Development and Validation of Social Cynicism Scale for Women

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ABSTRACT

The present investigation purported to develop and validate an indigenous social cynicism scale for young adult women. Following an exploratory sequential research design, the study involved three phases. In phase I, a qualitative study with ($n = 20$) young adult women is conducted to conceptualize the construct of social cynicism. The themes drawn from the data were used to develop a pool of 36 items. After extensive scrutiny and evaluation by five expert judges, 28 items were finalized that were phrased in a self-report five-point Likert rating scale. In phase II, the psychometric properties of the scale were established. Through non-probability purposive sampling, a sample of ($n = 227$) young adult women aged 18-28 years ($M = 22.29$ and $SD = 2.06$) was recruited for exploratory factor analysis. Principle Component Analysis was performed for factor extractions, while the Direct Oblimin method was applied for factor rotations. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were found to be significant. As a result, a final scale of 19 items with a three-factor model, namely institutional, experiential and dispositional cynicism, emerged that accounted for 42.41% variance, with an alpha reliability of .83. In phase III, another sample of ($n = 218$) young adult women with an age range of 18–27 years ($M = 22.48$ and $SD = 2.38$) was recruited to run confirmatory factor analysis that revealed a good model fit and validated the three-dimensional structure of the scale.

Keywords: Content validity, construct validity, dispositional cynicism, experiential cynicism, institutional cynicism, scale development, young adult women

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INTRODUCTION

Our worldview significantly influences our cognitions, feelings, and behaviors. For example, social cynicism (SC) is a negative view of human nature, which entails exploitation by others and a lack of trust in social institutions (Leung et al., 2002). Similarly, Burgess (2015) argued that it is a belief about life and its working dynamics. Accordingly, socially cynical individuals consider this world a skeptical place, with equally distrustful social institutions, where ethical values are compromised to achieve vested interests. It means that it emerges from the non-fulfillment of high social expectations about social institutions, authorities, and society as a whole, leading to disillusionment, betrayal, and disappointment in the individual (Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). It eventually produces unhappiness and dissatisfaction in life.

Some prior investigations suggested using personal and social cynicism interchangeably, but both concepts are qualitatively unique and must be treated separately (Chen et al., 2006). While personal cynicism may be treated as a personality trait, SC is a worldview that pervasively impacts diverse social behaviors and attitudes (Chen et al., 2016). Defined both as a personal characteristic and a general perspective of the world, personal cynicism or simply cynicism (Butcher et al., 1990) is believed to appear initially during early childhood and encapsulates one's perceived experiences of social interaction and communication (Mills & Keil, 2005).

Previous studies have investigated SC across a diverse variety of workplace settings that shed significant light on its underlying dynamics and interrelations with other variables of interest. For example, while conducting a cross-cultural investigation, Leung et al. (2010) found that SC negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Similarly, another study concluded that SC had a significant negative relationship with job and life satisfaction while positively correlated with turnover intentions (Li et al., 2011). Moreover, West et al. (2015) argued that employees with lesser levels of SC would be less distrustful and show more corporate social responsibility. Furthermore, another study reported that SC affects the person-organization fit, thus impacting job satisfaction (Deng et al., 2011).

While converging on leadership dynamics within organizational settings, Byza et al. (2017) proposed that the congruence between leaders' and followers' SC shaped the leadership dynamics as it is the SC that influenced followers' leader-member exchange, extra-role, and proactive behavior. Similarly, another study investigated the effects of SC on employees on organizational cynicism and reported that they were moderated by organizational policies about fairness and giving independence (Kwantes & Bond, 2019). A study further argued that SC had direct and positive effects on perceived workplace bullying bringing in the moderating role of Islamic work ethic (S. Ahmad et al., 2021).

By studying SC beliefs at the individual level, Alexandra et al. (2017) found that it had a positive relationship with social dominance orientation. Moreover, the social dominance orientation mediated the relationship between individual SC beliefs and the perception of unethical behavior. Similarly, while contextualizing SC at a dispositional level, a study investigated its effects on traumatic experiences and found that it did not predict post-traumatic growth (Nalipay et al., 2017). Furthermore, SC was found to have a negative association with hope (Bernardo, 2013), while Lau et al. (2021) reported no association between SC and the sleep quality of the participants.

Overview of Scale on Cynicism and Social Cynicism

As far as assessment scales of cynicism are concerned, quite a few options are available to researchers. The Organizational Cynicism Scale (Brandes, 1997) is among the others that assesses cynicism in organizational settings and is comprised of three factors: emotional cynicism, cognitive cynicism, and behavioral cynicism. Brandes (1997) posited that within organizational settings, a change in the workplace dynamics brought a change in the cynicism levels of employees. It sheds light on the role of the workplace environment on employees' cynicism. Similarly, the Cynicism Scale by Turner and Valentine (2001) is also used to assess organizational cynicism. The unique aspect of this 11-item scale was the inclusion of statements on moral decision-making based on the challenges the employees working

in the customer care and sales department have to deal with in their professional interactions.

Furthermore, Bedford and Foulds (1978) developed the Personality Deviance Scales (PDS), which focused on the personality assessment of the psychiatric population. They divided the factors into two major orthogonal factors through hierarchical factor analysis: personal inadequacy and general hostility. At the same time, cynicism was treated as a subscale under general hostility and was labeled as distrust-cynicism. Also, through an 18-item Cynical Attitudes Towards College Scale (CATCS), Brockway et al. (2002) assessed cynicism among college students across four reliable dimensions: policy, academic, social, and institutional.

Similarly, cynicism was also one of the nine restructured clinical scales of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-II Restructured Form (MMPI-2-RF) by Ben-Porath and Tellegen (2008) that also included demoralization, somatic complaints, low positive emotions, antisocial behavior, ideas of persecution, dysfunctional negative emotions, aberrant experiences, and hypomanic activation. Here, once again, cynicism was treated as a subscale, and that too within the clinical framework, just like PDS (Bedford & Foulds, 1978) discussed earlier.

The overview of all these assessment measures indicates that most of the available scales of assessing the construct of cynicism are grounded in clinical or organizational settings, which are rather different from

social settings and experiences. Moreover, there are hardly any scales to measure SC except for the most extensively used Social Axioms Survey (SAS) by Leung et al. (2002), but it conceptualized SC as a subscale of SAS. Other than SC, SAS assessed four other factors: social complexity, the reward for application, spirituality (religiosity), and fate control. Its revised version was developed as Social Axioms Survey-II (Leung et al., 2012), which enhanced its cross-cultural validity and application to improve its psychometric properties. Consequently, the subscale of fate control in SAS-II was further subdivided into fate determination and alterability.

Moreover, not a single assessment measure among all these scales aimed to target women; rather, there are examples of developing and validating scales by testing the items on men as default participants and extending the results to women. The same situation occurred during the development of MMPI (Hathaway & McKinley, 1943).

Gender Dynamics and Social Cynicism

Talking about the unique positionality of women within a typical patriarchal system, Kara et al. (2012) argued that the vulnerability of women arises from the unique challenges they face, like motherhood, gender stereotyping, and discrimination. For example, as the gender stereotypes considered men to be born leaders, it became rather difficult for women to acquire leadership roles in society (Schaap et al., 2008).

In the context of these findings, it can be assumed that women might feel uncomfortable and discouraged from carrying out their professional responsibilities, especially without any substantial support, as it looks like an intrusion into their personal and social life. Unfortunately, according to our knowledge, the research scholarship lacks gender analysis on SC, though a few studies have reported gender-based findings on cynicism. Like, Töyry et al. (2004) found higher levels of cynicism among adult men employees. Nevertheless, conversely, Greenglass et al. (2001) demonstrated higher cynicism in women nurses. Similarly, another study revealed that women reported a 6.7 times stronger impact of employee cynicism on work withdrawal (Abubakar et al., 2017).

Helgeson (2020) pointed out that gender dynamics vary from culture to culture, which further highlights the need for an indigenous and culturally relevant scale of SC for women that can manifest the unique socio-cultural, familial and political context. Finally, it gives a glimpse into the precarious times in which we are living these days, where there is a surge of violence against women, which many argue, is not some new phenomenon but a manifestation of increased awareness and resistance of the women in fighting back against these atrocities (S. Hafeez, 2021; Kirmani, 2021).

Similarly, it is observed that by projecting negative stereotypes of women, the media is also aggravating violence against women in Pakistan (Khan, 2021). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic also

played a vital role in manifesting intimate partner violence due to financial instability and higher levels of stress and anxiety (Munir et al., 2021). Keeping in mind all these experiences of women, it becomes even more vital to examine SC among Pakistani women, which is why the current study was designed to develop and validate an indigenous SC scale for young Pakistani adult women following a multi-phase procedure.

This literature review enabled us to formulate the following objectives: (a) to investigate the conceptualization of SC among young Pakistani indigenous women and (b) to develop and validate a scale for assessing SC in young Pakistani indigenous women.

METHOD

Research Design and Procedure

Following an exploratory sequential research design, this study involved three phases, with samples recruited for each study across different periods. Conceptualized in January 2021, the data collection and analysis for phase I was conducted between January and February 2021. The sample recruitment for phase II was completed by March 2021, followed by sample recruitment for phase III in July 2021. The final results were compiled and interpreted in August 2021.

A qualitative study in phase I explored social cynicism in young adult women, starting with an inductive approach. The data was collected through focus group discussion (FGD) and open-ended questionnaires, and themes were drawn to generate an item pool for the scale, which was finalized after getting approval from a panel of experts. Based on this item pool, a tryout phase of the item pool was conducted in phase II, which reported satisfactory findings, resulting in the recruitment of a sample for exploratory factor analysis (EFA). To further confirm emerged factors through EFA, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted in phase III to evaluate the scale's construct validity. As the scale was developed in the English language, only those participants recruited in both phases II and III who could easily comprehend its content and were able to fill out the questionnaire online.

Ethical Considerations

In all the phases of the current study, strict adherence to the ethical guidelines mandated by American Psychological Association (APA) was followed. An ethics clearance certificate with reference no. PSY-31/GCU/21, dated January 18, 2021, was taken from the Ethics Review Committee (ERC) at the Department of Psychology, Government College University (GCU) Lahore, Pakistan. All the participants were briefed about the nature and objectives of the study, and only those participants were recruited who gave their formal consent by agreeing to the terms and conditions for participation. The first author assured to keep their information confidential and private, only to be used for academic and research purposes. While the sample for the FGD was recruited online through a Zoom meeting link, the rest was recruited through Google forms documents.

The participants could only proceed after they had read, understood, and selected the 'Yes' option from the consent checklist. The Google form link was deactivated once the desired number of participants was completed. Following a sociodemographic characteristics sheet, the scale items were presented to each participant in a five-point Likert format. After completing the assessment, all participants were thanked for their volunteer participation. Forms with incomplete information regarding social cynicism items were excluded from the study. Moreover, additional permission was taken from the FGD participants for the audio recording of the session, which would be transcribed, translated, and interpreted anonymously for research purposes only.

Details of Subsequent Phases

Phase I Qualitative Study. As the study aimed to explore the indigenous and socio-cultural aspects of social cynicism among young adult women, an inductive approach was found appropriate for investigation. Following the qualitative research method, a sample of ($n =20$) young adult women was recruited in two stages through a non-probability purposive sampling technique from a public sector university. In addition, the triangulation method (Carter et al., 2014) was employed to enhance the quality and credibility of the qualitative data. Initially, data was collected through an FGD with $n = 6$ young adult women. At the same time, in the second stage, an open-ended questionnaire was administered to a sample of young adult women till the point of thematic saturation

(Guest et al., 2020), which resulted in an additional sample of $n = 14$. Furthermore, for better understanding and comprehension, each participant was presented with the definition of social cynicism (Burgess, 2015) at the start of data collection.

Phase II Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Study. This phase was also divided into two subsequent stages. In the first stage, a tryout of the 28 items social cynicism scale in women (SCSW) was conducted on a non-probability purposive sample of ($n = 50$) young adult women recruited online from various universities through a Google Forms link. By using SPSS version 21, results were generated that showed significant reliability indices for the scale. Furthermore, it led to the formal recruitment of the sample for the EFA, with $n = 227$ young adult women, through the non-probability purposive sampling technique. Cohen et al. (2013) suggested that for better psychometric properties, the scale must be administered to a sample equivalent to five or 10 times the total number of items; hence this suggestion was incorporated into the current investigation.

Phase III Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Study. CFA is conducted to establish the construct validity of the scale further and test the hypothesis that the factor structure that emerged in EFA can be replicated in an independent sample (Stevens, 1996). Following a similar sampling technique and inclusion and exclusion criteria of EFA, a sample of ($n = 218$) young adult women aged 18–27 were recruited. Following the

guidelines of Cohen et al. (2013), a sample equivalent to five or 10 times the total number of items was recruited for this phase.

RESULTS

Phase I Qualitative Study

Only young adult women studying for at least two years in public sector universities were recruited in this phase with an age range of 20-23 years ($M = 21.1$, $SD = 0.94$), without any reported physical or mental health-related issues. The sociodemographic characteristics in Table 1 showed that most of the participants were of 21 years (40%), middle-born (65%), had 14 years of education (70%), and belonged to the nuclear family system (85%), with an average monthly family income of 136,000 ($SD = 95205.04$) PKR.

Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines, an inductive thematic analysis (TA) approach was used to analyze the whole data. All the transcription-based data and open-ended questionnaire responses were read several times for better

familiarization and understanding. Initially, similar themes were clustered together and further inspected for repetitive themes. The reduced data was then analyzed to generate codes, leading to the extraction of central themes with relevant sub-themes, which served as the basis for item generation (Younas et al., 2021). It resulted in a pool of 36 items, which were presented for content validation and further scrutiny to a panel of five expert judges, including four SMEs (subject matter experts, all Assistant Professors of Psychology) and one English language expert (an M.Phil. scholar of English language and literature) for potential identification of grammatical and linguistic errors. They removed eight items, including vague and overlapping items, to reduce redundancy and those about the religion-based social cynicism owing to their sensitive nature, and eventually finalized a 28-item scale. As Babakus and Mangold (1992) recommended using a five-point Likert scale for better response rate and quality, we also transformed it accordingly with the following options: 1 (strongly

Table 1

Sociodemographic characteristics of participants in phase I (n =20)

Variables	n	%	Variables	n	%
Age (years)			*Formal Education (years)*		
20	6	30	14	14	70
21	8	40	15	6	30
22	4	20	*Family System*		
23	2	10	Joint	3	15
Monthly Family Income[a]			Nuclear	17	85
Below and up to 100,000	14	70	*Birth Order*		
100,001–200,000	2	10	Firstborn	4	20
200,001–300,000	3	15	Middle born	13	65
300,001–400,000	1	5	Last born	3	15

Note. [a] Reflects income in PKR

disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither disagree nor agree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree), indicating the degree to which the participants would report social cynicism.

Phase II Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) Study

Table 2 highlights sociodemographic characteristics for both phases II and III. For example, the age range for phase II was 18-28 years ($M = 22.29$, $SD = 2.06$), while for phase III, it was 18-27 years ($M = 22.48$, $SD = 2.38$). Moreover, the average monthly family income in phase II was $M = 142594.27$ with an SD of 173969, while for phase III, it was found to be

172288.99 with an SD of 372640.22. Also, the average formal educational experience of participants was found to be 13.48 with an SD of 2.02 for phase II and 16.27 with an SD of 2.19 for phase III, respectively.

To establish the authentication of data fitness for the factor analysis before running EFA, the Bartlett Test of sphericity ($\chi2 = 1041.51(171)$, $p < .001$) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.86) values were computed that showed significant results. Also, factors based on Eigenvalues > 1 with factor loadings $\geq .35$ were retained. Principal component analysis (PCA) was performed for factor extractions, while the Direct Oblimin method was used for factor

Table 2

Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants in phase II and phase III

Variables	Phase II ($n = 227$)		Phase III ($n = 218$)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*
Birth Order				
Firstborn	67	29.5	53	24.3
Middle born	102	44.5	95	43.6
Last born	56	24.7	52	23.9
Only child	3	1.3	18	8.3
Monthly Family Income[a]				
Below and up to 100,000	134	67.67	147	67.43
100,001–200,000	34	17.17	43	19.72
200,001–300,000	15	7.5	9	4.13
Family System				
Joint	55	24.2	41	18.8
Nuclear	146	64.3	133	61
SPDOP[b]	2	.9	1	.5
SPSP[c]	11	4.8	4	1.8
SPDP[d]	9	4	17	7.8
SPEP[e]	1	.4	7	3.2
Others	3	1.3	15	6.9

Note. [a] In phase II, 29 participants did not report their monthly family income. Therefore, the values reported here are for a sample of ($n = 198$) and in PKR. [b] Reflects Single parent family due to divorce. [c] Reflects Single parent family due to separation. [d] Reflects Single parent family due to the death of a parent. [e] Reflects Single parent family owing to the employment situation of a parent

rotations that resulted in a 19-item three-factor solution, accounting for 42.41% variance (Table 3).

Table 3

Exploratory factor analysis of the Social Cynicism Scale for Women (SCSW)

SCSW items	Factor loading		
	1	2	3
Factor I: Institutional			
SCSW 7	**.46**	-.09	.34
SCSW 15	**.36**	-.03	.24
SCSW 18	**.55**	.28	-.10
SCSW 20	**.65**	.08	-.00
SCSW 21	**.64**	.28	.01
SCSW 22	**.72**	.04	-.10
SCSW 23	**.44**	.27	.08
SCSW 24	**.62**	.05	-.04
SCSW 25	**.67**	-.12	.14
SCSW 26	**.57**	-.30	-.10
Factor II: Experiential			
SCSW 4	-.02	**.46**	.38
SCSW 8	-.04	**.63**	-.00
SCSW 9	.27	**.46**	.27
SCSW 17	.10	**.65**	-.11
Factor III: Dispositional			
SCSW 3	-.11	-.12	**.53**
SCSW 5	.07	.27	**.68**
SCSW 6	.40	-.17	**.48**
SCSW 13	.37	.10	**.48**
SCSW 27	-.00	.13	**.59**

Note. N = 227. The extraction method was principal axis factoring with an Oblimin rotation. The highest factor loadings are in bold.

Table 4 showed significant inter-correlations among all the factors of SCSW, justifying the use of the Direct Oblimin rotation method.

Moreover, the scree plot (Figure 1) also showed three factors for the scale. Based on face validity, interpretability, the meaningfulness of the research context, and the overall content of the factor, items were finally clustered into respective factors. Once again, in consultation with two SMEs (Assistant Professors of Psychology), the factors of the SCSW were labeled, and their further details were reported.

The factor I Institutional Cynicism comprised ten items (7, 15, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26), which explained 27.51% of the variance with factor loadings from .36 to .67. It included items assessing the SC experiences in women resulting from their interaction with key social institutions.

The factor II Experiential Cynicism consisted of four items (4, 8, 9, and 17) that explained 8.23% of the variance with factor loadings from .46 to .65. This subscale includes items referring to the daily life experiences of women that become source of SC.

Factor III Dispositional Cynicism comprised five items (3, 5, 6, 13, and 27)

Table 4

Inter-correlations of factors of Social Cynicism Scale for Women (SCSW) in phase II (n =227)

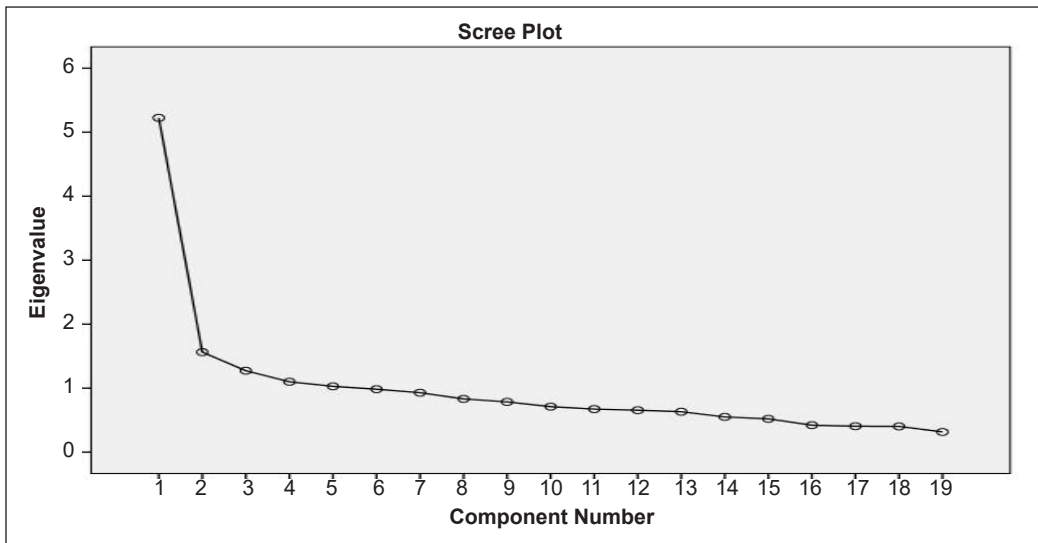| Variables	1	2	3	4	M	SD
1. Total SCSW	-	.89**	.69**	.78**	72.11	9.23
2. Institutional Cynicism		-	.41**	.52**	39.65	5.41
3. Experiential Cynicism			-	.41**	14.26	2.83
4. Dispositional Cynicism				-	18.21	3.17

Note. **p< .01

Figure 1. Scree plot for Social Cynicism Scale for Women (SCSW)

that explained 6.71% of the variance with factor loadings of .48 to .68. It includes items regarding the gender-based stereotypes prevalent in the society that cause SC in women.

The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability for the SCSW was .83, while the reliability values for individual factors were observed to be .79 for Institutional cynicism, .54 for experiential cynicism, and .62 for dispositional cynicism. Hulin et al. (2001) reported that an alpha of .6-.7 indicated an acceptable level of reliability, and .8 or greater is a very good level. It means that while the overall alpha value was very good, for institutional and dispositional subscales, it is acceptable, but for experiential cynicism, it was low. Furthermore, Field (2018) argued that the minimum acceptable cut-off for alpha co-efficient in social sciences is .50; therefore, the reliability of the experiential subscale was also accepted, even though it was low.

The analysis of corrected item-total correlations showed a range of .19-.64 for all items. Furthermore, it did not show any significant change in alpha value if the item (3) with the minimum (r^{it} = .19) value would be deleted. Correspondingly, the corrected item-total correlations range for institutional cynicism was .28-.64. No significant change in the α value was observed if the item (26) with the minimum value (r^{it} = .28) was deleted. Similarly, the corrected item-total correlations range for experiential cynicism was .29-.48. It did not show any significant change in alpha co-efficient if the item (8) with the minimum value (r^{it} = .29) was deleted. Likewise, the corrected item-total correlations range for dispositional cynicism was .19-.52, and insignificant change was noted in the α value if the item (3) with the minimum value (r^{it} = .19) would be deleted. Moreover, the content of item 3 carried significance for the scale; therefore, it was decided to retain this item along with all the

other items with minimum corrected item-total correlations at this stage.

Phase III Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Study

The overall Cronbach's alpha reliability value for the scale was .87, while the reliability estimates for individual factors were .86 for institutional cynicism, .54 for experiential cynicism, and .55 for dispositional cynicism. It showed very good reliability for the overall SCSW scale as well as for the institutional cynicism subscale (Hulin et al., 2001) and low but acceptable

for both experiential and dispositional cynicism subscales as in social sciences, a minimum acceptable cut-off for the alpha coefficient is considered .5 (Field, 2018).

Through AMOS 21, CFA was run on the collected data, and the findings confirmed the three-factor solution of the SCSW obtained in EFA, as indicated in Figure 2. Initially, the default model I had slightly lower NFI and CFI values (Table 5) but after drawing two covariances between e7-e8 and e2-e18, all the indices reached the acceptable range (Hu & Bentler, 1998 as cited by Montoya & Edwards, 2021) such as CMIN/*df* < 3 (i.e.,
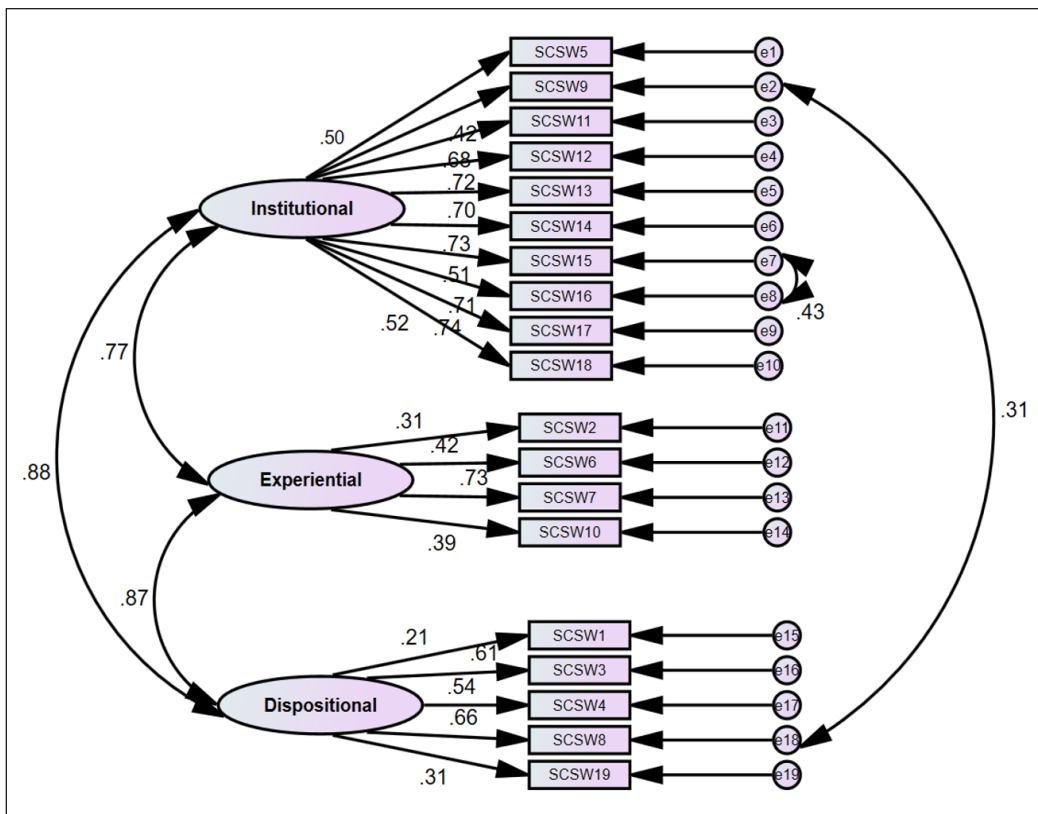

Figure 2. Path diagram showing a good model fit with the data
Note. The figure shows standardized estimates of factor loadings for all items of SCSW and the correlations for every covariance. The factor structure of SCSW explored through EFA in phase II of this study was confirmed through CFA in phase III.

Table 5
Results of confirmatory factor analysis for the Social Cynicism Scale for Women (SCSW)

Models	χ^2	*df*	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Model I	326.12***	149	.77	.86	.074
Model II	287.93***	148	.79	.89	.066
Model III	270.35***	147	.81	.90	.062

Note. N = 218. Structural equation modeling was used for the analysis. NFI = normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root-mean-square of approximation. ***p < .001

1.84); CFI = .90; GFI = .89; TLI = .89; NFI = .81; RMSEA = .06 with χ^2 = 270.35 (147), p < .001. The range of factor loadings for institutional cynicism was between .42-.74, for experiential cynicism, it was .31-.73, and for dispositional cynicism, it was estimated between .21–.61, respectively. The entire factor loadings were above the cut-off of .3, except for item 1 in the dispositional subscale. However, as the exploratory factor analysis showed good factor loadings on this item, it was decided to retain it at this stage.

DISCUSSION

Critical research scholarship and advancement in behavioral, social, and health sciences seem impossible without the development of reliable and valid assessment measures. It provides empirical foundations for investigating and studying research constructs and phenomena (Boateng et al., 2018). Moreover, it is also a well-established point that, like individual differences, cultural variance is equally important for investigating human development and adaptation, whether physical, social, psychological, moral, or cognitive (Habib et al., 2013).

Taking these leads, the present study aimed to develop an indigenous SC scale for young adult women to understand the interplay of specific socio-cultural contexts of our society. Starting with an exploratory phase, we tried to understand the underpinnings of SC-based experiences in young adult women as they reflected on their personal lives and observations and described the phenomenon in vivid detail. This rich data was then used to draw themes, which enabled us to develop an item pool for the proposed SC scale. After the initial scrutiny, SMEs and an English language expert were requested to establish its content validity. They discarded a few thematically redundant items and those about the institution of religion. Following the advice of Cohen et al. (2013) regarding test construction and development guidelines, we also removed those items that would either be triggering for the participants or potentially bring in a low response rate. It left us with a pool of 28 items that were formatted into a five-point Likert-type rating scale. The five-point Likert scale format was used for better response rate and quality, as recommended by Babakus and Mangold (1992).

The tryout stage brought in psychometrically promising results; therefore, the items were administered to a

sample of (n = 227) young adult women to run EFA. Following the results of the Bartlett test of sphericity with $\chi2$ = 1041.51(171), p < .001, and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO = 0.86) values, with Eigenvalues > 1 and retaining the factor loadings ≥ .35, PCA was performed using the Direct Oblimin rotation method. It resulted in a 19-item three-factor solution that accounted for a 42.41% variance. As per Hutcheson (2020), these results indicated that the correlations between items were sufficiently large for PCA. Moreover, studies argued that higher cumulative variance (CV) yields better factor solutions, yet, in social and behavioral sciences, a CV below 50% variance is also acceptable (Williams et al., 2010), which gives credibility to the CV of the current study.

After consulting two SMEs, the factors of the SCSW were named institutional cynicism, experiential cynicism, and dispositional cynicism. For phase II, the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability of SCSW was found to be .83. At the same time, the indices for its subscales range between .54-.79. Hulin et al. (2001) reported that an alpha of .6-.7 indicated an acceptable level of reliability. Field (2018) also argued that the minimum acceptable cut-off for the alpha coefficient was .5. Because all the alpha values were above the cut-off of .5, they were accepted. Similarly, in phase III, the overall alpha value was .87, with a range of .54-.86 for its subscales. Institutional cynicism showed very good reliability (α = .86). However, the α values for both experiential and dispositional subscales were a little above .5, which were accepted per the criteria given by Field (2018).

The first factor was labeled institutional cynicism and included the maximum number of items in contrast to other factors, highlighting its importance for SC in women. As the label suggests, most items explored SC concerning social institutions. If we take into account the very definition and conceptualization of SC, it will become evident that SC resulted from social institutions (Burgess, 2015; Leung et al., 2002). The only difference between SAS (Leung et al., 2002) and SCSW is that the former is a subscale and included items on social institutions in a general sense, while SCSW is comprised of items concerning the indigenous context of these institutions. Several studies have examined the impact of social institutions across the spectrum of gender. By addressing different socialization processes, Tabassum (2016) reported that women were assigned inferior status in Pakistan, with unequal political power resulting in discriminatory laws. It enhanced their vulnerabilities and fostered a pervasive culture of delegating an inferior educational, health, economic and political status. Another study concluded that due to gender inequality, the socioeconomic well-being of women in Pakistan had been compromised (Ashraf & Ali, 2018).

Similarly, Yasin and Aslam (2018) informed that the ratio of school dropouts for girls in rural settings is very high due to families' lack of interest and support. Furthermore, exploring the gender-based

institutional discrimination in the media industry, E. Hafeez and Zahid (2021) reported that women journalists face rampant sexism, a glass ceiling, a pay gap, and a lack of leadership positions. All these findings highlight that under a patriarchal system, all the social institutions interplay to create a discriminatory environment for women, which may lead to the development of SC.

Similarly, factor II experiential cynicism was based on the reported concerns of women regarding their day-to-day life experiences. During phase I of this study, public safety, and security concerns emerged as major themes concerning SC, and the literature supports these findings. For example, Ahmed et al. (2019) reported that women experienced different forms of street harassment in Pakistan, including visual, physical, and emotional forms of harassment. It led to anger, fear, shame, and humiliation in women and directly affected their participation in public life. Similarly, another study concluded that body objectification, street harassment, and abuse are irrefutable experiences of women in Pakistan that have a devastating emotional, psychological, and physical impact on women (N. M. Ahmad et al., 2020).

Lastly, factor III, dispositional cynicism, involves the items referring to the gender-based stereotypes that woman has to go through in her day-to-day life. It highlights a different set of responsibilities and expectations for women, which is disadvantageous as it increases their

vulnerability, causing negative repercussions as reported in various studies (Abubakar et al., 2017; Kara et al., 2012; Munir et al., 2021).

With a sample of (n = 218) young adult women, these three factors were hypothesized to be confirmed on an independent sample during phase III. After undertaking two covariances, this three-factor model was found to be a good fit with acceptable indices; CFI = .91; GFI = .89; TLI = .88; NFI = .85; RMSEA = .075 with χ^2 = 185.42 (84), p < .001 (Hu & Bentler, 1998 as cited by Montoya & Edwards, 2021).

However, the factor loading for item 1 in dispositional cynicism was .21, which is considered below the acceptable cut-off of .3. But based on its exploratory factor analysis, content validity, and construct validity indices established in the earlier phases, we decided to retain this item for further research exploration, with larger sample size to reach a better decision about retaining or deleting this item.

CONCLUSION

The present investigation developed and validated an indigenous social cynicism scale for young adult Pakistani women who reported their relevant daily experiences concerning various social institutions. It resulted in a three-factor scale highlighting the institutional, experiential, and dispositional aspects of social cynicism in our society. Other than making a valuable addition to the indigenous scale development scholarship as well as generating empirical

evidence of social cynicism in women, this scale also shed light on the gender-based issues and experiences that can be used to sensitize the public in general and make this society a better and safe place for women. Furthermore, this study also brought into the limelight that the gendered experience of women within a patriarchal culture cultivates SC through various agents of socialization that, as per our knowledge, have not been reported in any indigenous setting.

Apart from academicians and professionals working in social, clinical, counseling, and organizational settings, these findings can also facilitate policymakers serving in the public and private sectors to bring structural changes to society. Both government and non-governmental organizations can work together to develop and implement gender-based education and awareness programs to address social cynicism emerging from our social institutions.

Limitations and Suggestions

Though SCWS showed promising valid and reliable indices, certain limitations still need to be acknowledged for better conceptualization and planning of future research endeavors focused on the construct of social cynicism. Due to limited time and logistic disadvantages, a non-probability sampling technique was employed to recruit online samples of university-educated, young adult women, based mainly in and around the city of Lahore, who were also well-versed in the English language and filling out online questionnaires. Moreover, due to the social-cultural sensitivity, questions about religion were excluded in the present study that can be investigated in the future. The reliability analysis for phases II and III suggested good and acceptable indices, except for the experiential cynicism. Similarly, CFA showed an item with low factor loading during phase III of the current study. Recruitment of a large and diverse sample can address both issues in future studies.

Involving an in-person assessment of SCSW across a diverse age range of adult women, and even by translating and validating an Urdu version of it, the external validity of the current SCSW scale can be further improved. Moreover, by conducting its convergent and discriminant validity, the psychometric properties of SCSW can be enhanced in the future. Lastly, taking the lead from this SCSW scale, the construction and validation of social cynicism in other vulnerable and marginalized groups and communities of society can also be studied.

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Supplementary Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current research are available at the fig share repository [https://figshare.com/account/home#/projects/129953].

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