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Psychometric Properties of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale for University Students: Insights for Foreign Language Learners

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ABSTRACT

In the field of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), behaviors that undermine progress are known as self-defeating behaviors. These actions and attitudes create obstacles in acquiring the language and reflect a complicated mix of emotions and thoughts. Often, these issues arise after facing ongoing difficulties or tough situations, causing feelings of despair and powerlessness. This research aims to confirm the effectiveness of a psychometric tool for measuring

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self-defeating behavior in university students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). A descriptive research method was employed, and the tool was given to a group of 412 learners at the university level to test its reliability and accuracy in assessing self-defeating behaviors in this educational setting. Various statistical methods were used for data analysis, such as Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results from these analyses demonstrated that the scale is highly valid in assessing self-defeating behaviors among the students who participated in the research. The analysis identified four unique aspects of self-defeating behavior: feelings of spiritual emptiness, self-hatred, perceptions of inadequacy, and psychological vulnerability. Consequently, the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale used in EFL classrooms shows a good level of construct validity, internal consistency, and reliability over time. Thus, it is confirmed to be appropriate and dependable for application in this area. These results imply that the validated Self-Defeating Behavior Scale can be effectively used to recognize and tackle self-defeating behaviors in university students learning EFL, thereby aiding in enhancing both academic results and emotional health.

Keywords: Psychometric Properties; Self-Defeating Behavior; University Students; EFL

1. Introduction

Proficiency in English is now considered crucial for navigating the complexities of the global landscape^[1]. This view is widely supported by advocates who emphasize its pivotal role in competitive environments where English fluency is essential. As a result, there is a notable trend towards learning English to adapt to this dynamic environment. Motivations for achieving English language proficiency include meeting educational requirements, integrating into English-speaking communities, achieving specific goals, and recognizing the benefits of linguistic competence^[2].

Adolescents face significant challenges and encounter a variety of social, academic, emotional, and personal hurdles, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning^[3–5]. They are particularly prone to engaging in actions that hinder their progress in mastering a new language. In the realm of EFL education, contemporary youth navigate a rapidly changing landscape, confronting obstacles that encompass psychological, social, cognitive, and educational dimensions, which can hamper their language learning goals and aspirations. Moreover, perceptions regarding the difficulties experienced by certain nations and minority groups in learning English can create psychological strain, potentially leading these young learners to adopt self-defeating behaviors. It is crucial to understand the factors driving these challenges and their impact on students' linguistic proficiency and overall well-being for the purpose of academic inquiry and discussion within the EFL com-

munity^[6–10]. Recognizing and addressing these factors is essential for scholarly exploration and dialogue in the field of EFL education^[11, 12].

Individuals grappling with cultural and intellectual conflicts, frustration, deprivation, and erosion of values often demonstrate a heightened propensity for engaging in self-defeating behaviors^[13–15]. This complexity intensifies when feelings of failure extend beyond mere setbacks and encompass one's ideologies, principles, and moral convictions. According to Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, behaviors associated with self-defeating tendencies and psychological challenges arise not only from external factors but also from beliefs about these factors, distorted perceptions, and irrational convictions. These irrational convictions typically affect individuals' functioning by shaping detrimental emotional patterns^[16]. Frequently, these beliefs are deeply embedded during the formative years through social learning methods that people believe to be advantageous and protective. They are often strengthened by personal repetition and reinforcement^[17–19].

Self-sabotaging actions are defined as intentional behaviors that clearly have negative impacts on oneself or related goals. After facing difficulties, individuals frequently feel that these challenges are beyond their control^[20]. It further describes negative beliefs about one's ability to successfully undertake self-driven actions, which impedes the start and participation in these activities. Additionally, self-sabotaging actions can manifest as an ineffective type of social conflict, where individuals sense they are stuck and

unable to escape^[21]. This creates two distinct types of conflict: internal conflict, marked by a person's battles with their own thoughts and feelings, often leading to a sense of self-imposed loneliness; and external conflict, which arises from feeling constrained by outside events or situations^[22].

Self-defeating behavior illustrates an individual's internal defeat and its most dangerous aspect lies in the fact that when a person succumbs to their own actions, they often refrain from defending themselves^[23]. On the contrary, when faced with others attempting to inflict defeat upon them, the individual vigorously strives to confront and counteract such efforts made by others. However, this can potentially lead to even greater harm in instances of self-defeat. It is also described as a psychological condition characterized by the surrender of the individual's resolve and personal resilience to oneself and others, the incapacity to confront life's trials, avoidance of current and future life pursuits, detachment of the spirit from sources of happiness, fulfillment, peace, and conviction of spiritual void accompanied by sensations of insignificance, disdain, self-deprecation, and self-condemnation^[24].

Self-defeating behavior encompasses a set of negative beliefs about one's capabilities to achieve goals and succeed in purposeful actions, which inhibit the initiation, engagement, and completion of these actions within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning^[21]. Typically, these beliefs primarily affect one's functioning through emotional self-defeatism^[18, 25]. Moreover, Rational Emotive Behavior Theory elucidates that behavioral and psychological issues associated with self-defeating behavior are not solely triggered by external events; they are also influenced by beliefs about those events, irrational convictions, and distorted perceptions^[16, 26]. Additionally, researchers have observed that self-defeating behavior tends to predict polarized thinking patterns among EFL learners^[27]. Furthermore, Azzazi and Ali found a positive correlation between self-defeating behavior and cognitive security in the context of EFL education^[24].

Those who demonstrate self-defeating behavior often show a range of identifiable traits. These include experiencing a general sense of fatigue, relying heavily on others, feeling anxious about potential harm and the future, consistently putting off tasks, having a negative self-image, engaging in self-criticism and self-punishment, avoiding taking

risks, having lower motivation and self-esteem, and feeling a deep sense of emptiness that encompasses feelings of social detachment, contamination, depression, hopelessness, and discouragement^[28]. These traits can appear as sensations of fatigue, mental exhaustion, reliance on others, apprehension about the future, and persistent procrastination. Self-defeating behavior is often linked to a series of pessimistic cognitive perceptions that validate feelings of inadequacy, within a context of self-deception and dishonesty toward others^[9, 15, 29].

The concept of self-defeating behavior is intricate, with its components varying based on individual psychological traits, personality characteristics, and environmental factors. Wei and Ku pointed out several elements, including self-esteem, profound anxiety, social self-efficacy, and depression^[30]. Abdulsamad outlined six distinct components of self-defeating behavior: weakness of willpower, spiritual emptiness, self-contempt, submission to defeat, psychological fatigue, and self-deprecation^[13]. Abu Halawa detailed six components, including pessimism, self-neglect, shame, lack of self-vitality, cognitive distortions, and self-punishment^[31]. Al-Obeidat and Abu Asaad's study concentrated on four components: seeking approval, seeking love, striving for entitlement and achievement, and self-blame^[32]. Al-Shafie's research pinpointed four components: spiritual void, pessimism, a sense of purposelessness, and self-insufficiency^[33]. Almohtadi's investigation delineated six components: withdrawal, social isolation, self-degradation, narcissism, fear of failure, and guilt^[34].

Azzazi and Ali's research pinpointed these key elements associated with self-defeating behavior: psychological breakdown, lack of motivation, spiritual emptiness, and hope in life, and self-humiliation^[24]. On the other hand, Khalaf and Khalif's study (2021) unveiled five distinct components: cognitive distortions, lack of self-vitality spiritual void, self-blame, and self-neglect. These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of self-defeating behaviors and their detrimental impact on an individual's mental and emotional well-being^[35]. Ibn Yahya's study outlined four essential components linked to self-defeating behavior: shame, cognitive distortions, self-neglect, and self-punishment. Building upon the findings of prior research, this investigation concentrates on four specific components of self-defeating behavior to construct a scale^[36]. The components include psycho-

logical vulnerability, self-contempt, spiritual emptiness, and self-insufficiency. The above-mentioned aspects have been widely referenced, comprehensive, and considered appropriate for the study's participants, who are university students in the Saudi context.

Psychological defeat is a psychological state characterized by feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, passivity, and an expectation of failure when facing life's challenges. It involves a sense of spiritual loss, along with feelings of inferiority, self-contempt, and self-deprecation, both personally and socially. Individuals who experience psychological defeat often exhibit signs of frustration, anger, depression, resentment, anxiety, fatigue, and exhaustion. They tend to complain frequently, express dissatisfaction with their tasks, lack motivation, lose enthusiasm, avoid taking responsibility, struggle to meet life's demands, and experience social isolation^[6, 24, 28].

In this study, the researcher operationally defines the components of the Self-Defeating Behavior scale in accordance with the culture of the sample's community and based on relevant prior research as follows:

Psychological Weakness: Psychological weakness is defined as a sustained feeling of emotional and mental exhaustion, combined with an inability to effectively manage daily challenges. This leads to reduced psychological resilience and a tendency to yield to stressors. It is measured by indicators such as frequent feelings of fatigue, hesitation in decision-making, reduced problem-solving abilities, and a tendency to quickly give up in the face of adversity.

Self-Contempt: Self-contempt is defined as an ongoing negative self-view, a sense of inferiority, and harsh self-criticism, all of which contribute to low self-esteem and a perception of incompetence. This is assessed by indicators such as frequent self-deprecating thoughts, a tendency to make unfavorable social comparisons, avoidance of social situations due to feelings of inadequacy, and a constant sense of shame or guilt.

Spiritual Emptiness: Spiritual emptiness is defined as a deep sense of meaninglessness in life, often accompanied by a weakened connection to personal values and spiritual or religious beliefs. This results in feelings of inner loss and existential void. It is measured through indicators like hopelessness, a lack of clear life goals, diminished inner peace and psychological comfort, and reduced participation

in spiritual or religious practices.

Self-Deficiency: Self-deficiency refers to an individual's perception of an inability to control life events, coupled with the belief that personal efforts to improve or succeed are futile. This is evaluated by indicators such as low self-confidence, a tendency to surrender when facing challenges, reliance on others for decision-making, and avoiding goal-setting due to fear of failure.

Drawing from the researchers' teaching experience at the university level, they noticed signs of self-defeating behavior in classes of TEFL students during discussions on diverse subjects. To ensure these observations, the researchers carried out a pilot study by conducting interviews with students. They pinpointed shared traits such as pessimism, lack of involvement in volunteer work and presentations, hesitancy to participate in training sessions, and a sense of frustration and hopelessness regarding specific assignments.

In this regard, various studies illuminated the detrimental effects of self-defeating behavior among university students. Abu Halawa stressed that self-defeating behavior poses a greater threat than material defeat as it can result in feelings of frustration and helplessness, despite possessing qualifications and resources, even when avenues for enhancement exist^[31]. It represents a more significant threat to both individuals and societies than any weapons created by individuals in conflicts, given its potential for intellectual, cultural, and spiritual defeat, often leading to behaviors of despair and suffering, ultimately culminating in resignation. This behavior has adverse impacts on various facets of an individual's personality^[13]. Those experiencing self-defeating behavior may undergo withdrawal intellectually and socially, becoming isolated. Moreover, it can impact their health, contributing to a state known as "Broken Heart Syndrome" as described by specialists^[8, 37].

After conducting an extensive review of the literature in this field, the researcher has identified a gap in the examination of the psychometric properties of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale developed for students at the university stage. This study aims to address the existing gap in the literature concerning the assessment of self-defeating behavior among EFL learners, particularly within the Saudi Arabian context. The significance of this research lies in its provision of a reliable and valid tool to identify these behaviors, thereby informing interventions aimed at enhancing

students' academic performance and emotional well-being. Additionally, the study offers a theoretically grounded tool for assessing self-defeating behavior among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and empirically validates its reliability and validity. Consequently, this study seeks to elucidate the components and dimensions of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale for university students in Saudi Arabia in EFL classes and validate some of the psychometric properties, including internal consistency, validity, and reliability. Additionally, this research contributes to Arabic existing literature by introducing a tailored Self-Defeating Behavior Scale that aligns with the educational and psychological landscape, benefiting those involved in the educational process within recent Arab society. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to explore the psychometric properties of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale in EFL classes for University Students. To achieve this goal, the following questions were formulated:

- (1) Does the Scale of Self-Defeating Behavior for University Students in EFL classes exhibit adequate internal consistency?
- (2) Does the Scale of Self-Defeating Behavior for University Students in EFL classes demonstrate a high validity level?
- (3) Does the Scale of Self-Defeating Behavior for University Students in EFL classes show an acceptable reliability level?

2. Methods

2.1. Study Design and Settings

To achieve the research objectives, the current study employed a descriptive research methodology, deemed appropriate for the research nature. The goal is to develop the Self-Defeating Behavior in EFL classes Scale, delineate its components and dimensions, and verify its psychometric characteristics within the Saudi setting. A descriptive research design was chosen for its appropriateness in developing and validating the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale. This design allows for a comprehensive analysis of the scale's psychometric properties, ensuring its reliability and validity in the given context.

2.2. Participants

The participants in the current research comprised 412 university students taking an English course as a general university requirement course for non-specialist undergraduates from various departments, including 229 male students and 183 female students (mean age = 17.78; SD = 1.63). Participant selection was conducted through random sampling, with the principal aim being the evaluation of the psychometric attributes of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

2.3.1. The Self-Defeating Behavior Scale

The researcher devised the self-defeating behavior scale to assess such behavior among university students in EFL classes, drawing upon components identified in prior studies and deemed appropriate for the research sample characteristics: self-contempt, spiritual emptiness, self-deficiency, and psychological weakness. The scale underwent several stages until it reached its final version as follows:

Reviewing theoretical frameworks and scales that addressed psychological defeat and its components, such as [13, 24, 31, 32]. Initially comprising 24 items, evenly distributed among these components with six items per component, the scale employs a Likert Scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The scores ranged from 1 to 5, respectively. Consequently, scores range from 24 to 120 points, with higher scores denoting greater self-defeating behavior. The upper quartile, representing participants in the main study, is delineated by a score of 90, while the lower quartile aligns with a score of 30.

The utilized scale was subjected to review by seven psychology and mental health faculty members, finding high agreement percentages among reviewers regarding the statements' suitability for the learners' nature and characteristics and their alignment with the scale components. The agreement ranges from 80% to 100%. Hence, the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale exhibits satisfactory content validity.

The stages of scale development and validation included item generation based on literature review, expert review for content validity, pilot testing, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). These stages ensured the scale's content validity, construct

validity, and reliability.

Also, the authors discussed the reliability of the scale in the Results section.

2.4. Data Analysis

To evaluate the validity of the measurement tool, a series of techniques were employed including a split-sample approach, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Only participants with complete data for all scales were included in the study, and the dataset was randomly divided into two equal subsets utilizing the “Random Sample of Cases” feature in SPSS. One subset underwent exploratory factor analysis using the SPSS version (26).

To ensure the factor analysis suitability, it was necessary for the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) to be ≥ 0.8 , and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity needed to have a significance level of $p < 0.05$ as Field clarified^[38]. The factors were identified based on Kaiser’s criterion, which entails selecting those with eigenvalues surpassing 1. Subsequently, a rotation technique called direct Oblimin was applied to enhance the correlation between factors. This rigorous methodological approach ensured the robustness and validity of the factor analysis results.

At the same time, the researchers conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on a distinct subset using Amos version 26, applying the model derived from the exploratory factor analysis (EFA). They utilized maximum like-

lihood estimation to evaluate the model. Various measures of goodness-of-fit were reported, including the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), the model χ^2 , root mean square error approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI), following the guidelines established by Kline^[39]. Criteria for determining acceptable model fit included a non-significant model $TLI \geq 0.95$, χ^2/df ratio ≤ 3.0 , $RMSEA \leq 0.08$, $GFI \geq 0.95$, and $CFI \geq 0.95$, consistent with the data provided by Hu and Bentler^[40]. To evaluate the reliability of these indicator variables in measuring latent variables, the researchers assessed construct reliability, considering a value above 0.7 as indicative of dependable indicator variables, in line with the criteria set forth by Purwanto et al.^[41].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Findings of the Internal Consistency

To evaluate the reliability of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale, Pearson’s correlation coefficient was utilized to measure the correlation between individual item scores and the total score of their respective dimensions. Specifically, this coefficient was calculated for each item’s score concerning the overall score of its related dimension. Furthermore, the correlation between each dimension and the overall score was established for the complete scale. **Table 1** provides an overview of the internal consistency of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

Table 1. The Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Internal Consistency.

N.	Correlation with Dimension	N.	Correlation with Dimension	N.	Correlation with Dimension	N.	Correlation with Dimension
Psychological Weakness		Self-Contempt		Spiritual Emptiness		Self-Deficiency	
1	0.627**	7	0.554**	13	0.547**	19	0.514**
2	0.646**	8	0.630**	14	0.581**	20	0.687**
3	0.630**	9	0.634**	15	0.671**	21	0.668**
4	0.597**	10	0.634**	16	0.546**	22	0.617**
5	0.642**	11	0.653**	17	0.567**	23	0.575**
6	0.583**	12	0.511**	18	0.567**	24	0.627**
Correlation with Scale = 0.618**		Correlation with Scale = 0.551**		Correlation with Scale = 0.581**		Correlation with the overall Scale = 0.632**	

Table above reveals that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at a 0.01 significance level, illustrating the acceptable internal consistency between the scale items and their dimensions, pointing out that the scale has strong internal consistency and is considered reliable.

The findings of this study provide strong support for the efficacy of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale in assessing self-defeating behaviors among college students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The scale demonstrated strong internal consistency, underscoring its reliability within

the EFL context. The results of this study align with various prior research outcomes, despite variations in the quantity and nature of identified elements across these studies [8, 24, 33].

The **Table 1** indicates that all correlation coefficients are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This statistical significance highlights the acceptable internal consistency among the scale items and their respective dimensions. The strength of these correlations underscores the robust internal consistency of the scale, affirming its reliability. Such a high level of internal consistency is crucial for ensuring that the scale reliably measures the intended constructs, thus providing confidence in the validity and applicability of the scale within the context of psychological and educational research. The reliability of the scale is essential for its use in assessing self-defeating behaviors among EFL students, ensuring that the results are consistent and dependable across different applications and samples.

3.2. Construct Validity

In order to assess the accuracy of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale's conceptual framework, researchers utilized a sample of 376 students by conducting exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. This group was evenly split into two subsets of 188 students each through random selection. One subset underwent exploratory factor analysis, while the other was subjected to confirmatory factor

analysis. The ensuing analysis will detail the results derived from both the confirmatory and exploratory factor analyses carried out on the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale, shedding light on its effectiveness in measuring self-defeating behaviors.

3.2.1. Exploration of Scale Factors through Factor Analysis

The exploration of the scale's factors through exploratory factor analysis (EFA) involved utilizing the Principal Axis Factoring method. Bartlett's test yielded a significant result with a value of 967.323 and 275 degrees of freedom, illustrating significance at the 0.01 significance level. Moreover, the value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) calculated was found to be 0.847, surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.8, suggesting that the data were suitable for factor analysis.

Factors with eigenvalues greater than one were retained, adhering to the criterion for determining the number of factors to extract. Items were deemed to load on a factor if their loading surpassed 0.3. Hence, four factors were identified, collectively explaining 62.21% of the overall variance of the scale. To aid interpretation, Promax rotation was employed to enhance the clarity of the factor structure. This rotation technique adjusts the factors to make them easier to interpret, facilitating a clearer understanding of the relationships between variables as **Table 2** illustrates.

Table 2. The Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Exploratory Factor Analysis.

N.	Factor				Shared Variances
	1	2	3	4	
1	0.351	0.664	0.263	0.086	0.641
2	0.334	0.743	0.207	0.204	0.748
3	0.236	0.553	0.379	0.167	0.533
4	0.146	0.564	0.396	0.194	0.534
5	0.307	0.767	0.250	0.016	0.745
6	0.007	0.664	0.296	0.383	0.675
7	0.250	0.248	0.603	0.165	0.515
8	0.355	0.323	0.629	0.177	0.657
9	0.364	0.269	0.698	0.027	0.693
10	0.175	0.261	0.656	0.262	0.598
11	0.371	0.342	0.605	0.119	0.635
12	0.229	0.190	0.529	0.098	0.378
13	0.247	0.306	0.215	0.548	0.501
14	0.416	0.088	0.269	0.661	0.690
15	0.142	0.089	0.103	0.804	0.685
16	0.210	0.249	0.219	0.726	0.681
17	0.365	0.222	0.231	0.594	0.589
18	0.347	0.238	0.160	0.642	0.615

Table 2. Cont.

N.	Factor				Shared Variances
	1	2	3	4	
19	0.742	0.020	0.221	0.172	0.629
20	0.720	0.220	0.400	0.228	0.779
21	0.634	0.424	0.071	0.255	0.652
22	0.726	0.164	0.301	0.194	0.682
23	0.520	0.259	0.389	0.068	0.493
24	0.682	0.216	0.064	0.259	0.583
Eigenvalue	4.232	3.751	3.600	3.344	Overall Variance
% Variance	17.64%	15.63%	15.01%	13.94%	62.20%

Based on the analysis presented in the provided table, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the factor structure of the scale:

1. Items from 19 to 24 are predominantly associated with the first factor, exhibiting higher loadings. This factor, characterized by an eigenvalue of 4.233 and explaining 17.64% of the variance, primarily encompasses the concept of self-helplessness.
2. Items from 1 to 6 demonstrate stronger loadings on the second factor, with a value of 3.752 and explaining 15.63% of the variance. These items mainly address the notion of psychological fatigue, suggesting a distinct factor related to this aspect.
3. Items from 7 to 12 display greater loadings on the third factor, with a value of 3.600 and explaining 15.01% of the variance. This factor is primarily associated with the concept of self-contempt, indicating a specific dimension captured by these items.
4. Items from 13 to 18 exhibit higher loadings on the fourth factor, with a value of 3.345 and explaining 13.94% of the variance. These items predominantly deal with the dimension of spiritual emptiness, suggesting a distinct factor related to this aspect of self-defeating behavior.

Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the underlying structure of the scale, delineating distinct factors representing different dimensions of self-defeating behavior. This analysis enhances our understanding of the construct being measured and informs future research and intervention efforts targeting these specific dimensions.

3.2.2. The Scale Confirmatory Factorial Analysis

For the confirmatory factor analysis of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale, the diagonally weighted least

squares (DWLS) method was employed. This method was chosen due to its suitability for Likert-type data, ensuring robustness in handling the scale's measurement model. The measurement model consisted of 24 items allocated to four dimensions, reflecting the factor structure identified in previous analyses. This model underwent rigorous testing to evaluate its fit to the observed data.

Table 3 presents the goodness-of-fit indices obtained from the results of the confirmatory factor analysis model of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale. These indices provide insights into how well the proposed model aligns with the empirical data. Commonly assessed indices include the chi-square test, Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), comparative fit index (CFI), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR).

Table 3. The Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Model Fit Statistics for Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

Fit Indices	Criterion	Obtained
χ^2	—	610.71
df	—	245
χ^2/df	≤ 3.00	2.47
CFI	≥ 0.96	0.952
TLI	≥ 0.96	0.950
GFI	≥ 0.96	0.951
IFI	≥ 0.96	0.953
RMSEA	≤ 0.09	0.063

The interpretation of the values of these indices allows researchers to determine whether the model adequately represents the relationships among the scale items and the underlying factors. A good fit indicates that the model accurately captures the structure of the construct being measured, while a poor fit may necessitate further model refinement or reconsideration of the theoretical framework.

The confirmatory factor analysis of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Data presented in the preceding **Table 4** re-

veals that the goodness-of-fit indices obtained were favorable and fell within acceptable thresholds. This suggests a high level of congruence between the measurement model and the

empirical data, indicating that the proposed model accurately represents the relationships among the scale items and the underlying factors (see **Figure 1**).

Table 4. Standardized calculations for confirmatory factorial analysis for the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

Item	Standardized Estimate	Std. Error	Z Value	Sig.	Item	Standardized Estimate	Std. Error	Z Value	Sig.
Psychological Weakness					Spiritual Emptiness				
1	0.801	0.091	11.14	<0.001	13	0.648	0.098	8.17	<0.001
2	0.807	0.087	11.24	<0.001	14	0.698	0.077	9.01	<0.001
3	0.802	0.093	11.13	<0.001	15	0.500	0.106	5.98	<0.001
4	0.758	0.086	10.25	<0.001	16	0.633	0.084	7.93	<0.001
5	0.783	0.099	10.74	<0.001	17	0.830	0.090	11.54	<0.001
6	0.739	0.089	9.89	<0.001	18	0.708	0.089	9.21	<0.001
Self-contempt					Self-deficiency				
7	0.724	0.084	9.65	<0.001	19	0.645	0.102	8.31	<0.001
8	0.796	0.085	11.04	<0.001	20	0.880	0.077	12.97	<0.001
9	0.775	0.084	10.62	<0.001	21	0.847	0.083	12.18	<0.001
10	0.847	0.094	12.15	<0.001	22	0.789	0.087	10.93	<0.001
11	0.810	0.092	11.35	<0.001	23	0.734	0.100	9.86	<0.001
12	0.596	0.107	7.51	<0.001	24	0.783	0.081	10.81	<0.001

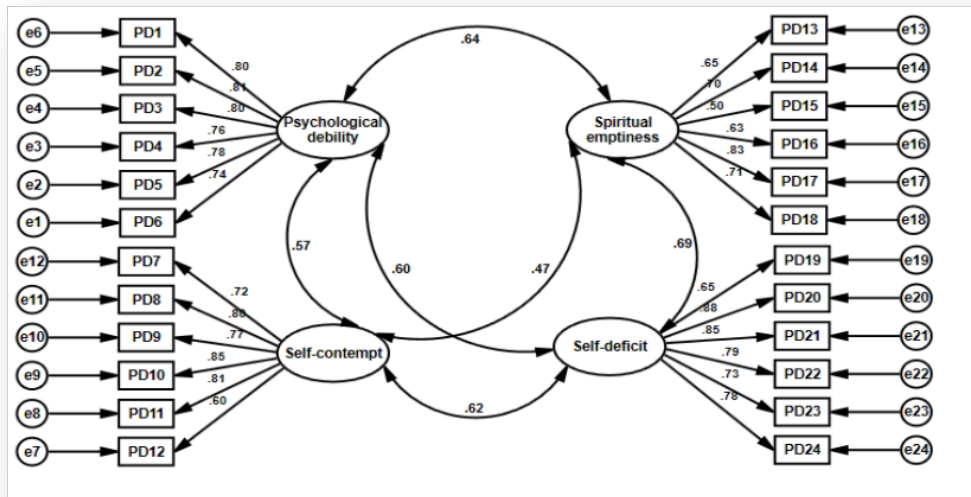


Figure 1. Measurement model accompanied with standardized estimates for Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

The findings from the preceding table indicate that all factor loadings exceeded the threshold of 0.4 and were significant at the 0.01 level. This robust statistical evidence strongly supports the construct validity of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

The confirmation of construct validity through the CFA underscores the scale's ability to accurately assess self-defeating behaviors across multiple dimensions. This validation lends credibility to the scale's utility in both research

and clinical settings, as it ensures that the scale effectively captures the intended construct without undue measurement error.

3.2.3. Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Discrimination Validity

Evaluating Discriminant Validity through Known-Groups Validity entails comparing different groups within the sample, specifically individuals in the upper quartile (top 25%) and lower quartile (bottom 25%), based on their total

scores obtained from the survey scale. This comparison allows for an examination of whether the scale can effectively differentiate between these groups, supporting its ability to discriminate between individuals with varying levels of the construct being measured.

The following **Table 5** indicates a visual representation of this comparative analysis, illustrating the mean total

scores for the upper and lower categories, along with any relevant statistical comparisons (e.g., t-tests, standard deviation) to determine the significance of differences between these groups. This analysis helps assess whether individuals in the upper category, who theoretically exhibit higher levels of the construct, indeed score significantly higher on the scale compared to those in the lower category.

Table 5. Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Discrimination Validity.

Dimensions	Group	N.	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-Value	Sig.
Psychological weakness	Upper	47	17.98	5.42	92	14.59	<0.001
	Lower	47	6.32	0.78			
Self-contempt	Upper	47	17.79	5.68	92	13.51	<0.001
	Lower	47	6.47	0.86			
Spiritual emptiness	Upper	47	15.81	5.15	92	12.37	<0.001
	Lower	47	6.36	0.92			
Self-deficiency	Upper	47	17.28	5.42	92	13.89	<0.001
	Lower	47	6.21	0.62			
Total scale	Upper	47	68.85	16.66	92	17.81	<0.001
	Lower	47	25.36	1.55			

The previous table shows that every “t” value is meaningful at the 0.01 level, indicating that the developed scale has discrimination validity and confirming its suitability for use.

The outcomes of this research strongly support the effectiveness of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale in evaluating self-defeating behaviors in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) college students. Through factor analysis, this study discovered four unique dimensions in the scale: self-contempt, psychological weakness, spiritual emptiness, and self-identity. The scale proved to be highly reliable, consistent internally, and valid overall, highlighting its dependability in the EFL setting. The findings of this study correspond with some results from various earlier studies, although there are differences in the number and type of dimensions identified in those research efforts. [6, 8, 13, 15, 24, 34–36].

Consequently, self-defeating behavior is recognized as a complex issue. In this research, the investigator used four clear dimensions of self-defeating behavior to create a measurement tool. These dimensions include psychological weakness, self-deprivation, self-contempt, and spiritual emptiness. They are logical, thorough, and considered appropriate for the individuals being studied. The researcher suggests that these four elements align with those found in earlier research and are significant due to their breadth

and relevance to the participant group. The sampled group shows similar cognitive and psychological traits that are generally seen in university students, without gender distinctions. Considering the data provided, it is clear that the current version of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale effectively measures self-defeating behavior among university students. The scale’s dependability emphasizes the strength of its content in evaluating self-defeating tendencies. Additionally, it reveals discrimination validity by appropriately differentiating among the four dimensions of self-defeating behavior: psychological exhaustion, self-deprecation, spiritual void, and self-restraint. The researcher confirmed the construct validity of the scale through both confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis

Furthermore, the scale showed discrimination validity through comparing variables, with all values showing statistical significance at the 0.01 level. This supports both the discrimination and construct validity of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale, emphasizing its suitability for use. Regarding the scale’s dependability, the results showed reliability coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.904, according to both Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability. This high level of consistency confirms the reliability of the scale components in measuring various aspects of self-defeating behavior.

3.3. The Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Reliability

3.3.1. Cronbach's alpha Reliability Coefficients

To verify the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale reliability, Cronbach's alpha statistical analysis was employed. This statistical measure assesses the internal consistency of the scale by examining the correlations between its items. The subsequent table (**Table 6**) presents the results of the reliability analysis conducted using Cronbach's alpha equation.

Table 6. Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Reliability coefficients.

Dimensions	Reliability
	Cronbach's alpha
Psychological weakness	0.736
Spiritual emptiness	0.740
Self-contempt	0.810
Self-deficiency	0.766

The preceding table indicates that all stability coefficients exceeded 0.7, suggesting the reliability of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale.

3.3.2. The Scale Composite Reliability (CR)

CR coefficients calculation involved assessing the ratio of true variance to total variance, as outlined by Kline (2015). Composite reliability offers a measure of internal consistency similar to Cronbach's alpha but provides additional insights by considering the proportion of true score variance relative to overall variance.

$$CR = \frac{(\sum \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum \lambda_i)^2 + (\sum \epsilon_i)}$$

- (CR\) coefficient of CR,
- (λ_i \) weights of the standardized regression,
- (ϵ_i \) standardized error.

In **Table 7**, it is evident that all the coefficients of the Composite Reliability (CR) for the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale surpassed 0.7, implying the scale's construct commendable reliability.

Regarding the scale's reliability, the results indicated reliability coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.904, as evaluated by both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. This considerable level of consistency affirms the reliability

of the scale components in assessing diverse dimensions of self-defeating behavior.

Table 7. Self-Defeating Behavior Scale Reliability Coefficients.

Dimension	Reliability
	Composite Reliability (CR)
Psychological weakness	0.903
Self-deficiency	0.904
Self-contempt	0.892
Spiritual emptiness	0.832

In conclusion, the consistently high CR coefficients validate the robustness of the Self-Defeating Behavior Scale, emphasizing its reliability and suitability for accurately measuring self-defeating behaviors in the specified population. Future studies could further validate these findings across diverse student populations or explore additional dimensions of self-defeating behavior to enhance the scale's comprehensiveness and applicability.

4. Limitations

The newly created tool for evaluating self-defeating behavior demonstrates strong psychometric characteristics and is useful for studying this behavior in EFL students. However, it's important to recognize some limitations. Firstly, specific cultural differences in the studied group may limit how widely the findings can be applied, which might affect the scale's usefulness in various EFL settings. Moreover, using only self-reported information, which is a common method in research, could lead to biases or the need to present oneself in a favorable light, thereby affecting how accurately participants answer. In addition to this, the research's cross-sectional approach only offers a limited view of self-defeating behavior, making it hard to determine cause-and-effect relationships or to track changes over time. To address these issues, future research could use longitudinal approaches and involve a broader range of EFL learners, which would improve the scale's validity and relevance across different cultural and educational contexts.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study has effectively created and confirmed a Self-Defeating Behavior Scale aimed at measuring self-defeating behaviors among university students

learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The scale includes four key elements—psychological weakness, self-criticism, lack of purpose, and feelings of inadequacy—and it has shown strong psychometric characteristics. These results improve our comprehension of self-defeating behaviors in EFL education, providing a culturally relevant tool for assessing such issues in university students. The outcomes of this research are important for tackling self-defeating behavior in EFL settings, recommending specific interventions and collaboration with educational organizations. In the future, research could use long-term studies to clarify how these behaviors develop over time and carry out cross-cultural tests to verify the scale’s applicability in various EFL contexts. Implementing specific intervention strategies and thoroughly analyzing each aspect of the scale are crucial actions to enhance student well-being and create a supportive learning atmosphere that encourages resilience and academic achievement.

Abbreviation

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
CR	Composite Reliability
Std	Standard Deviation
df	Degree of Freedom
Sig	Significance
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.A.A. and M.S.A.; methodology, A.B.F.; software, L.A.; validation, W.E.H., M.S.A. and A.A.E.; formal analysis, H.A.; investigation, A.L.; resources, A.B.F.; data curation, M.S.A.; writing—original draft preparation, A.A.E.; writing—review and editing, A.L.; visualization, H.A.A.; supervision, W.E.H.; project administration, H.A.A.; funding acquisition, A.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data will be provided by storing it via a link via the email m.heby@psau.edu.sa and sending it to those interested if they request it.

Conflicts of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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