

Examining the Relationships Between Psychological Inflexibility and Impulsiveness of University Students

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between the psychological inflexibility levels and impulsivity of university students. A correlational survey model was used in this study. The study group of the research consists of a total of 512 university students, 393 women (76.8%) and 119 (23.2%) men, reached through convenient sampling. Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, Barratt Impulsivity Scale Short Form, and personal information form were used as data collection tools. Descriptive statistics with participants, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression analysis were used in the analysis of the data. According to the results of the correlation analysis, a significant positive correlation was obtained between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity ($r=.438, p<.01$). According to the results of the regression analysis were examined, it was found that impulsivity was a significant predictor of psychological inflexibility ($p<.001, R=.43, R^2=.19, \beta=.43$). As a result of this research, a positive and significant relationship was found between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity, and impulsivity significantly predicted psychological inflexibility. It is thought that the results of this research will contribute to the researches based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. The findings obtained in the research were discussed by taking into account.

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ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN PSİKOLOJİK KATILIK VE DÜRTÜSELLİK ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLERİN İNCELENMESİ

Makale Bilgileri	ÖZ
Published: 28.12.2022	Bu araştırmada üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik katılık düzeyleri ve dürtüsellikleri arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu araştırmada ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır.
Keywords: Psikolojik Katılık, Dürtüsellik , Kabul ve Kararlılık Terapisi	Araştırmanın çalışma grubu uygun örnekleme yoluyla ulaşılan 393 kadın (%76.8) ve 119 (% 23.2) erkek olmak üzere toplam 512 üniversite öğrencisinden oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama araçları olarak Kabul ve Eylem Formu-II, Barratt Dürtüsellik Ölçeği Kısa Formu ve kişisel bilgi formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde katılımcılarla betimsel istatistikler, Pearson korelasyon analizi ve basit doğrusal regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Yapılan korelasyon analizi sonuçlarına bakıldığında psikolojik katılık ile dürtüsellik arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki elde edilmiştir ($r=.438$, $p<.01$). Yapılan regresyon analizi sonuçlarına bakıldığında dürtüsellik psikolojik katılığın anlamlı bir yordayıcı olduğu bulgusu elde edilmiştir ($p<.001$, $R=.43$, $R^2=.19$, $\beta=.43$). Bu araştırmanın sonucunda psikolojik katılıkla dürtüsellik arasında pozitif anlamlı ilişki çıkmıştır ve dürtüsellik psikolojik katılığı anlamlı düzeyde yormaktadır. Bu araştırma sonuçlarının Kabul ve Kararlılık Terapisini temel alarak yapılacak araştırmalara katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular dikkate alınarak tartışılmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

The need arising from the respect of man and the human world has led many humanities to produce various therapy trends. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) emerges as an experiential and value-oriented approach, as well as bringing a new breath to the problems and areas examined by previous therapy ecoles (Biglan & Hayes, 1996). In addition, the literature on the psychopathology model proposed by this school is gradually expanding (Hayes et al., 2006). The concept of psychological inflexibility emerges as an important concept in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. Psychological inflexibility, which has its Latin origin "psychological inflexibility", is a psychological reaction that has a dominant role in personal values and actions that direct events, preventing people from positively changing their behaviors in achieve individual goals (Bond et al., 2011). Psychological inflexibility affects many aspects of functioning, including thinking styles, personality, cognitive change, emotion, and physiology (Gilbert et al., 2019).

Psychological inflexibility consists of six dimensions: cognitive fusion, experiential avoidance, conceptualized past and feared future, lack of values clarity, inaction impulsivity or avoidance, and attachment to conceptualized self (Hayes et al., 2006). Psychological inflexibility is a focus on managing psychological responses rather than performing actions consistent with deeply attached values, often in an effort to avoid unpleasant emotions (Bond et al., 2011). Psychological inflexibility is the individual's effort to control her/his emotions, thoughts, behaviors, or experiences when faced with an undesirable experience (Arslan et al., 2020). As a result, individuals may act inconsistently with what the environment offers regarding values and goals (Hayes et al., 2006).

Impulsivity is the inability to resist the urge, drive, or temptation to commit an act that is harmful to an individual or others (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Patton et al. (1995) discuss impulsivity in a three-dimensional structure. These dimensions are; not planning, motor impulsivity, and attention impulsivity. Attention-related impulsivity, one of the sub-dimensions of impulsivity; includes inattention and cognitive dysregulation, while motor impulsivity; indicates being impulsive and not being patient in motor actions, while not making a plan includes having difficulty in controlling and not being able to tolerate cognitive confusion (Bilgili, 2022). Impulsive individuals lack the ability to evaluate the consequences of their actions for themselves or others (Bakhshani, 2014).

There has been a lot of recent research on the dynamics between psychological inflexibility and various variables. Considering the studies in the literature, psychological inflexibility with psychopathological states (Arslan et al., 2020; Kato, 2016; Levin et al., 2014; Woodruff, 2013), suicide actions (Callahan et al., 2021; Krafft et al., 2019; DeBeer, et al., 2018), eating disorder (Finger et al., 2018) and internet addiction (Kabakçı, 2021; Hsieh et al., 2019; Chou et al., 2017) are examined. Considering the studies in the literature, it is seen that impulsivity is studied with concepts

such as suicidal cognitions (Baltacı et al., 2020), obsession, alexithymia (Özen & Topcu, 2015), the dark triad of Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Satici et al., 2019). It is predicted that the impulsive personality trait will also be a factor related to psychological inflexibility. In addition, it is stated that the presence of situations such as effective behavioral control, experiential avoidance, deficiencies in rule control, weak suppression skills, weakness in discrimination and inappropriate stimulus control, and inability to cope with delay (Farmer & Golden, 2009) regarding impulsive behaviors will be effective on psychological inflexibility.

Looking at the literature, it is seen that there is no study examining the relationships related to psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. Considering the many risky behaviors that impulsivity brings with it, it is thought that it would be beneficial to conduct research that determines the relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity in university students. For this purpose, answers to the following basic questions were sought in the study:

1. Is there a significant relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity in university students?
2. Does impulsivity significantly predict psychological inflexibility in university students?

METHOD

Research Method: Correlational research model, one of the quantitative research designs, was used in this study. It is a research design used to measure the relationship between two or more variables in the correlational research model (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity and the predictive effect of impulsivity on psychological inflexibility were investigated. The dependent variable of the study is psychological inflexibility and the independent variable is impulsivity.

Research Group: The study group of the research consists of a total of 512 university students, 393 women (76.8%) and 119 (23.2%) men. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 33 (\bar{X} :22.17, ss:3.06).

Data Collection Tools: Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II, developed by (Yavuz et al., 2016) as a data collection tool, and adapted to Turkish Culture by Meule et al. (2011) and adapted into Turkish by Tamam et al. (2013) Barratt Impulsivity Scale-Short Form and Personal Information Form were used.

Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II (AAQ-II): For the measurement of psychological inflexibility, which is seen as the basis of psychopathology in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Bond et al. (2011) and Yavuz et al. (2016) adapted to Turkish Culture. The scale is a 7-point Likert scale, from 1: never true to 7: always true. As a result of CFA, it is seen that the fit index of the scale

has acceptable values (RMSEA (.07), SRMR (.021), CFI (.97), GFI (.97), NFI (0.961), chi-square χ^2/df (3.74) $p < 0.01$). The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .85. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .90.

Barratt Impulsivity Scale Short Form: The short form of the Barratt Impulsivity Scale was prepared by Meule et al. (2011). The Turkish adaptation of the short form of the Barratt Impulsivity Scale was made by Tamam et al. (2013). The scale consists of 3 sub-dimensions and 15 items (No Planning, Motor Impulsivity, and Attention). The scale is evaluated both on the total score and on the sub-dimensions. It is a 4-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the adapted scale was determined as .82 for the total score of the scale, .80 for the inability to plan subscale, .70 for motor, and .64 for attention. The findings show that the Turkish version of the short form of the scale is sufficient, reliable, and valid. In this study, the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .82.

Personal Information Form: It was created by the researchers to get information about the age and gender of the participants.

Data Collection: The scales used in the research were transferred to digital media and the data were collected online. Informed consent was obtained from the participants as the study was based on volunteerism. It took approximately 15 minutes for the participants to fill out the research form.

Data Analysis: The data were analyzed using the SPSS program. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple, e-linear regression analysis were used in the analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	\bar{X}	SS	Skewness	Kurtosis
Psychological Inflexibility	29.40	10.47	.175	-.755
Impulsivity	25.80	7.41	.274	-.701

As can be seen in Table 1., the skewness and kurtosis values of the AAQ-II and Barratt Impulsivity Scale-Short Form scales vary between -1 and +1. The distribution of the variables between -1 and +1 indicates a normal distribution (Hair Jr et al., 2021). Parametric analyzes are applied in cases where a normal distribution is achieved (Elliott & Woodward, 2014). In this study, parametric analyzes were performed since the data were normally distributed.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis Results to Determine the Relationship Between Psychological Inflexibility and Impulsivity

Variables	Psychological Inflexibility	Impulsivity
Psychological Inflexibility	-	.438 **
Impulsivity	-	-

Table 2. shows the results of the correlation analysis to determine the relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. As seen in Table 2., there is a significant positive relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity ($r=.43$, $p<.001$).

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results of Impulsivity Prediction of Psychological Inflexibility

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	T
Constant	6.625	1.706		3.884
Impulsivity	.062	.056	.438	10.989 **

$R = .43$, $R^2 = .19$, $\Delta R^2 = .19$, $F_{(1-510)} = 120.747$, $*p <.05$, $**p <.01$

Table 3 presents the results of a simple linear regression analysis of impulsivity as a predictor of psychological inflexibility. As seen in Table 3., impulsivity predicts psychological inflexibility significantly ($\beta=.43$, $R^2 = .19$, $p<.001$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, a positive and significant relationship was obtained between the psychological inflexibility levels of university students and their impulsivity. In addition, it was found that impulsivity significantly predicted psychological inflexibility. As the level of psychological inflexibility of university students increases, their impulsivity also increases. Considering the studies in the literature, there are no studies that directly address psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. In the studies conducted by Kalın (2020); Nasehi et al., (2020), and Raisi-Nasehi et al., (2020), a negative relationship was obtained between psychological flexibility and impulsivity, which is the opposite concept of psychological inflexibility according to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. In the studies conducted by Mobini et al., (2007) and Mobini et al., (2006), a positive relationship was obtained between cognitive distortions that may cause psychological inflexibility and impulsivity.

Impulsive characteristics of individuals; negatively affect decision-making processes. In these individuals, the situation has an inhibitory role in the formation of psychological flexibility and causes the formation and increase of psychological inflexibility (Ong & Eustis, 2006). Considering the studies in the literature, it is seen that there are no studies that directly address the concepts of psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. Considering the relationship between psychological inflexibility and similar and opposite concepts and impulsivity, it is seen that there are findings that are indirectly consistent with the findings of this study.

There are some limitations in this study. This research is limited to the participants to whom the used data collection tools were applied and the qualities that the data collection tools used measured. Since the study group of the research consists of university students, it is seen that there is a limitation in terms of generalizability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research was conducted on university students. Considering the studies in the literature, it is predicted that it will be beneficial to apply approaches based on acceptance and awareness with children and adolescents (Öztop, 2017). Similar studies can be repeated on the children and adolescents study group. In this study, it was found that there is a significant relationship between psychological inflexibility and impulsivity and that impulsivity predicts psychological inflexibility. Future studies can also deal with the relationship between impulsivity and the elements of the hexagon that make up psychological inflexibility in more detail. Considering the studies in the literature, there are no studies on psychological inflexibility and impulsivity. It is thought that considering these concepts in different sample groups will contribute to the literature. It is seen that the increase in the psychological inflexibility levels of university students increases impulsivity. It is recommended to organize psychoeducation to help university students reduce their level of psychological inflexibility.

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