



Murat YILDIRIM

Associate Professor, PhD in Psychology
Head of the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science and Letters, Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen
University, Ağrı, Türkiye
E-mail: muratyildirim@agri.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1089-1380

Zaur Gudrat ALAKBAROV

Master's student, General Psychology, Department of Psychology,
Khazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan
E-mail: zauralekberov2024@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0006-0057-9683

**PSYCHOMETRIC VALIDATION OF THE AZERBAIJANI ADAPTATIONS OF THE
ULTRA BRIEF CHECKLIST FOR SUICIDALITY (UBCS) AND THE SUICIDAL
BEHAVIORS QUESTIONNAIRE – REVISED (SBQ-R): RELIABILITY, FACTOR
STRUCTURE, AND CRITERION-RELATED VALIDITY IN A UNIVERSITY STUDENT
SAMPLE**

Abstract

This study conducted the first formal psychometric validation of the Azerbaijani adaptations of the Ultra Brief Checklist for Suicidality (UBCS) and the Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire – Revised (SBQ-R) in a university student sample. Design/method/approach. $N = 366$ students in Baku (M age = 20.92; 69.4% female) completed both instruments alongside Azerbaijani-validated measures of depression (Zung SDS), anxiety (Zung SAS), and life satisfaction (SWLS). Internal consistency, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), Spearman correlations, and multiple regression were examined. Findings/Results. Both instruments showed adequate reliability (UBCS: $\alpha = .794$, $\omega = .813$; SBQ-R: $\alpha = .808$, $\omega = .833$). CFA supported the one-factor structure of the SBQ-R ($CFI = .985$, $SRMR = .026$) and provided partial support for the UBCS ($CFI = .959$, $SRMR = .040$), with elevated RMSEA values attributed to a known artifact of $df = 2$ models. All convergent validity hypotheses were confirmed (UBCS–SBQ-R: $\rho = .691$; UBCS–depression: $\rho = .538$; UBCS–anxiety: $\rho = .462$; UBCS–life satisfaction: $\rho = -.443$). Multiple regression explained 36.8% of variance in UBCS scores and 33.9% in SBQ-R scores. Depression was the dominant predictor for UBCS ($\beta = .316$); anxiety dominated the SBQ-R model ($\beta = .288$).

Keywords: suicide risk, psychometric validation, university students, Azerbaijan, UBCS.

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Introduction

Suicide accounts for approximately 703,000 deaths annually and represents a major public health challenge across all income levels [1]. In Azerbaijan, official data report a rate of just 2.1 per 100,000 population (2019) — a figure widely regarded as an underestimate, given that cultural and religious pressures lead families to conceal suicidal

deaths [2]. University students constitute a population of heightened vulnerability: academic pressure, social transition, and the developmental demands of early adulthood produce elevated rates of suicidal ideation, depression, and anxiety relative to age-matched peers [3,4].



A key barrier to addressing this burden in Azerbaijan is the absence of validated, purpose-built suicidality assessment tools for Azerbaijani speakers. Instruments measuring depression (Zung SDS [5]), anxiety (Zung SAS [6]), and life satisfaction (SWLS [7]) have been adapted locally, yet direct multidimensional assessment of suicidal risk has relied on single items embedded in general depression scales — a practice documented as methodologically inadequate for capturing the multidimensional nature of suicidal risk [8].

Two instruments were identified as suitable candidates for Azerbaijani adaptation. The Ultra Brief Checklist for Suicidality (UBCS; [9]) is a four-item self-report scale completable in under one minute, assessing passive ideation, active ideation, planning, and lifetime attempt history on a 0–4 Likert format (total 0–16; cutoffs: ≥ 1 Risk-Positive, ≥ 3 High-Risk). The Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire – Revised (SBQ-R; [10]) covers lifetime ideation and attempt history, past-year ideation frequency, intent communication, and subjective future risk (total 3–18; cutoff ≥ 7 for non-clinical samples). Together they support a two-stage assessment model: UBCS for rapid universal screening followed by SBQ-R for in-depth risk profiling.

The present study pursued the first formal psychometric validation of the Azerbaijani UBCS (primary aim) and an equivalent evaluation of the Azerbaijani SBQ-R (secondary aim). Four hypothesis clusters were tested: adequate internal consistency (H1.1, H1.2); replication of one-factor structures via CFA (H2.1, H2.2); significant correlations between UBCS scores and criterion variables (H3.1–H3.4); and the collective and independent predictive roles of depression, anxiety, and life satisfaction in regression models for both instruments (H4.1, H4.2).

Method

Participants and procedure. Data were collected via an online survey between December 2025 and January 2026 from $N = 366$ university students enrolled at higher education institutions in Baku (M age = 20.92,

$SD = 3.94$; 69.4% female, 29.8% male). Recruitment combined formal institutional cooperation at ADA University ($n = 136$) and Azerbaijan Medical University ($n = 25$) with supplementary snowball and convenience sampling. Ethical approval was granted by the Khazar University Ethics Research Committee (Protocol No. 4-2025/2026). Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Instruments. Both the UBCS and SBQ-R were adapted into Azerbaijani following the forward-backward translation protocol of Beaton et al. [11]: three independent forward translators produced Azerbaijani versions, which were reconciled through researcher-led consultation; two independent back-translators blind to the originals then verified semantic and conceptual equivalence. Criterion variables were measured using the validated Azerbaijani adaptations of the Zung SDS [5], Zung SAS [6], and SWLS [7], all of which carry established psychometric properties in Azerbaijani samples.

Statistical analysis. All analyses were conducted in JASP (version 0.96.0). Internal consistency was examined via Cronbach's α and McDonald's ω (threshold $\geq .70$). CFA with maximum likelihood estimation evaluated factorial validity; fit was assessed using CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR, with $CFI \geq .90$ and $SRMR \leq .08$ treated as primary indicators under $df = 2$ conditions [12]. Convergent validity was examined using Spearman rank-order correlations, pre-specified for suicidality variables given their known positive skewness. Criterion-related validity was assessed through multiple linear regression with standardized beta (β) coefficients; collinearity diagnostics were examined prior to interpretation.

Results

Descriptive statistics. The UBCS produced a mean of 2.12 ($SD = 2.89$, range 0–16, skewness = 2.05) and the SBQ-R a mean of 6.15 ($SD = 3.37$, range 3–18, skewness = 1.31), both showing substantial positive skew consistent with non-clinical samples. Mean Zung SDS scores ($M = 45.56$, $SD = 10.31$) fell precisely at the locally validated clinical cutoff of ≥ 45 [5], suggesting clinically relevant

depressive symptomatology in a meaningful proportion of the sample. Mean Zung SAS scores were 39.97 (SD = 10.71) and SWLS scores 21.81 (SD = 6.60).

Reliability. The UBCS demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .794$, 95% CI [.736, .853]; $\omega = .813$, 95% CI [.782, .844]), supporting H1.1. Item-rest correlations ranged from .509 (Item 4, lifetime attempt) to .791 (Item 2, suicidal ideation), all exceeding the .30 threshold. The lower correlation for Item 4 reflects its temporal distinction from Items 1–3, which assess current two-week suicidality; the item was retained because prior attempt history is among the strongest predictors of future lethal risk [13]. The SBQ-R demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .808$, 95% CI [.763, .853]; $\omega = .833$, 95% CI [.804, .862]), supporting H1.2, with item-rest correlations ranging from .596 (Item 3) to .739 (Item 2). For both scales, McDonald's ω modestly exceeded Cronbach's α , consistent with unequal factor loadings [14].

Confirmatory factor analysis. Results are presented in Table 1. For the UBCS, CFI (.959) and SRMR (.040) both met acceptability criteria. The RMSEA (.189) substantially exceeded .08; however, under $df = 2$ conditions — unavoidable for any four-item single-factor instrument — RMSEA is known to be systematically unstable and prone to artificial inflation [12]. CFI and SRMR are therefore the more appropriate fit indicators here, and both indicate adequate fit. H2.1 is partially supported. All four factor loadings were statistically significant and exceeded .40: Item 1 ($\lambda = .613$), Item 2 ($\lambda = .955$), Item 3 ($\lambda = .813$), Item 4 ($\lambda = .559$). For the SBQ-R, CFI (.985), TLI (.954), and SRMR (.026) all met their criteria; the RMSEA (.107) exceeded .08 but its lower CI bound (.049) fell below that threshold. H2.2 is fully supported. SBQ-R factor loadings were uniformly strong: Item 1 ($\lambda = .733$), Item 2 ($\lambda = .847$), Item 3 ($\lambda = .662$), Item 4 ($\lambda = .728$).

Table 1. CFA fit indices for the Azerbaijani UBCS and SBQ-R (N = 366).

Scale	$\chi^2(df)$	p	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	90% CI	SRMR
UBCS	28.12(2)	< .001	.959	.878	.189	[.131, .254]	.040
SBQ-R	10.33(2)	.006	.985	.954	.107	[.049, .175]	.026
Cut off	—	—	$\geq .90$	$\geq .90$	$\leq .08$	—	$\leq .08$

Note: RMSEA instability under $df = 2$ is a recognized artifact [12]; CFI and SRMR are treated as primary fit indicators.

Convergent validity. All four hypotheses were supported (Table 2). UBCS and SBQ-R scores showed a strong positive correlation ($\rho = .691$, 95% CI [.633, .741], $p < .001$), confirming H3.1 and indicating substantial construct overlap without redundancy. UBCS scores correlated positively with depression ($\rho = .538$, $p < .001$; H3.2) and anxiety ($\rho = .462$, $p < .001$; H3.3),

and negatively with life satisfaction ($\rho = -.443$, $p < .001$; H3.4). The hierarchy — depression > anxiety > life satisfaction in absolute magnitude — is consistent with theoretical accounts in which hopelessness-driven pathways [15] most directly link depression to suicidal ideation, while anxiety operates through a more distal arousal and future-threat appraisal mechanism [16].

Table 2. Spearman correlations among study variables (N = 366).

	SBQ-R	Zung SDS	Zung SAS	SWLS
UBCS	.691***	.538***	.462***	-.443***
SBQ-R	—	.490***	.482***	-.387***
Zung SDS	—	—	.786***	-.555***



	SBQ-R	Zung SDS	Zung SAS	SWLS
Zung SAS	—	—	—	-.391***

Note. *** $p < .001$. UBCS = Ultra Brief Checklist for Suicidality; SBQ-R = Suicidal Behaviors Questionnaire – Revised; Zung SDS = Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale; Zung SAS = Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale.

Criterion-related validity. The regression model predicting UBCS scores was significant, $F(3, 362) = 70.33$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .368$. Depression was the dominant predictor ($\beta = .316$, $p < .001$), followed by anxiety ($\beta = .195$, $p = .005$) and life satisfaction ($\beta = -.188$, $p < .001$), fully replicating the hypothesized hierarchy and supporting H4.1. The SBQ-R model was also significant, $F(3, 362) = 61.82$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .339$; however, anxiety emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = .288$, $p < .001$), ahead of depression ($\beta = .198$, $p = .013$) and life satisfaction ($\beta = -.193$, $p < .001$), yielding partial support for H4.2. Collinearity between depression and anxiety was moderate (tolerance = .293 and .361 respectively; both VIFs < 10), below levels that would critically distort the estimates.

Discussion

Both Azerbaijani adaptations performed adequately across all four psychometric domains. Reliability coefficients for the UBCS and SBQ-R fall within — and in several respects exceed — the ranges reported in the original validation studies [9,10] and in international adaptations from Nigeria [17], Poland [18], Iran [19], Malaysia [20], and Afghanistan [21]. The replication of one-factor structures, with all factor loadings well above .40, confirms that the instruments retain their construct architecture after translation.

The partial support for H2.1 reflects a methodological constraint rather than a deficiency of the Azerbaijani adaptation. The same RMSEA inflation under $df = 2$ conditions observed in Yoon et al.'s [9] original validation recurs here, and CFI and SRMR — the indices recommended as primary under these constraints [12] — both met their criteria.

The divergent predictor patterns across the two regression models carry theoretical weight. Depression's dominance in the UBCS

model aligns with the Hopelessness Theory [15]: hopelessness-mediated cognitive distortion most directly generates the current passive and active ideation captured by the UBCS's two-week items. The reversal in the SBQ-R model, where anxiety overtook depression, is interpretable within the ideation-to-action framework [22]. The SBQ-R includes items on the frequency of ideation over the past year (Item 2) and the subjective likelihood of a future attempt (Item 4) — dimensions that extend beyond the current two-week window. Anxiety's characteristic sustained hyperarousal and negatively biased future appraisal [16] may be better positioned than depression's acute motivational deficits to predict these prospective and habitual dimensions of suicidal risk. Franklin et al.'s [13] meta-analytic finding that predictor effectiveness varies across specific suicidal outcomes supports this reading. The moderate multicollinearity between depression and anxiety ($p = .786$) adds a methodological caveat: beta coefficients should be treated as approximate rather than precise estimates of construct-level relationships.

The mean Zung SDS score of 45.56 — at the locally validated clinical cutoff [5] — is itself a finding of public health concern. Clinically relevant depressive symptomatology appears common in this Baku student sample, consistent with international literature [4] but poorly documented in the Azerbaijani context.

Several limitations qualify these findings. The convenience and snowball sampling approach, with overrepresentation of ADA University students (37.2%) enrolled in English-medium programs, limits generalizability to state-sector institutions. The 69.4% female sample deviates from the national student gender ratio by approximately 12–14 percentage points [23], and single-



group CFA precludes conclusions about measurement invariance across gender. The adaptation protocol did not fully implement the six stages recommended by Beaton et al. [11]: formal committee synthesis, structured expert review, and pilot testing were not conducted. The cross-sectional design rules out test-retest reliability assessment. Future research should replicate these analyses in representative samples, test measurement invariance, validate local cutoff scores against structured clinical interviews, and examine mediation models that directly test the hopelessness and anxiety sensitivity pathways proposed here.

Conclusion

This study provides the first formally validated Azerbaijani adaptations of both the UBCS and SBQ-R, demonstrating adequate internal consistency, replicated factor structures, and theoretically coherent patterns of convergent and criterion-related validity. The scientific novelty of this work is twofold: it fills a critical gap in Azerbaijani suicidality assessment infrastructure, and it documents a theoretically interpretable differential predictor pattern — depression dominant for current ideation as measured by the UBCS, anxiety dominant for prospective and frequency-based risk as measured by the SBQ-R — that contributes empirical evidence to the ideation-to-action literature. The practical significance is equally direct: healthcare providers, university counseling services, and researchers in Azerbaijan now have access to brief, anonymous, psychometrically sound screening tools for suicidal risk identification in a context where stigma, resource constraints, and the prior absence of purpose-built instruments have historically impeded early detection. The two-stage model — UBCS for universal rapid screening, SBQ-R for in-depth risk profiling — is empirically supported for Azerbaijani student populations and can be integrated into university mental health protocols without specialist administration.

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Murat YILDIRIM

Dosent, Psixologiya üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru, Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen Universiteti, Fen Edebiyat Fakültəsi,
Psixologiya kafedrasının müdürü, Ağrı, Türkiyə

Zaur Qüdrət oğlu ƏLƏKBƏROV

Xəzər Universiteti, Psixologiya departamenti, Ümumi psixologiya, magistrant, Bakı, Azərbaycan

**İNTİHAR MÜƏYYƏNEDİCİSİNİN ULTRAQISA YOXLAMA SİYAHISININ (UBCS) VƏ
YENİLƏNMİŞ İNTİHAR DAVRANIŞ ANKETİNİN (SBQ-R) AZƏRBAYCAN
ADAPTASIYALARININ PSIXOMETRİK VALİDASIYASI: ALİ TƏHSİL MÜƏSSİSƏSİ
TƏLƏBƏLƏRİ NÜMUNƏSİNDƏ ETİBARLILIQ, FAKTOR QURULUŞU VƏ MEYARA
ƏSASLANAN KEÇƏRLİLİK**

Xülasə

Bu tədqiqat Ultraqisa İntihar Müəyyənədicisinin (UBCS) və Yenilənmiş İntihar Davranış Anketinin (SBQ-R) Azərbaycan adaptasiyalarının ali təhsil müəssisəsi tələbələri nümunəsində ilk rəsmi psixometrik validasiyasını həyata keçirmişdir. Bakıda $N = 366$ tələbə (orta yaş = 20,92; 69,4% qadın) hər iki aləti depressiya (Zung SDS), narahatlıq (Zung SAS) və həyat məmnuniyyəti (SWLS) üzrə Azərbaycanca validasiya olunmuş ölçülərlə birlikdə doldurmuşdur. Daxili ardıcılıq, təsdiqli faktor təhlili, Spearman korrelyasiyaları və çoxlu reqressiya tədqiq edilmişdir. Hər iki alət adekvat etibarlılıq göstərdi (UBCS: $\alpha = .794$, $\omega = .813$; SBQ-R: $\alpha = .808$, $\omega = .833$). Təsdiqli faktor təhlili SBQ-R üçün bir faktorlu quruluşu (CFI = .985, SRMR = .026) tam, UBCS üçün isə qismən (CFI = .959, SRMR = .040) dəstəklədi. UBCS göstəriciləri SBQ-R ($\rho = .691$), depressiya ($\rho = .538$), narahatlıq ($\rho = .462$) və həyat məmnuniyyəti ($\rho = -.443$) ilə əhəmiyyətli korrelyasiya göstərdi. Reqressiya modelləri UBCS ($R^2 = .368$) və SBQ-R ($R^2 = .339$) göstəricilərindəki dispersiyanı müvafiq olaraq açıqladı; depressiya UBCS modelini, narahatlıq isə SBQ-R modelini üstünlük təşkil edərək proqnozlaşdırdı.

Açar sözlər: intihar riski, psixometrik validasiya, tələbələr, Azərbaycan, UBCS.

Мурат ЙЫЛДЫРЫМ

Доцент, доктор философии по психологии (PhD)

Заведующий кафедрой психологии, Факультет естественных и гуманитарных наук,
Университет Агры Ибрагима Чечена, Агры, Турция

Заур Кудрат АЛЕКПЕРОВ

Магистрант, Общая психология, Департамент психологии, Университет Хазар, Баку,
Азербайджан

**ПСИХОМЕТРИЧЕСКАЯ ВАЛИДАЦИЯ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНСКИХ АДАПТАЦИЙ
УЛЬТРАКРАТКОГО КОНТРОЛЬНОГО СПИСКА СУИЦИДАЛЬНОСТИ (UBCS) И
ПЕРЕСМОТРЕННОГО ОПРОСНИКА СУИЦИДАЛЬНОГО ПОВЕДЕНИЯ (SBQ-R):
НАДЁЖНОСТЬ, ФАКТОРНАЯ СТРУКТУРА И КРИТЕРИАЛЬНАЯ ВАЛИДНОСТЬ
НА ВЫБОРКЕ СТУДЕНТОВ ВЫСШИХ УЧЕБНЫХ ЗАВЕДЕНИЙ**

Резюме

Настоящее исследование провело первую формальную психометрическую валидацию азербайджанских адаптаций Ультракраткого контрольного списка суицидальности (UBCS) и Пересмотренного опросника суицидального поведения (SBQ-R) на выборке студентов университетов. $N = 366$ студентов в Баку (средний возраст = 20,92; 69,4% женщин) заполнили

оба инструмента наряду с валидированными азербайджанскими мерами депрессии (Zung SDS), тревоги (Zung SAS) и удовлетворённости жизнью (SWLS). Были исследованы внутренняя согласованность, подтверждающий факторный анализ, корреляции Спирмена и множественная регрессия. Оба инструмента продемонстрировали адекватную надёжность (UBCS: $\alpha = .794$, $\omega = .813$; SBQ-R: $\alpha = .808$, $\omega = .833$). ПФА подтвердил однофакторную структуру SBQ-R (CFI = .985, SRMR = .026) и частично — UBCS (CFI = .959, SRMR = .040). Баллы UBCS достоверно коррелировали с SBQ-R ($\rho = .691$), депрессией ($\rho = .538$), тревогой ($\rho = .462$) и удовлетворённостью жизнью ($\rho = -.443$). Регрессионные модели объяснили 36,8% дисперсии баллов UBCS и 33,9% — SBQ-R; депрессия доминировала в модели UBCS, а тревога — в модели SBQ-R.

Ключевые слова: суицидальность, психометрическая валидация, студенты, Азербайджан, UBCS.

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