

From Translation to Theory: Cross-cultural Adaptation and Validation of the Personal Brand Equity Scale for the Turkish Context

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ABSTRACT

The Personal Brand Equity Scale (PBES) has been developed initially in English to assess the brand equity of professionals; however, there is no equivalent measure in the literature in a different language that would allow cross-cultural studies. In this study, PBES was translated, adapted and validated into Turkish to make it suitable for use by Turkish-speaking professionals. With this adaptation, the scale now extends beyond its original linguistic context and becomes available for use in different cultural settings. To achieve this aim, a five-stage translation and adaptation process was implemented, and the structural consistency of the translated scale was tested with comprehensive psychometric tests. As a result of the research, the three dimensions of the original scale were retained in the Turkish translation. Due to weak and inconsistent psychometric performance, one item from each dimension was removed, resulting in a nine-item version of the Personal Brand Equity Scale-Turkish (PBES-TR). Psychometric test results indicated that the Turkish version demonstrated strong validity, reliability, and linguistic equivalence, confirming its suitability for use in research settings. The study's findings indicate that the PBES, originally developed in English, also functions as a valid instrument in a different linguistic and cultural setting. This result contributes to the literature

on personal branding, identity, and cross-cultural measurement. Beyond these findings, the clarity and replicability of the method and process used also provide a usable path for further scale translations and adaptations in the fields of marketing and psychology.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's corporate environment, a professional's success depends on distinguishing themselves from their competitors in the face of intense competition, being visible both physically and digitally, and effectively managing their professional identity. All these elements come together through what is commonly referred to as "Personal Brand Management". Effective personal brand management requires a professional to consciously and systematically build their own identity and accurately project that identity to their target audience as her brand image.

In today's global environment, competition is no longer limited to companies; it has also reached the level of the professionals working within them. As a result, branding is no longer associated only with companies and their products. Individuals have also become brand agents. In this context, the perceived value of an individual's brand has become an indicator of their position in business life. As a result, understanding and assessing the perceived value of a professional's personal brand has become an important phenomenon for both practitioners, from company executives to human resources managers, and academics working in the fields of personnel psychology and marketing.

The importance of personal branding is rapidly growing between practitioners and academics. But studies related to the assessment of the brand equity between professionals are very scarce.

The theoretical basis for the concept of personal brand equity is the extension of the traditional brand equity framework (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993) to the individual level, encompassing dimensions of brand attractiveness, differentiation, and brand recognition (Gorbatov et al., 2021).

The roots of the personal brand equity concept can be traced back to "Identity theory" (Burke & Stets, 2009) and "Signaling theory" (Spence, 1973). Both examine how individuals communicate their competence, trustworthiness, and authenticity in social and organisational contexts. The concept of personal brand equity forms a link between reputation management, self-concept, and social capital at the intersection of psychology and marketing.

The original Personal Brand Equity Scale was developed in English by Gorbatov et al. (2021). In the initial validation study of the PBES, the scale was tested on English-speaking participants recruited through crowdsourcing. This approach prevented the scale from being evaluated in a homogeneous sample that aligned with the cultural context of its developers, leaving uncertainty about the scale's cultural stability. In this study, translating, adapting, and validating the scale into Turkish also validated the developed personal brand equity scale in a homogeneous market. In a society like Türkiye, where collectivist norms prevail (Hofstede, 2001) and relational trust are paramount, validation is valuable for assessing whether different cultures can be assessed with the same measurement tool when applied in the original language

of the survey. In this context, a validated adaptation and translation of the Personal Brand Equity Scale offer the opportunity to examine the universality of the concept and its limitations across cultures.

Numerous studies exist in literature examining the concept of personal brand management from various perspectives. Only one measurement tool could be found developed specifically to measure personal brand equity. The accessibility of this measurement tool is limited to English-speaking audiences. This study aimed to fill this gap in literature. The original scale was meticulously translated and adapted into Turkish following a comprehensive, five-stage psychometric process, and its validity was confirmed.

The fundamental question guiding this research is whether the three-dimensional structure of the Personal Brand Equity Scale retains its structural stability across cultural contexts, particularly within a collectivist, high-context society such as Türkiye. The study's contribution to literature is multifaceted. The first of these dimensions is the expansion of the scale to a language other than English, thus increasing its generalisability. Another contribution is the provision of theoretical clarity by positioning the concept of personal brand equity within the framework of identity and personal brand management. Finally, it provides a replicable methodological procedure for future cross-cultural validation studies.

With these contributions to literature, the study strengthens the theoretical and methodological link between personal

branding and psychology and provides evidence on how personal brand equity operates within different cultural self-presentation and value creation logics.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Foundations of Personal Brand Equity

The theoretical roots of personal branding are based on psychology, specifically the concept of identity, and on economics and marketing, specifically the concept of brand. According to symbolic interactionism and identity theory (Goffman, 1956; Burke & Stets, 2009), individuals tend to manage how they are perceived in social settings. This process parallels the process of building brand equity. Individuals consciously manage qualities of attractiveness, distinctiveness, and recognisability to demonstrate their perceived value. Signaling theory (Spence, 1973) also explains how professionals convey their competence and credibility through observable cues. Social capital theory, on the other hand, focuses on how an individual's value is reinforced through networks, recognition, and individual resources. When viewed from a common perspective across all these theories, personal brand equity can be said to be "the market value attributed to an individual's self-constructed identity."

Personal branding was once explained more in abstract terms, such as how an individual presents themselves, their image, and the impression they make. Over time, this approach has shifted.

Now, personal branding is considered a measurable construct tied to an individual's perceived market value. This necessitates the use of multidimensional scales that capture psychological and communication dimensions to understand personal branding.

Evolution of the Concept in Empirical Studies

Personal branding refers to a combination of values (Kaputa, 2010), processes, and elements (Karaduman, 2022) that make a person unique by increasing self-worth (Thompson, 2010) and differentiation (Paprocki & Paprocki, 2009). While often treated as a marketing sub-discipline, it integrates managerial professionalism and psychological behavior. Khedher (2015) traces its lineage from Carnegie (1936) and Goffman (1956) to Peters (1997), who popularised the modern term. When personal branding first emerged, it was a concept primarily of interest to practitioners; over time, it evolved into a multifaceted field of research that integrates marketing, organisational behavior, and psychology.

Early empirical work (Labrecque et al., 2011; Karaduman, 2013; Chen, 2013) emphasised digital self-presentation, while later studies expanded into professional sectors such as librarianship (Baharuddin & Kassim, 2014), art and design (Kucharska & Mikolajczak, 2018), and politics (Armannsdottir et al., 2020). These studies consistently show that strong personal brands enhance perceived competence and employability. Gorbатов et al. (2018) provided the first systematic

review, identifying brand authenticity and differentiation as key attributes, and Baccarella et al. (2019) linked Instagram identity cues to audience engagement.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly examined how digital platforms and networked environments mediate personal branding processes, transforming how individuals signal credibility and build brand equity. (Jacobson, 2020; Confente & Kucharska, 2021; Md Saad & Yaacob, 2021; Marin & Nilă, 2021; Gorbатов et al., 2021; Kucharska & Mendoza, 2022; Kongsri & Jaroenwanit, 2024; Kromalcas, Kraujalienė & Ževžikovas, 2024; Szántó, Papp-Váry & Radácsi, 2025).

Despite this progress, personal brand equity, the quantifiable perception of an individual's brand value, remains underexplored. Earlier works (Vitberg, 2010; Waller, 2020; Te'eni-Harari & Bareket-Bojmel, 2021) were context-specific and lacked unified measures. Gorbатов et al. (2021) introduced the Personal Brand Equity Scale (PBES), defining the construct as "an individual's perception of the value of one's personal brand derived from its appeal, differentiation, and recognition." Their three-dimension model demonstrated high reliability ($\alpha = 0.88-0.91$) across various industries. Its validation was confined to English-speaking samples, leaving its cross-cultural generalisability untested.

Conceptual Rationale for Cross-cultural Adaptation

Identity expression and reputation management vary across cultures (Hofstede, 2001). In

this context, verifying whether the PBES dimensions remain stable in a collectivist, high-context society like Türkiye is important both to demonstrate the scale's applicability in Türkiye and to provide insight into its generalisability to similar societies. In similar societies, norms of modesty, relational harmony, and indirect self-promotion may have a direct impact on personal brand dimensions. Therefore, adapting the PBES to Turkish serves the literature as a conceptual test of measurement equivalence rather than a mere linguistic translation, contributing to the global theory of personal branding.

In collectivist, high-context societies like Türkiye, self-presentation norms differ significantly from those in the individualistic, low-context environments where the PBES was first developed. The way individuals express their personal brands may be influenced by cultural norms such as modesty, relational harmony, indirect communication, and avoiding self-praise. In Türkiye and similar societies, these cultural dynamics may result in more subtle and implicit operation of personal brand equity dimensions. This raises the question of whether the scale's dimensions remain valid in an environment where assertive identity signaling is less prevalent.

These cultural nuances make Türkiye an analytically valuable setting for assessing the cultural robustness of the PBES. Therefore, the translation and adaptation conducted in this study also serves as a conceptual test of cross-cultural measurement equivalence.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the Personal Brand Equity Scale, originally developed in English, was translated, adapted, and validated into Turkish using a quantitative approach. For this purpose, the process proposed by Sousa & Rojjanasrirat (2011) was reconsidered and adapted. This adaptation considered the guidelines of the International Test Commission (2017) and the procedures outlined by Hambleton and Patsula (1999), Wild et al. (2005), and Heggstad et al. (2019). The overall process consisted of five stages: (1) forward translation, (2) blind back-translation, (3) content clarity and validity assessment, (4) bilingual pre-psychometric testing, and (5) full psychometric validation.

In the first stage, the scale was translated from English into Turkish by two translators, one with expertise in linguistics and the other in the subject area, following the principles described by Brislin (1986). In the second stage, two independent experts translated the Turkish version back into English to ensure semantic consistency (Wild et al., 2005). During the third stage, content clarity and content validity were evaluated with 25 native speakers and 12 subject-matter experts, in line with the procedures suggested by Lawshe (1975) and Polit et al. (2007). In the fourth stage, sixty bilingual participants completed both versions of the scale, allowing for the assessment of cross-language equivalence (Ross & Willson, 2017). Finally, in the last stage, exploratory and confirmatory factor

analyses (Hair et al., 2010; Kline, 2015) were conducted using data collected from a sample of 438 professionals.

Population and Sampling

In determining the sample size described above, the target population of the study was defined as “professional managers living in Türkiye.” Care was taken to ensure that the sample included managers predominantly from sectors in which personal branding is highly salient, such as business, academia, healthcare, and communication. The final sample exceeded the minimum requirement of 385 participants at the 95 percent confidence level. In addition, the guideline for having at least five respondents per item, as recommended by Boateng et al. (2018) and DeVellis & Thorpe (2021), was also satisfied.

Instrument and Item Rationale

The original scale consists of 12 items, each rated on a five-point Likert scale, organised into three dimensions with four items per dimension. These three dimensions of the PBES are Appeal, Differentiation, and Recognition (Gorbatov et al., 2021). The dimensions reflect the logic of brand equity theory and align with identity- and signaling-based processes.

Item Retention and Data-driven Refinement

No items were removed a priori; item reduction occurred data-driven, post-analysis and is explained subsequently.

Statistical Analyses

KMO and Bartlett tests confirmed sampling adequacy. Oblique rotation was used due to correlated dimensions. Model fit was evaluated via χ^2/df , GFI, CFI, TLI, NFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. Convergent validity was verified through $CR \geq .70$ and $AVE \geq .50$; discriminant validity via Fornell-Larcker and HTMT ($< .85$). Reliability and composite measures supported internal consistency.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous; respondents were informed of research aims, and procedures complied with ethical standards for studies involving human participants. Additionally, ethics committee permission was obtained for the data collection process within the scope of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study aims to translate, adapt, and validate the Personal Brand Equity scale into Turkish. Table 1 shows the five-stage process developed based on the method conceptualised by Sousa & Rojjanasrirat (2011).

Forward Translation (Phase 1)

Two translation teams were established, each consisting of two guides, one of whom was an expert in the marketing field. The original scale (SL1) was translated into Turkish by two teams, and these translations were named TL1 and TL2.

Table 1
Five-stage scale translation, adaptation, and validation process

Phase	Input	Process	Outcome	Participants
Forward Translation	Original Scale-OS	Translation of the original scale into the target language	Translated Scale 1-TS1	Translator 1 (Target language expert) Translator 2 (Expert in the field of the scale)
			Translated Scale 2-TS2	Or Translation Team 1 (Two translators who are experts in the target language and scale) Translation Team 2 (Two translators who are experts in the target language and scale)
	TS1 and TS2	Comparison of both translations	Comparison Report	Translator/Translation Team 3
	TS1, TS2 and comparison report	Removing inconsistencies and creating the first translated Version	FTS	Translator/Translation Team 1 Translator/Translation Team 2 Translator/Translation Team 3 Researchers
Blind Back-Translation	FTS	Translation of FTS from the target language to the original	BFTS1 BFTS2	Translator A (Original language expert) Translator B (Expert in the field of the scale) or Translation Team A and B
	BFTS1, BFTS2, OS, FTS	Comparison of all translations and evaluations of all items and preparing a pre-final Version of the translated scale	PFTS	Translators/Translation Teams 1,2,3 Translators/Translation Teams A, B Researchers At least one field expert
Content Clarity and Validity	Content Clarity Test of PFTS	Pre-Final Pilot Testing for Content Clarity	Content Clarity Results	10-40 target language-speaking participants
	Content Validity Test of PFTS	Expert Panel Study for Content Validity	Content Validity Results	Preferably, at least five experts in the field
Bilingual Preliminary Psychometric Testing	PFTS Shuffled OS	Scale in both languages will be tested	Repeated measures T-Test results	At least five bilingual (both original and target language) participants per item
Pre-Final Full Psychometric Testing	PFTS	The internal consistency reliability (or sensitivity and specificity), stability reliability, homogeneity, construct validity, criterion validity, factor structure, and model fit of the instrument are determined.	Exploratory Factor Analysis Results Explanatory Factor Analysis	Full sample from the target population

Source: Modified and developed by Sousa and Rojjanasirat (2011)

Subsequently, a third translator compared TL1 and TL2 with SL. Then, in a meeting held with the participation of translators and researchers, the inconsistencies were resolved, and the first translation of the scale, PI-TL, was developed.

Blind Back-translation (Phase 2)

The scale was translated into its original language by teams consisting of two bilingual guides, one of whom was knowledgeable in the field of marketing (B-TL1 and B-TL2). Again, translators and researchers came together to evaluate the similarity of items in terms of vocabulary, sentence structure, meaning, and relevance. As a result of this stage, the pre-final Version of the scale P-FTL was developed.

Content Clarity and Validity (Phase 3)

Pre-final Pilot Testing for Content Clarity (Phase 3.1)

In this phase, content clarity was tested with a sample of 25 native Turkish speakers. Participants were presented with the options of (1) not clear, (2) needs revision, (3) clear but requires minor revision, and (4) very clear for each scale item. The resulting item and scale clarity results are in Table 2.

Expert Panel Study for Content Validity (Phase 3.2)

Content validity can be defined as the ability of the items to reflect the variables of the construct (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). CVR was developed by Lawshe (1975)

and can be calculated by using the formula $CVR = (N_c - N/2) / (N/2)$.

At this stage of the study, the content validity of the scale was assessed through an online expert panel. For this, a panel of twelve experts was formed. Neutral responses are not desired in the evaluation made with this online expert panel (Shrotryia & Dhanda, 2019). Therefore, CVI was evaluated using a four-point scale. Probability of Chance Agreement (PC): The probability of chance agreement is calculated by the formula $P_c = [N! / A! (N - A)!] \times 0.5^N$, and the Kappa Coefficient is calculated by the formula $K = (I - CVI - P_c) / (1 - P_c)$. Results can be seen in Table 3.

Since CVR for all items is higher than 0.56 (Lawshe, 1975), scale items can be accepted as valid. A scale with excellent content validity should have I-CVIs of 0.78 or higher, S-CVI/UA, and S-CVI/Ave of 0.8 and 0.9 or higher (Shi et al., 2012). Since Polit, Beck, and Owen argued in their study that the S-CVI/UA approach is overly stringent (Polit et al., 2007), conservative (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015) and provides better results with a small number of panelists, with a relatively large number of experts as 12 S-CVI/UA approach doesn't provide proper results.

Bilingual Preliminary Psychometric Testing (Phase 4)

P-FTL was tested by using a bilingual sample (60 international students, all speaking both Turkish and English). The sample size was calculated to be over five people for each item.

Table 2
Item and scale clarity

Dimension	Item	Number of the Participants	Item Clarity Rating Average (ICR-A)	Item Clarity Rating Percentage	Total Clarity Rating Average (TCR-A)	Total Clarity Rating Percentage
Brand Appeal	1	25	3.96	0.99	3.92	0.98
	2	25	3.96	0.99		
	3	25	3.8	0.95		
	4	25	3.96	0.99		
	5	25	3.96	0.99		
Brand Differentiation	6	25	3.92	0.98	3.95	0.9875
	7	25	3.92	0.98		
	8	25	4	1		
	9	25	4	1		
Brand Recognition	10	25	3.92	0.98	3.93	0.9825
	11	25	3.88	0.97		
	12	25	3.92	0.98		

Source: Authors' own work

Table 3
Content validity of the measure

Dimension	Item	Quite & Highly Relevant	Not & Somewhat Relevant	I-CVI	P _c	S-CVIA	S-CVI/UA	Kappa Coef.	CVR	Interpretation
Brand Appeal	1	10	2	0.83	0.09375	0.9575	0.75	0.81	0.67	Appropriate
	2	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	3	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	4	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
Brand Differentiation	5	12	-	1	0.015625	0.9575	0.75	1	1	Appropriate
	6	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	7	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	8	10	2	0.83	0.09375	0.915	0.50	0.81	0.67	Appropriate
Brand Recognition	9	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	10	12	-	1	0.015625	-	-	1	1	Appropriate
	11	10	2	0.83	0.09375	-	-	0.81	0.67	Appropriate
	12	10	2	0.83	0.09375	-	-	0.81	0.67	Appropriate

Source: Authors' own work

Participants filled out the P-FTL, and then the original scale (SL) was given in a shuffled order. Thus, conceptual, semantic, content, and structural equivalence were tested by comparing P-FTL with SL. To conduct a repeated measure T-test (Ross & Willson, 2017), the items in the two groups were placed in the same order and compared using the Paired-Samples T-test. Results can be seen in Table 4.

H1: There is a significant relationship between P-FTL and SL.

The H1 hypothesis was accepted as the significance value for each pair of questions was greater than 0.015, as seen in Table 4. In addition, the closeness of the mean values for each pair reveals that the answers are very close to the scale versions in both languages. Since none of the pairs showed significant differences ($p > .05$), linguistic equivalence was supported.

Pre-Final Full Psychometric Testing (Phase 5)

At this final stage of the study, the full psychometric test of the scale, which has now become pre-final, was performed. The PBES, translated into the Turkish Language, is aimed at professionals in business life. For this reason, the research population was determined to be "Turkish-speaking professionals," and the sample size at the 95% confidence interval should be 385 or more. The sample was selected using the exponential non-discriminative snowball sampling method.

Questionnaire forms prepared using Google Forms were sent to the participants online, and 438 valid returns were received.

The scale validation process starts with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), followed by selecting and interpreting subscales based on the preferred factor solution and calculating internal consistency per subscale using Cronbach's α (Dima, 2018). The emerging factor structure is expected to be compatible with the scale's factor structure in the original language.

In Table 5, as a prerequisite to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test have been implemented to test the adequacy of the sample size.

Since the KMO Value was 0.892, it was concluded that the sample size was sufficient for exploratory factor analysis. As a second prerequisite, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was implemented. As a result, a chi-square with a p-value found, $0.000 < .05$, an acceptable value for EFA. As a third prerequisite, the anti-image correlation matrix which can be seen in Table 6 has been checked, and it was seen that high values are in the diagonal of the matrix and low values out of the diagonal.

After it was determined that the sample data were suitable for exploratory factor analysis (EFA), the analysis was performed. EFA is a widely used statistical technique for identifying factors or dimensions underlying variables or items. In the context of measurement scales, EFA is used to identify the underlying constructs the scale is intended to measure.

Table 4
Paired-samples T-test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	-.033	.181	.023	-.080	.013	-1.426	59	.159
Pair 2	.017	.129	.017	-.017	.050	1.000	59	.321
Pair 3	-.017	.129	.017	-.050	.017	-1.000	59	.321
Pair 4	.000	.184	.024	-.048	.048	.000	59	1.000
Pair 5	.017	.291	.038	-.058	.092	.444	59	.659
Pair 6	-.033	.181	.023	-.080	.013	-1.426	59	.159
Pair 7	-.017	.129	.017	-.050	.017	-1.000	59	.321
Pair 8	-.050	.220	.028	-.107	.007	-1.762	59	.083
Pair 9	.083	.334	.043	-.003	.170	1.932	59	.058
Pair 10	.000	.260	.034	-.067	.067	.000	59	1.000
Pair 11	.017	.225	.029	-.041	.075	.574	59	.568
Pair 12	.000	.184	.024	-.048	.048	.000	59	1.000

Source: Authors' own work

Table 5
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		,892
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5546,639
	df	66
	Sig.	,000

Source: Authors' own work

Table 6
Anti-image correlation matrix

	Kmc1	Kmc2	Kmc3	Kmc4	Kmf1	Kmf2	Kmf3	Kmf4	Kmt1	Kmt2	Kmt3	Kmt4
Kmc1	.934 ^a	-.026	-.404	.055	-.078	.005	-.079	-.024	-.135	.104	.061	-.017
Kmc2	-.026	.919 ^a	-.292	-.232	-.073	-.295	.274	.035	.033	.000	-.132	-.146
Kmc3	-.404	-.292	.902 ^a	-.302	-.146	.032	.100	-.115	.116	-.113	.092	-.100
Kmc4	.055	-.232	-.302	.908 ^a	-.041	.172	-.380	.031	-.141	.157	.017	-.201
Kmf1	-.078	-.073	-.146	-.041	.958 ^a	-.239	-.126	-.317	.022	-.055	.009	-.029
Kmf2	.005	-.295	.032	.172	-.239	.850 ^a	-.711	-.268	.197	-.227	-.028	.026
Kmf3	-.079	.274	.100	-.380	-.126	-.711	.839 ^a	.054	-.159	.179	-.057	-.018
Kmf4	-.024	.035	-.115	.031	-.317	-.268	.054	.933 ^a	-.137	.171	.064	-.040
Kmt1	-.135	.033	.116	-.141	.022	.197	-.159	-.137	.800 ^a	-.899	-.133	-.008
Kmt2	.104	.000	-.113	.157	-.055	-.227	.179	.171	-.899	.789 ^a	-.086	-.193
Kmt3	.061	-.132	.092	.017	.009	-.028	-.057	.064	-.133	-.086	.969 ^a	-.179
Kmt4	-.017	-.146	-.100	-.201	-.029	.026	-.018	-.040	-.008	-.193	-.179	.969 ^a

a. Measures of Sampling Adequacy (MSA)

Source: Authors' own work

As seen in Table 7, 81.716% of the total variance in three dimensions was explained in parallel with the original scale.

In Table 8, the questions numbered KMT (1-4), KMF (1-4), and KMC (1-4) are grouped in their own sub-dimensions, precisely the same as the original scale. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) aims to determine whether the observed variables measure the same underlying construct by examining the correlations between these observable variables. When high correlations are found, it provides evidence that the measurement instruments are valid, indicating that they accurately measure the intended construct.

The AMOS 20.0 program evaluated the effectiveness of each structure. As the AMOS software cannot handle missing data, frequency analysis in the SPSS 21.0 software was initially employed to determine whether any data were missing. The identified missing data were then replaced using the Maximum Likelihood Approach, considered the most appropriate method (Allison, 2003).

In most Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) studies, various standard fit indices are used to evaluate model adequacy. These indices include absolute fit indices, such as χ^2 , GFI, RMSEA, RMR, SRMR, and Normalised χ^2 ; incremental fit indices, such as NFI, TLI, CFI, and RFI; and parsimony fit indices, such as AGFI and PNFI.

Hair et al. (2010) suggest that at least one absolute fit index and one incremental fit index should be reported together. This study used χ^2 , standardised χ^2 , GFI,

RMSEA, and RMR as absolute fit indices and NFI, TLI, and CFI as incremental fit indices.

According to the recommended fit indices (Kline, 2005), the goodness-of-fit for the measurement model as a whole can be expressed as follows: $\chi^2=86,888$ (22), $p=.000$. The normalised χ^2 of 3.94 is within acceptable limits, but these results are consistent with a good fit in large samples (Kline, 2005). RMR=.038; GFI= .953; CFI= .983; NFI= .977; TLI= .971 indicates a good level of fit. The RMSEA=.082 falls within an acceptable range of fit. As seen in Figure 1, these fit indices indicate that the model fits the data well.

The initial order of fit indices did not meet the necessary standards, prompting the utilisation of second-order confirmatory factor analysis. Due to the considerable amount of interaction between the assertions (kmt4, kmc4, and kmf3) and the questions in other dimensions, these assertions were excluded from the study.

Although three items from the Turkish scale were omitted for statistical reasons, this situation is clearly consistent when evaluated conceptually and culturally. The phrase "My professional strengths are clear" from the attractiveness item does not resonate in a modesty-oriented cultural context like Türkiye. The item removed from the differentiation dimension is "I provide greater professional value compared to others." The explicit comparison contained in this item does not resonate in collectivist societies. Such societies tend to soften their claims of superiority.

Table 7
Total variance explained

Comp.	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Var.	Cum. %	Total	% of Var.	Cum. %	Total
1	7,454	62,116	62,116	7,454	62,116	62,116	5,476
2	1,575	13,129	75,245	1,575	13,129	75,245	6,150
3	,777	6,472	81,716	,777	6,472	81,716	6,032
4	,498	4,151	85,867				
5	,396	3,300	89,167				
6	,334	2,787	91,954				
7	,275	2,289	94,244				
8	,222	1,852	96,096				
9	,204	1,696	97,792				
10	,162	1,349	99,140				
11	,073	,608	99,748				
12	,030	,252	100,000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance

Source: Authors' own work

Table 8
Pattern matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
Kmt2	,993		
Kmt1	,980		
Kmt3	,926		
Kmt4	,646		
Kmf3		,974	
Kmf2		,932	
Kmf4		,888	
Kmf1		,749	
Kmc3			,988
Kmc1			,894
Kmc2			,732
Kmc4			,579

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalisation^a

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Source: Authors' own work

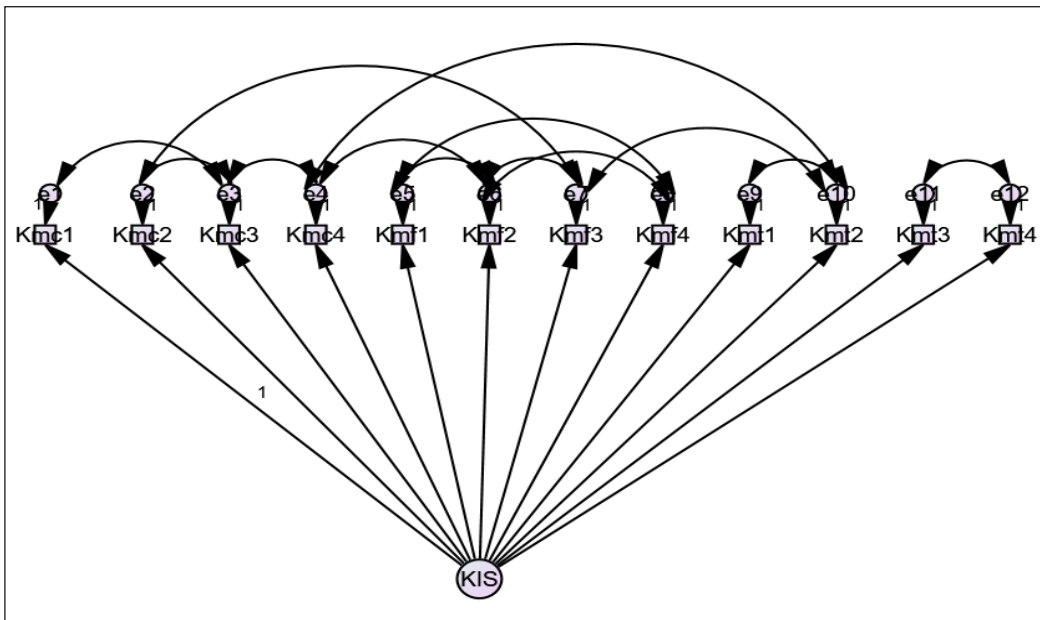


Figure 1. First-order confirmatory factor analysis
Source: Authors' own work

Similarly, the item "I am often recommended to others," removed from the recognition dimension, contradicts cultural dynamics. This clearly demonstrates why the three removed items do not fit.

The results of the second-order confirmatory factor analysis are presented in Figure 2, showing the revised model after excluding items kmt4, kmc4, and kmf3. The fit of the measurement model was evaluated using various fit indices. The chi-square value was 86,888 with 22 degrees of freedom, and the normed chi-square value was 3.94 with a p-value of .000. Although the chi-square value was not ideal, the other fit indices in Figure 2 indicated that the model fit was acceptable.

The SRMR value was 0.0336, which indicated a good fit. The RMSEA value was 0.082, which also fell within an acceptable

range. The acceptable range for other fit indices was as follows: GFI = 0.953, CFI = 0.983, NFI = 0.977, TLI = 0.971, and IFI = 0.983.

When these indicators are evaluated together, the model demonstrates a good fit with the data, despite the slightly higher chi-square value. Based on the findings of second-order confirmatory factor analysis, the PBES-TR consists of three dimensions, each with three questions, consistent with the original scale.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that personal brand equity is a construct based on conceptual foundations such as identity theory, signaling theory, and brand equity, and that it resonates across cultures.

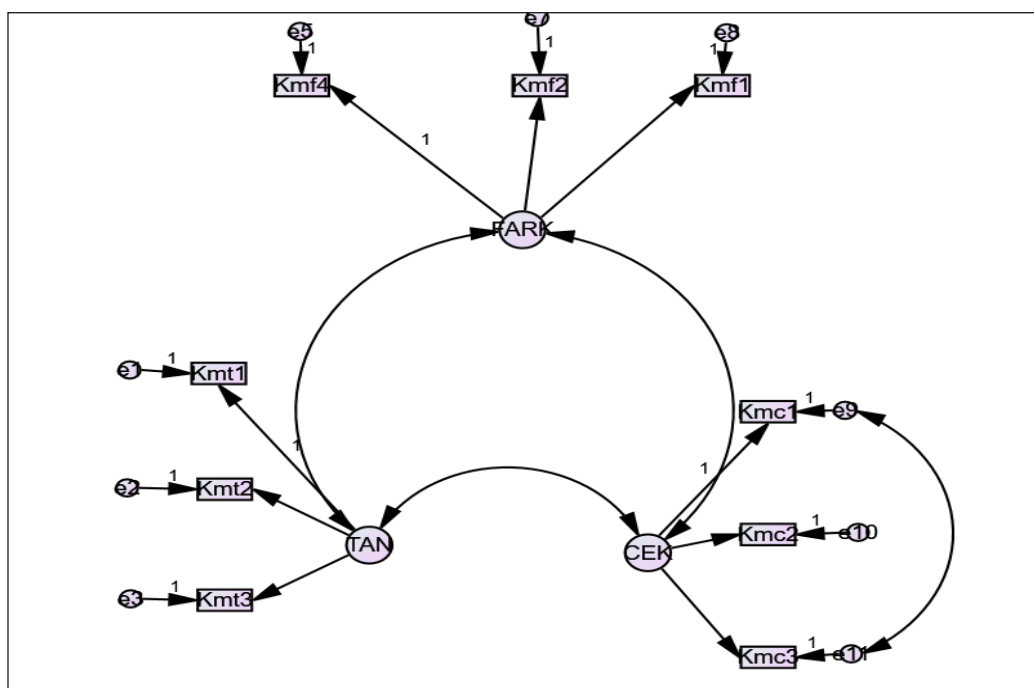


Figure 2. Second-order confirmatory factor analysis
Source: Authors' own work

The preservation of all three dimensions of the original scale in the Turkish adaptation demonstrates that the perception of personal brand equity is not culture-specific. While this could be interpreted as a universality of the concept, variations in factor loadings reflect cultural differences.

From a theoretical perspective, the results support the view that individual identity functions like a brand. This is consistent with the fundamental assumptions of signaling theory (Spence, 1973) and social capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986).

These findings also resonate with earlier discussions in the personal branding literature, particularly the view that the “visibility, differentiation, recognition”

structure reflects a general cognitive process rather than a culture-bound pattern. The fact that the three-factor model remained largely intact in the Turkish sample suggests that individuals may rely on similar mental shortcuts when forming impressions of professional value, even in contexts where self-presentation norms differ. At the same time, the weaker performance of the three removed items indicates that certain aspects of personal brand signaling remain sensitive to cultural expectations. This balance between stability and cultural nuance offers a more refined understanding of how personal brand equity operates across contexts.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, the PBES, originally in English and translated and adapted into Turkish, was validated through a series of psychometric analyses. The study followed a five-stage process derived from an examination of best practices. As a result, all three dimensions of the original scale were retained, while three items were removed from the 12-item scale to create the 9-item PBES-TR.

It is assessed that this study makes a significant contribution to marketing and psychology, as well as to management and communication literature. This validation demonstrates that the three-dimensional construct of personal brand equity—appeal, differentiation, and recognition—operates consistently with the principles of brand equity and identity-signaling theories across cultures.

Theoretical Implications

The most fundamental theoretical contribution in this study is the standardisation of a successful scale translation and adaptation process. As is known and stated in the research, the importance of the personal branding process is increasing day by day, and it finds a detailed place in both marketing and psychology literature. The scale developed in this field will have wide use.

With the translation of the scale, Turkish-speaking individuals have also been included in this area of use. This scale translation and adaptation study confirmed the conceptual stability of the

PBES across different cultural contexts. This broadened the scale's scope of application and enhanced its value. Scales adapted for different cultural contexts contribute to theory by facilitating cross-cultural studies.

Practical Implications

The study has some important practical implications. The translation and adaptation conducted within the scope of the study expanded the geographic boundaries within which the PBES can be applied. The scale is used not only in academic studies but also in measuring the brand equity of professionals. The translated and adapted scale also serves as a self-assessment tool for professionals in Turkish-speaking regions.

In addition, organisations and consultants may apply the scale for leadership development, personal marketing, and talent management purposes. The scale may also assist universities and training institutions in designing programs that help individuals manage and communicate their personal brands more effectively.

Another practical contribution is related to the standardised process in the scale translation method. This process has been proposed using previous good practices and developed processes and is a roadmap for the scale's translation and adaptation.

Limitations and Future Directions

A translated version of the PBES is evaluated as bringing an intercultural perspective to the concept of personal brand equity. In future studies, the scale from both languages can be used to evaluate and compare

different cultures. In this respect, the study will contribute significantly to literature, it has some limitations.

Firstly, the study was limited to only Turkish-speaking samples, which may not be representative of the broader population. Therefore, the generalisability of the findings to other languages or cultures should be treated with caution. Additionally, the study did not examine the test-retest reliability of the scale, which could provide further insight into the stability of the results over time. Finally, the study did not investigate the criterion validity of the scale by comparing it with other measures of personal brand equity, which could provide further support for its construct validity. Despite all the limitations of this study, considering both the methodology and the results, it is considered that it contributes to future scale translation and adaptation studies and personal brand management literature.

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