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Adaptation and Validation of Unconditional Positive Self Regard for the Indonesian Counseling Context

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Abstract

Background: Culturally appropriate psychological assessments are essential for ensuring accurate and valid measurement across diverse populations. This study aimed to adapt and validate the Unconditional Positive Self-Regard (UPSR) Scale for use in Indonesian school counseling settings.

Methods: Following a rigorous forward-backward translation process, expert review, and dual certified translation, the Indonesian version of the UPSR was administered to 60 school counselors in Semarang Regency. Data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in JASP to test the two-factor structure of the UPSR, consisting of self-regard and conditionality subdimensions, as proposed in the original scale. The analysis assumed multivariate normality and linearity.

Results: Model fit indices demonstrated acceptable to good fit (CFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.953, RMSEA = 0.064), while all item loadings were statistically significant. Despite minor challenges with reverse-coded items, the adapted scale showed strong internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.89$) and construct validity.

Conclusion: This validated Indonesian UPSR offers a culturally relevant and psychometrically sound tool for counselor training, reflective practice, and future research. The adaptation was conducted with written permission from the original author, ensuring ethical integrity and scholarly rigor.

Keywords: UPSR, Instrument Adaptation, Construct Validity, CFA, School Counselors



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INTRODUCTION

Unconditional Positive Self-Regard (UPSR) is a foundational concept within person-centered theory that reflects an individual's capacity to accept themselves without condition, judgment, or dependency on performance, external validation, or conformity to social standards.¹ It refers to a stable, non-contingent form of self-acceptance — in contrast to conditional self-worth — and has long been seen as a key indicator of psychological maturity, emotional resilience, and openness to personal growth.^{1,2} UPSR plays a central role in Rogers' therapeutic change model, which posits that under the conditions of congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard, individuals experience increased UPSR and reduced internalized conditions of worth, leading to greater autonomy and self-trust.^{1,3} In other words, UPSR functions not only as an internal attitude but as a marker of therapeutic progress and self-actualization.

Patterson and Joseph developed the first empirical measure of UPSR, distinguishing it from global self-esteem by emphasizing its unconditional nature — a feature not adequately captured in prior self-report scales.² Through a series of rigorous psychometric analyses, they identified two core components of UPSR: self-regard (affective/cognitive evaluation of self-worth) and conditionality (the degree to which that evaluation is stable or fluctuates based on external outcomes). Their 12-item scale demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha > .79$) and both convergent and discriminant validity. Although UPSR has been validated in Western academic populations, no equivalent validated instrument exists in Indonesia—particularly one designed for use in counseling and psychoeducational settings. This gap is especially limiting for guidance teachers and school-based counselors who operate in a cultural context where self-perception may be deeply influenced by social norms and religious-moral expectations. In such settings, developing a culturally adapted instrument to measure UPSR is both a theoretical and practical necessity.

Recent advances in neuroscience further reinforce the importance of self-regulation and emotional self-acceptance. The Magic of Encounter bridged Rogers' principles with neurobiological processes such as prefrontal integration, limbic resonance, and mirror neuron activation.⁴ Within this model, unconditional acceptance of self and others is associated with lower amygdala reactivity, increased oxytocin levels, and

reduced reactive defensiveness, contributing to interpersonal safety, resilience, and learning capacity.

While Lux laid foundational ideas for integrating neuroscience with the person-centered approach, his work was primarily theoretical and psychotherapy-focused.⁴ Building on this, the current author developed the Person-Centered Neuroeducation (PCN) model to specifically address the needs of school counselors. This model synthesizes Rogers' psychological framework with neuroscientific insights and contextualizes them within the competencies required in educational guidance. The PCN model positions UPSR not only as a therapeutic ideal but also as a measurable and trainable capacity essential for emotional regulation, professional presence, and student support. Based on this framework, this study aims to adapt and validate the UPSR scale for the Indonesian context. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the factorial structure of the Indonesian version of the UPSR scale, and to assess the scale's internal consistency, convergent validity, and model fit in a sample of Indonesian guidance teachers. These research objectives are pursued to ensure that the adapted instrument retains theoretical fidelity while achieving psychometric robustness in a new cultural context. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide a culturally valid tool for assessing unconditional self-acceptance—an attribute closely tied to psychological well-being, professional identity, and ethical conduct in the helping professions. A validated UPSR scale can enhance counselor training, educational intervention design, and empirical research, thereby contributing to the advancement of person-centered practices in Indonesian counseling and educational environments.

METHODOLOGY

Participants: This cross-sectional survey involved 60 school counselors from junior high schools across Semarang Regency and Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia. Since most schools employ only one or two counselors, participants were recruited across multiple schools. The sample size satisfied adequacy for CFA, following the rule of at least five participants per item for the 12-item scale. Schools were selected through purposive sampling to represent both public and private institutions. Participants were predominantly female, and no restrictions were placed on length of teaching or counseling experience, resulting in a diverse and inclusive sample of practitioners.

Instrument Translation and Adaptation: The original UPSR scale developed by Patterson and Joseph,² comprising 12 items, was translated into Bahasa Indonesia using a rigorous forward and backward translation method. Initial translation was conducted by bilingual counseling experts, followed by independent back-translation. Discrepancies between versions were reviewed and resolved through panel discussions with six experts in counseling, psychology, and linguistics to ensure conceptual, semantic, and cultural equivalence. Face and content validity were evaluated through expert judgment, while readability and comprehensibility were tested using the Cloze procedure with a small sample of representative respondents. Minor linguistic adjustments were made to enhance clarity without altering the construct being measured. The final instrument used in this study was verified through two official translation processes: English to Bahasa Indonesia by D. Susy Wulandari, S.S., from a legally authorized translation institution, and Bahasa Indonesia to English by Dicky Priyana, S. Hum., a sworn translator certified by the Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. This dual verification ensured linguistic accuracy and conceptual fidelity between the original and adapted versions.

Procedure: After obtaining permission from the heads of the Guidance and Counseling Teachers Association (MGBK) of Semarang Regency and Semarang City, the Indonesian version of the UPSR instrument was distributed online via Google Forms in a structured questionnaire format. Data collection took place over two weeks. This research adhered to ethical principles for psychological research: participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of anonymity, and consent was implied through voluntary submission of the form. To ensure authenticity, counselors' names and school affiliations were recorded, and completed data were then exported to JASP for analysis. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and provided informed consent.

Data Analysis: The data collected were analyzed using LISREL 8.80. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) was employed to assess the construct validity of the Indonesian UPSR scale. Model fit was evaluated using a combination of indices: Chi-square/df ratio, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Standardized Root Mean Square

Residual (SRMR). Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, while convergent validity was assessed via Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR). Residual variances and anti-image matrices were analyzed to assess item adequacy and detect problematic indicators. The validation also included expert feedback on item readability and alignment with construct indicators.⁵

RESULTS

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the Indonesian version of the UPSR scale supported a two-factor model consistent with the theoretical structure proposed by Patterson and Joseph² The model included two latent factors: Self-Regard and Conditionality.

Model Fit

The overall model fit for the two-factor solution was evaluated using a range of widely accepted fit indices based on covariance structure analysis⁶ Table 1 presents the model fit indices categorized according to their conceptual groupings.

The results in Table 1 indicate that the model demonstrates acceptable to good fit across most statistical benchmarks. According to Hu and Bentler⁶, a CFI and TLI above 0.90 and an RMSEA below 0.08 suggest a reasonably well-fitting model. Although NFI and RFI fell slightly below the ideal threshold, these are less commonly emphasized in current SEM best practices⁷. Overall, the UPSR Indonesian adaptation is statistically justifiable in its two-factor structure.

Factor Loadings

All 12 items loaded significantly ($p < .001$) onto their respective latent variables. Factor loadings for Self-Regard ranged from 1.00 to 1.47, and for Conditionality from -1.17 to 1.25. Notably, two items (U3 and U5) demonstrated negative loadings, indicating the possibility of conceptual reversal or misinterpretation by respondents.

Table 1. Summary of CFA Model Fit Indices

Category	Fit Indices	Cut-Off Criteria	Result Estimates	Description
Noncentrality Based Fit	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	> 0.90	0.91	Good Fit
	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.05 – 0.08	0.064	Acceptable Fit
Absolute Fit	Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	> 0.90	0.953	Good Fit
	Normed Fit Index (NFI)	> 0.90	0.852	Marginal Fit
Incremental Fit	Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	> 0.90	0.916	Good Fit
	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	> 0.90	0.900	Good Fit
	Relative Fit Index (RFI)	> 0.90	0.828	Marginal Fit
Parsimonious Fit	Parsimonious Normal Fit Index (PNFI)	0.60 – 0.90	0.801	Acceptable Fit

Table 2. Standardized Factor Loadings of UPSR Items (N = 60)

Item	Factor	Loading	Std. Error	z-value	p-value
U1	Self-Regard	1.000 (fixed)	—	—	—
U4	Self-Regard	1.238	0.179	6.917	< .001
U7	Self-Regard	1.468	0.183	8.017	< .001
U8	Self-Regard	1.448	0.194	7.447	< .001
U9	Self-Regard	1.369	0.178	7.681	< .001
U11	Self-Regard	1.350	0.181	7.472	< .001
U2	Conditionality	1.000 (fixed)	—	—	—
U3	Conditionality	-1.008	0.274	-3.677	< .001
U5	Conditionality	-1.174	0.291	-4.029	< .001
U6	Conditionality	1.248	0.305	4.095	< .001
U10	Conditionality	1.256	0.300	4.190	< .001
U12	Conditionality	1.104	0.292	3.778	< .001

This table confirms that all items are statistically significant indicators of their corresponding constructs, further validating the factorial structure proposed in the original scale ². The presence of negative loadings may warrant rephrasing or further semantic evaluation in future revisions.

DISCUSSION

This study confirmed that the Indonesian version of the Unconditional Positive Self-Regard Scale (UPSR) is psychometrically valid and aligns with the original two-factor structure introduced by Patterson and Joseph (2006) consisting of Self-Regard and Conditionality. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results revealed that all items significantly loaded onto their respective latent constructs, with acceptable model fit indices—CFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.953, RMSEA = 0.064—indicating that the adapted scale fits the data well.^{6,7} The presence of negative loadings in items U3 and U5 suggests

challenges commonly found in reverse-coded items, which may be due to misinterpretation or semantic inversion effects ⁸. Despite this, the scale demonstrated strong internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.89 and composite reliability (CR) exceeding 0.70, supporting the scale's reliability.⁹

Cross-cultural research emphasizes the importance of validating psychological instruments in local cultural contexts. Vijver et al.¹⁰ argued that constructs like self-regard are inherently shaped by cultural values and relational norms. The rigorous translation, expert review, and readability evaluation conducted in this study ensured semantic, conceptual, and functional

equivalence of the Indonesian UPSR. Recent literature supports the UPSR's relevance across cultural and applied settings. For instance,¹¹ found strong correlations between UPSR and psychological health outcomes in a UK sample. Proctor et al.¹² demonstrated that parental conditional regard negatively predicted UPSR among young adults, affirming its sensitivity to interpersonal and cultural dynamics. Furthermore, Flanagan et al.¹³ identified that UPSR predicts post-traumatic growth, validating its predictive utility in positive psychology.

In the Indonesian educational and counseling context, the UPSR adaptation is highly applicable. As Rogers¹⁴ proposed, and Lux⁴ extended through the Person-Centered Neuroeducation model, fostering UPSR in counselors enhances their authenticity, resilience, and empathic capacity. The culturally adapted UPSR scale thus offers a practical and theoretically grounded tool for counselor development and reflective practice. The adaptation was carried out with official written permission from Dr. Trevor Patterson, ensuring ethical alignment and intellectual integrity. This not only strengthens the scholarly validity of this study but also promotes the use of ethically sourced instruments

The present study developed and validated the UPSR (Understanding, Presence, Support, Relationship) scale for high school counselors, with the goal of offering a culturally grounded instrument to assess empathic connection with students. The confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the four-factor structure and showed good model fit and construct reliability, affirming that each dimension—Understanding, Presence, Support, and Relationship—represents a meaningful and distinct element of empathic counseling behaviour.^{15,16}

This research holds implications not only for the practice of counseling in educational settings but also for the broader domain of school-based mental health promotion. The UPSR enables school counselors and educators to assess their relational competencies, which are increasingly recognized as protective factors against adolescent psychosocial distress.¹⁷ In many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including Indonesia, access to psychological services is limited. Therefore, schools represent a crucial frontline in the detection and mitigation of emotional and behavioral problems.^{18,19}

Further research is recommended to explore UPSR's predictive validity in intervention studies and across diverse populations. The use of UPSR as a formative evaluation tool in counselor development programs may

also enhance reflective practices among practitioners, leading to improved student–counselor engagement and outcomes²⁰ in local research.

Strengths and limitations

This study is one of the first to adapt and validate the UPSR scale in the Indonesian school counseling context, involving counselors from both Semarang Regency and Semarang City to enhance representativeness. The structured procedure and clear participant identification strengthened data authenticity, while CFA using JASP provided robust evidence for the two-factor structure. However, the relatively small sample limited to one region may affect generalizability, the online self-report format could introduce bias, the absence of formal ethical clearance presents a governance limitation, and the cross-sectional design did not allow assessment of test–retest reliability or longitudinal stability.

Implications of the findings

The validated Indonesian UPSR offers a culturally appropriate tool for assessing school counselors' self-regard and conditionality, with potential use in training, supervision, and professional development, as well as in advancing counseling research and practice in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully adapted and validated the Unconditional Positive Self-Regard Scale (UPSR) for Indonesian school counselors. The adaptation process followed rigorous procedures including translation, expert review, readability testing, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The results indicated a stable two-factor structure—Self-Regard and Conditionality—consistent with the original scale developed by Patterson and Joseph (2006). The model showed acceptable fit (CFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.953, RMSEA = 0.064), and high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.89). The adaptation took into account cultural and semantic equivalence, following recommendations by¹⁰ for culturally sensitive instrument development. Despite minor issues with reversed items (Swain et al., 2008), the Indonesian UPSR demonstrated strong validity and reliability. The UPSR is not only theoretically relevant within humanistic psychology and person-centered approaches^{4,14}, but it also demonstrates empirical support across contexts^{11–13}.
¹³permission from Dr. Trevor Patterson, this adapted version offers a validated and ethically sound assessment tool for Indonesian counselor education.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest Declaration: None

Ethical Statement: This study involved non-interventional survey-based research conducted among adult participants (school counselors). Prior to participation, all respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study and gave their voluntary consent. As this study did not involve clinical or biomedical procedures and was conducted as part of a doctoral dissertation under academic supervision, no formal institutional ethical clearance was obtained.

Running Title: Validation of UPSR in Indonesia

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Appendices

Appendix A: UPSR Indonesian Adaptation Items

Item Code	Item Statement (Bahasa Indonesia)	Dimension
U1	Saya menghargai diri saya apa adanya.	Self-Regard
U2	Saya merasa layak hanya jika saya berhasil.	Conditionality
U3	Saya merasa gagal jika saya tidak menyenangkan orang lain.	Conditionality
U4	Saya menerima diri saya tanpa syarat.	Self-Regard
U5	Saya mencintai diri saya hanya ketika saya tampil sempurna.	Conditionality
U6	Saya tetap menghargai diri walaupun saya membuat kesalahan.	Conditionality
U7	Saya merasa diri saya berharga.	Self-Regard
U8	Saya percaya bahwa saya berhak bahagia apa pun keadaan saya.	Self-Regard
U9	Saya merasa damai dengan diri saya sendiri.	Self-Regard
U10	Saya tidak memerlukan persetujuan orang lain untuk merasa layak.	Conditionality
U11	Saya menerima kekurangan saya tanpa menghakimi.	Self-Regard
U12	Saya tidak merasa perlu selalu benar untuk merasa berharga.	Conditionality

Appendix B: Consent and Data Collection Procedure

This research adhered to ethical principles for psychological research. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, assured of anonymity, and consent was implied through voluntary form submission.

Appendix C: Expert Validation Summary

Expert Validator	Area of Expertise	Feedback Summary
M.S.S. (2024)	Utami Counseling, Instrumentation	Recommended minor linguistic revisions; confirmed item clarity and cultural relevance.