# Construct Validity And Reliability Of Empathy Scale On Students

#### Muhammad Arga Syafiza, Fatwa Tentama, Muhamad Hasan Abdillah

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyze the construct validity and reliability of empathy and to examine the dimensions and indicators that make up this construct. Empathy is measured by four dimensions, namely empathic concern, personal distress, fantasy and perspective taking. The population in this study were all grade VII students who were in Muhammadiyah 1 Prambanan Middle School. The sample in this study were 60 students. The sampling technique used is quota sampling. The data collection method uses empathy scale. Research data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through the SmartPLS version 3.0 program. Based on the results of data analysis, the dimensions and indicators that form the construct of empathy are declared valid and reliable. The dominant dimension that reflects the construct of empathy is empathic concern with a loading factor of 0.978. The weakest dimension reflects the empathy construct is personal distress with a loading factor of 0.908. This shows that all dimensions and indicators are able to reflect and shape the construct of empathy, thus the measurement model can be accepted because the theory that describes the construct of empathy fit with empirical data obtained from the subject.

Keywords: Construct Validity, Construct Reliability, Empathy, Empathic Concern, Fantasy, Personal Distress, Perspective Taking

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

Individual behavior is generally guided by social norms or rules of unwritten social behavior [1]. These social norms guide individual behavior in various types of interpersonal situations, such as social dilemmas [2]. Social dilemmas are situations where personal interests conflict with the interests of others or long-term public interests [3]. One consequence of social dilemmas is an increase in actions that can lead to increased conflict [4]. Some researchers have tried to identify strategies that can reduce this possibility, one of the behavioral strategies that can be applied include generosity or empathy [5], [6]. Empathy is one of the traits needed to interact [7]. Empathy is seen as an important component of various types of social relationships [8]. It helps individuals to achieve higher quality in socializing [9]. The concept of empathy in students is seen as an intellectual process involving at least two individuals with the ability to understand and the capacity to communicate that understanding back to the recipient in a non-judgmental way [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15]. However, some researchers consider that there are still many students who lack communication skills, caring philosophies, and concepts of empathy [16], [17]. Low empathy has been associated with several negative outcomes, such as aggressive behavior, bullying and disobedience [18], [19]. Empathy is an important factor that influences the conduciveness of student interactions with other students and teachers [20]. The results of observations made at Muhammadiyah 1 Prambanan Junior High School showed that some students joked during class hours, which made the classroom atmosphere not conducive during the learning process. Also during class time when the teacher has to erase the blackboard which is still full of writing from the previous lesson, no students take the initiative to help erase the blackboard so that the teacher himself erases the blackboard.

Other observations were found when a teacher was carrying enough textbooks, some students who were nearby seemed just to say hello but did not offer help to the teacher. Empathy is an emotional process of an adaptive orientation system that functions to help individuals determine priorities [21]. Empathy can be a powerful mechanism to motivate generous behavior that helps individuals effectively cope with negative interaction situations that might lead to an increase in tolerance and cooperation [22]. Empathy is needed to encourage prosocial behavior and is often referred to as social glue in relationships [23]. Empathy represents the basic ability of emotional regulation that enables individuals to build social bonds [24]. Individuals tend to reduce or even avoid behaviors that lead to aggression when they have high empathy [25]. Empathy plays a core role in social interaction because of its broad effects on behavior. expanding social relationships, improvina interpersonal communication, helping to reduce mental stress and physical suffering [26]. Empathy as a positive emotional response oriented to the welfare of others in need [27]. Several studies have found that individuals with empathy tend to have better generous behavior [28], and also allow individuals to be more obedient in following positive advice from others [29]. In addition, a high level of empathy is associated with the improvement of wider social relationships, meaning that the nature of empathy allows individuals to be more accepted by others [30]. The concept of empathy was first introduced by Titchener, who was an aesthetic expert in the mid-19th century. The term empathy is an adaptation of the German word Einfühlung. The word Einfühlung describes "knowing emotionally, by feeling emotional resonance [31]. At the end of the 19th century, psychologist Theodore Lipps [32], expanded this concept to" emotionally feel the experience of others. "Some experts argue that the discussion of empathy may even originate from "the beginnings of philosophical thought" [33]. In spite of this vast history, definitions of empathy have evolved along with the many studies that try to conceptualize based on certain fields, such as clinical, social, and educational fields [34], [35]. Empathy as the ability to understand the emotions, feelings, and reactions of others and communicate these understandings to others effectively [36]. Empathy refers to the ability of individuals to put themselves in the shoes of others by sharing their feelings without hurting anyone's feelings [34]. Empathy is the ability to understand the

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emotions of others by sharing feelings and experiences [37]. It is an expression of the deep emotion that often arises spontaneously in response to witnessing or even reading the emotions of others [38]. The concept of empathy is described as an insight that an individual has about the lives of others that enables individuals to understand the circumstances and reality of other people's life situations [39]. Empathy is a behavioral element that is very important to understand in various contexts and can play a key role in providing information on moral judgment [40]. The formation of empathy is influenced by at least four factors: (a) emotional intensity, how often an individual engages his emotions in helping others; (b) the quality of individual relationships with others; (c) personal characteristics (such as age, sex, personality, past experience); and, (d) context, namely certain situations that allow spontaneous empathy to emerge [40]. Some experts agree on empathy as a multidimensional concept. Firstly, empathy is seen as an effective response to others and can include emotional problems; both empathies involves cognitive dimensions in which individuals adopt or share perspectives; thirdly empathy is related to modulating emotions that lead to self-integration which can cause negative effects such as confusion, anxiety, and depression [34]. A study conducted by Davis [42] to develop a measure of empathy based on dimensions consisting of 1) Perspective taking, is the tendency of individuals to adopt the psychological point of view of others spontaneously (feel what others experience). This ability can facilitate smoother and more useful interpersonal relationships. 2) Fantasy, is an individual's tendency to imagine his feelings based on what others have experienced. This ability allows individuals to display physiological and psychological arousal. 3) Empathic concern, is the tendency of individuals to care about the negative experiences of others. This ability enables individuals to engage in behaviors and emotions that are beneficial to others (actions that reflect caring). 4) Personal distress, is an individual's tendency to orient himself based on the negative experiences of others. The multidimensional conceptual framework of empathy consisting of empathic concern, personal distress, fantasy, and perspective taking can be seen in Figure 1.

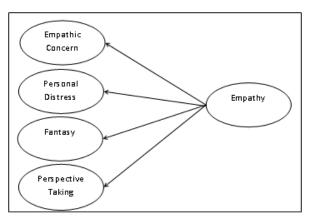


Figure. 1. Conceptual model of empathy

Based on Figure 1 above, the hypothesis in this study is the empathic dimensions of concern, personal distress, fantasy, and perspective taking together are able to form empathy constructs. One approach that can be used in testing the construction of a measuring instrument is Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), which is one of the main approaches in factor analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) can be used to test the dimensions of a construct. This test is used to measure the model so that it can describe the dimensions and indicators of behavior in reflecting latent variables namely empathy by looking at the loading factor of each dimension that forms a construct. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is also used to test the construct validity and construct reliability of the indicators (items) forming latent constructs [43]. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) used in this study is the second order Confirmatory Factor Analysis (2nd Order CFA), a measurement model that consists of two levels. The first level of analysis is carried out from the dimensions to the indicators, and the second analysis is carried out from the latent construct to its dimensions [44]. The description that has been described above shows that empathy is an important psychological attribute for every student to have, both in the setting of the school environment and the wider social environment. Given the importance of empathy, the formulation of the problem in this study are: 1) Is the empathy scale valid and reliable?; 2) Are empathic dimensions of concern, personal distress, fantasy, and perspective taking able to form empathy constructs? The purpose of this study is to analyze the validity and reliability of the empathy construct and to examine the dimensions and indicators that make up the empathy construct.

# 2 RESEARCH METHOD

#### 2.1 Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population in this study were all grade VII students who were in Muhammadiyah 1 Prambanan Middle School. The sample in this study were 60 students. The sampling technique used is quota sampling.

#### 2.2 Data Collection Method

Empathy in this study was measured using an empathy scale with a differential semantic model. The researcher arranged the empathy scale by referring to the empathy dimensions proposed by Davis [42], namely empathic concern, personal distress, fantasy, and perspective taking. Examples of items from each dimension can be seen in the following table:

TABLE 1           SAMPLE ITEMS OF EMPATHIC CONCERN DIMENSION						
	When	there's a	friend in	need of	help, I	
Help	5	4	3	2	1	Ignore
Come to them	5	4	3	2	1	Do nothing
SAMF	TABLE 2           Sample item of personal distress dimension					
When	there a	re friend l	being sc	olded by	the teac	her, I
Do nothing	5	4	3	2	1	Try to defend them
Keep patient	5	4	3	2	1	Feel angry

TABLE 3

SAMPLE ITEM OF FANTASY DIMENSION						
When I see people suffering, I						
Feel pity	5	4	3	2	1	Нарру
Care	5	4	3	2	1	Don't care

	<b>TABLE 4</b> SAMPLE ITEM OF PERSPECTIVE TAKING DIMENSION						
	When having different opinion, I						
Accept opinion	the	5	4	3	2	1	Reject the opinion
Listen		5	4	3	2	1	Don't listen

The indicators that reflect each dimension are as follows:

TABLE 5
BLUEPRINT OF THE EMPATHY SCALE

Dimension	Indicator	ltem Number	Total
Empathic concern	<ul> <li>a. Encourage others who are struggling</li> <li>b. Being able to feel the pain of others</li> </ul>	1,2,3,4,5,6	6
Personal distress	<ul> <li>a. Feeling helpless or powerless to do something</li> <li>b. Feeling worried or afraid of something</li> </ul>	7,8,9,10, 11,12	6
Fantasy	<ul> <li>a. Being able to carry the atmosphere to someone's suffering</li> <li>b. Able to imagine yourself in the position of others</li> </ul>	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 Ə	6
Perspective taking	<ul> <li>a. Able to consider other people opinions</li> <li>b. Being able to take another person's point of view</li> </ul>	's 19,20.21,2 2,23,24	6
Total		24	24

#### 2.3 Construct Validity and Construct Reliability

To test the validity and the reliability of the construct, this study used the outer model testing through the smartPLS 3.0 program. Validity testing consists of tests of convergent validity and discriminant validity. The convergent validity can be seen from the loading factor value > 0.5 and the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 [45], while the discriminant validity can be seen from comparing the roots of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) between dimensions in which it must be higher than correlation with other dimensions [45]. Reliability testing consists of Cronbach alpha test and composite reliability > 0.7 [45].

#### 2.4 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data used in this study is the SmartPLS version 3.0 program with the 2nd Order CFA. PLS is a variance-based structural equation analysis (SEM) that can simultaneously test measurement models to test the construct validity and reliability.

# 3 RESULT

The results of the analysis of the outer model test conducted on the construct of empathy using smart PLS 3.0 shows that the construct meets the validity and reliability. The output image of the outer model can be seen in the following image:

#### 3.1 The Construct Validity Test Result

#### 3.1.1 Convergent Validity

The empathy construct can be declared valid because it meets the criteria, namely through convergent validity which shows that the loading factor value > 0.5 can be seen in the following table:

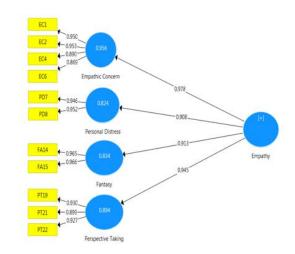


Figure. 2 Outer model of empathy scale

# TABLE 6

		/
Dimension	Loading Factor	Explanation
Empathic concern	0.978	Valid
Personal distress	0.908	Valid
Fantasy	0.913	Valid
Perspective taking	0.945	Valid

Based on the test of convergent validity on the outer model, it was found that the loading factor value of the dimensions to the indicators is > 0.5 shown in table 7.

TABLE 7           The value of Loading Factor (Dimension – Aitem)				
ltems	Loading Factor	Explanation		
EC1	0.950	Valid		
EC2	0.953	Valid		
EC4	0.890	Valid		
EC6	0.869	Valid		
PD1	0.946	Valid		
PD2	0.952	Valid		
FA2	0.965	Valid		
FA3	0.966	Valid		

PT1	0.930	Valid
PT3	0.894	Valid
PT4	0.927	Valid

Convergent validity test results show the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of the empathy construct is 0.838, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of each dimension can be seen in table 8.

**TABLE 8** 

 THE AVE VALUE OF EMPATHY VARIABLE

Dimension	AVE Value	Explanation
Empathic concern	0.840	Valid
Personal distress	0.901	Valid
Fantasy	0.932	Valid
Perspective taking	0.844	Valid

#### 3.1.2 Discriminant Validity

The results of discriminant validity test show that the root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) in each dimension is higher than the value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) root in other dimensions so that the discriminant validity criteria are met. The root value of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) empathy variable can be seen in table 9.

 TABLE 9

 AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)

 ROOT VALUE OF EMPATHY

Dimension	EC	PD	FA	PT	
EC	0.916	0.862	0.906	0.903	
PD	0.862	0.949	0.850	0.878	
FA	0.906	0.850	0.965	0.889	
PT	0.903	0.878	0.889	0.919	

# 3.2 Construct Reliability Test

The reliability test results have been fulfilled based on the Cronbach alpha value and composite reliability that is > 0.7. These results can be seen in the following table:

	TABLE 10				
THE VALUE OF	THE VALUE OF CRONBACH ALPHA AND COMPOSITE RELIABILITY				
Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Annotation		
Empathy	0.981	0.983	Reliable		

# 4 DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the analysis of construct validity and construct reliability that has been done, it is known that all dimensions and indicators that form the construct of empathy in students can be declared valid and reliable. Thus, all

dimensions and indicators can reflect student empathy. The most dominant dimension which reflects student empathy is the dimension of empathy concerning with a loading factor of 0.978 which has indicators such as "being able to feel the pain of others, compelled to help others who are struggling". Meanwhile, the weakest dimension in reflecting student empathy is the personal distress dimension with a loading factor of 0.908 which has indicators such as "feeling helpless or powerless to do something, feeling worried or afraid of something". The concept of empathy is considered important in many fields of psychology in different contexts, a study developing empathy instruments used in nurses towards patients with reference to the cognitive and affective dimensions [46]. Cognition is the dimension that distinguishes empathy from sympathy when experiencing empathy the individual can position himself in the conditions experienced by others, whereas individuals who experience sympathy only feel concerned without being able to unite their emotions [47]. This dimension is very suitable when applied in nurse settings, the Cronbach alpha coefficient obtained from this dimension is 0.850 [48]. Studies on empathy that refer to the dimension of Davis [42] have been carried out to test how much the reliability coefficient is obtained, some researchers including Jeong [49], which measures empathy in students obtained a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.715. Hampes [50], got a Cronbach alpha of 0.810 in college students. Meanwhile, this study obtained a Cronbach alpha of 0.981, thus some of these studies showed that the empathy dimension consisting of empathic concern, personal distress, fantasy, and perspective taking was still relevant as a reference for the preparation of empathy instruments. The results of this study provide an overview of the validity and reliability of empathy constructs in Muhammadiyah 1 Prambanan Middle School students so that researchers can then use the results of this study as a reference in measuring student empathy.

# 5 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the construct of empathy has fulfilled good validity and reliability, and all dimensions and indicators can significantly form empathy. The most dominant dimension that reflects the construct of empathy is empathic concern, and the weakest dimension reflects the construct of empathy is personal distress. In this study an empathy scale measurement model was formed that was in accordance with empirical data obtained from subjects at the study site.

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