knudson-Martin, 2013), use of this scale along with other in depth tools of measurement will provide more realistic estimates of power sharing between couples. For instance, researchers might incorporate qualitative data from interviews with partners in addition to administering the PSCRS.

One could rightfully consider the fact that the scale items inquiring partners' experiences related to power sharing individually as another limitation of the scale. On the other hand, the issue of power sharing can be viewed with the lens of relational ethics concept of contextual couple therapy (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986) where the perceived balance of "give and take" is emphasized. This view claims that issues raise when at least one of the partners perceives an unfair imbalance in "give and take." Therefore,

the authors chose to inquire each partner's experience on power sharing as opposed to the couples' shared experience so as to attain the individual partner's subjective experience within the context of the relationship. It should be kept in mind though items of the PSCRS were constructed in ways to reflect how power sharing occurs in couples' day-to-day interactions. Therefore, some may interpret this as one of the essential strengths of the scale because it attempts to measure power sharing within dyadic interactions as opposed to tapping into each partner's evaluation on power sharing. Researchers and practitioners may choose to administer the scale to each partner and look into similarities and differences in their responses.

In summary, in this study, dimensions of power sharing between couples were determined through extensive review of literature and qualitative and quantitative psychometric testing with Turkish participants. Next step research with the PSCRS may involve its further validation with qualitative data. Likewise, the scale can be used in examining relationship between power sharing and gender-role attitudes, beliefs, and values. In addition, the link between power sharing and a host of other variables such as differentiation of self, feminist identity development, and indicators of functionality in couple relationships can be explored. Upon satisfactory use of the scale in the Turkish culture and perhaps further refinement of the scale, it can be used in international populations for cultural comparisons on power sharing.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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