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Older People's Psychological Counseling and Guidance Needs Scale: Validity and reliability study

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Abstract

This study, has been conducted to examine the validity and reliability analysis of The Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale. The data were obtained from the older people aged between 60-60+ in the years between 2009-2010. The Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale, which was devised by the researcher, is a Likert-type scale consisting of 20 items. The Cronbach alpha coefficient is .87. Stability coefficient is .87. The result of factor analysis showed instrument one factor. These findings indicate that the Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale is reliable and valid.

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1. Introduction

As our society keeps getting older, the problems of older people become the problems of the society. As a person gets older, his/her psychological problems increase more. Within the life process, the pre-existing psychological problems unsolved come back with more intensity as deepened problems (Altekruse and Ray, 1998).

Older people are a potential patient population for the 21st century counselors. Counseling service for the older adults is a more-specialized counseling area than before. Being cared about by others is an underrecognized psychosocial state which would lead to more serious implementations in the daily lives of older people. Being cared about in their advanced ages of the older adults affect their experiences with the other psychological states (Dixon, 2007).

Old age period generally consists of the sudden losses in people's lives, and the unanticipated physical, emotional, social, and moral attacks towards the person's life (Langer, 2004).

The areas of personal anxiety and interpersonal anxieties, activity anxiety and environmental anxiety can be termed as the probable psychological problem areas of the older people in that period (Myers, 1993).

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The elderly population constituting the 14% of the world population increases incrementally every year. It is considered as an important community health problem with both its health and social problems. It is necessary to improve the special services for the older people because of the life changes in the old ages (Terakye and Güner, 1997).

There hasn't been an assessment instrument developed in order to determine the mental health problem areas of older people, to reveal their desires for psychological counseling and guidance, and to measure their psychological counseling needs in our country. The aim of this study is to contribute to the studies to be carried out in this field, and to develop a valid and reliable Attitude Scale for determining the older people's psychological counseling and guidance needs.

2. Method

In this section sampling of the study, data gathering tools, data analyses, and studies on developing the scale are given.

2.1. Subjects

This study was carried out on the data gathered from a group of older people aged over 60 years of age between the years of 2009-2011 (N=400). This number is the total sample of the eight processes that are carried out for developing the scale.

2.2 The Practices For Developing the Scale

As it is aimed to develop the scale of the older people's psychological counseling and guidance needs, the sufficient amount of literature was reviewed. After getting the necessary permissions for adapting the 'Older People's Psychological Counseling and Guidance Needs Scale (Older Persons Counseling Needs Survey-OPCNS)', developed by Myers (1993) with the aim of assessing older people's -aged above 60 years old- counseling needs and desires, the scale has been undergone eight processes in order for it to be adapted to Turkish sample group. In line with the experts' opinions on guidance and psychological counseling, a new item 'I'm worried about losing my spouse.', which does not exist in the original scale and expresses the need of psychological support related to a spouse's death, was added to the scale. Thus, the original scale consisting of 28 items reached to 29 items. In this study, those analyses were conducted on the first 29 items of the scale as it is aimed to determine the older people's psychological counseling needs. However, in the desires subscale, the items expressing the desires for psychological counseling and guidance were not subjected to the analyses. The scale in Turkish was applied to 400 old people -a sample group which is sufficient to represent the target population- in order to examine its validity and reliability in terms of psychometric features. A factor analysis related to the cluster obtained from Basic Components Analysis that was conducted at 29 items was carried out. As a result of this factor analysis, the number of items in the scale was decreased to 20 by removing 9 items the factor load of which was 0.40 or below and which do not have a 0.10 gap between two factors. In the validity practice, factor analysis was referred. For reliability, test-retest and Cronbach alpha coefficient were calculated.

3. Data Gathering Tools

Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale, the validity and reliability features of which are being examined, was used.

3.1. Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale

Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale was developed in order to determine the older people's guidance and psychological counseling needs. The scale is composed of a total of 20 items and a

single dimension. The older people are subjected to the expressions related to the situations that they can encounter in life, and then they are asked to grade those expressions to state whether they agree or not with a number from 1-4 as (4) I definitely agree, (3) I agree, (2) I don't agree, and (1) I definitely don't agree. The highest score to be obtained from the general of the scale is 80, and the lowest score is 20. High scores obtained out of the scale show that the older people's guidance and psychological counseling needs are also at a high level.

3.1.1. The Process

Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale was administered to the individuals at the age of 60 and over. These people who were willing to participate in the study were informed about the aim of the study and were explained how to answer the questions before the process started.

4. Data Analysis

In the practice of reliability of Older People's Guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale, basic components factor analysis was applied for the construct validity. That reliability was ensured by calculating test-retest, internal consistency coefficient, and split-half coefficient. SPSS 15.0 package program was used for data analysis.

5. Findings

Findings related to the total-item score coefficient of older people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale and the practices for validity and reliability take place in this part of the study.

5.1. Practices of Total-item Score Coefficient of the Older People's Guidance and Psychological Needs Scale

Total-item correlation of older people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale was carried out, and not a single item was removed from the scale, because there weren't any items whose correlation coefficient was below 0.30. 'Point double series correlation coefficient' between the total-item scores of old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale with 29 items is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Total-item Score Correlations of the Older People's Guidance and Psychological Needs Scale

Item No	r	Item No	r	Item No	r
1	0.54	11	0.38	21	0.59
2	0.55	12	0.49	22	0.49
3	0.63	13	0.36	23	0.52
4	0.53	14	0.56	24	0.54
5	0.57	15	0.51	25	0.45
6	0.61	16	0.39	26	0.53
7	0.55	17	0.63	27	0.52
8	0.52	18	0.41	28	0.54
9	0.57	19	0.63	29	0.30
10	0.57	20	0.66		

Total-item correlations of 20-item-scale change between .30 and 0.66.

5.2. Findings Related to the Reliability of the Older People's Guidance and Psychological Needs Scale

Basic Component Analysis which is a kind of exploratory factor analysis was carried out for the reliability practices of old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale. In order to control whether the data was suitable for factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin and Bartlett test of sphericity were used. The scale was applied to 400 old people in order to determine the factor structure of its first dimension (first 29 items). The results (KMO=0.91; $\chi^2=6090.125$; $p<0.001$) showed that correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. KMO value

was related with the sample convenience; and the highness of this value showed that factor analysis was applicable and the correlations between the items were big (Büyüköztürk, 2006; Şeker ve Gençdoğan, 2006) . As a result of the factor analysis carried out for the cluster gathered from Basic Component Analyses carried out on 29 items, when examining the factor load values, six factors were identified. It was revealed that each factor variance changes between the values of 4.425%- 29.38%; and the six factors explain the 57.33% of the total variance. As a result of this factor analysis, the number of items in the scale was decreased to 20 by removing 9 items the factor load of which was 0.40 or below and which don't have a 0.10 gap between two factors. This 20-item-scale was subjected to factor analysis again. Factor load values related to this result was given. As seen on Table 2, the total variance that the five factors of old people guidance and psychological counseling needs scale explain is 56.19%. 30.75 of this variance stems from the first factor, 7.48% stems from the second factor, 6.42% from the third factor, 6.14% from the fourth factor, and 5.39% stems from the fifth factor. Some difficulties were experienced while titling those factors. As the first factor met the 30.75% of the variance, the scale was estimated as single-dimension. Furthermore, it was seen that most of the items had high factor load under the first factor. While keeping the number of factors high increased the explained variance, it let to some difficulties in titling the factors in a multi-factor scale. It is considered to be sufficient for the explained variance to be 30% or above in a single dimension scale (Büyüköztürk, 2006).

Table 2. Factor loads related to the items of the older people's guidance and psychological needs scale

Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
3	0.678	-0.194	0.053	-0.145	-0.058
20	0.669	-0.235	-0.028	-0.054	-0.105
17	0.668	-0.271	-0.153	-0.067	-0.002
6	0.642	0.276	-0.351	-0.101	0.206
5	0.621	0.030	0.214	-0.206	0.093
1	0.595	-0.387	-0.174	-0.292	0.143
2	0.592	-0.509	-0.099	-0.177	0.043
4	0.572	-0.047	0.253	-0.340	0.031
10	0.565	0.163	-0.109	0.217	-0.289
7	0.556	0.341	0.181	-0.157	-0.092
27	0.538	0.051	-0.272	0.273	-0.462
23	0.527	-0.008	-0.220	0.117	-0.008
15	0.522	0.431	-0.406	0.036	0.244
8	0.520	0.487	-0.131	0.027	0.388
12	0.480	0.215	0.526	-0.110	0.043
16	0.483	0.221	0.343	-0.082	-0.044
26	0.530	-0.238	0.146	0.535	-0.003
13	0.488	0.068	0.241	0.343	0.132
25	0.447	-0.289	0.206	0.457	0.395
28	0.539	0.192	0.060	0.000	-0.545

As a result of this analysis it can be seen on Table 2 that the factor loads of all the items are between the values of 0.40-0.68 when they are brought together under one factor. This result supports the assumption that the variable in question is unidimensional.

5.3. Findings Regarding the Reliability of Old People's guidance and Psychological Counseling Needs Scale

The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for internal consistency reliability of the scale. Internal consistency coefficient of the 20-item-scale was found to be .87, its stability coefficient determined with the test-retest method was found as .87, and the reliability of the scale that was carried out with split-half method was found as .83. These obtained values are considered to be sufficient for the reliability level of old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale.

6. Results and Discussion

It is true that advancing age brings more depressive symptoms with itself for the elderly and the old people who feel themselves younger than their peers face less health problems (Baum and Boxley, 1983). It is also stated that the ones who are widowed(s), stay with a relative or a friend, stay at old people's home or nursing home, and have low level of education have high psychological counseling needs and they are the real old target group for psychological counseling (Myers, 1993).

Old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale is a unidimensional four-point Likert-type scale. For the reliability of the scale, its reliability coefficient was calculated by the means of internal consistency coefficient, test-retest, and split half methods. For determining the validity, on the other hand, construct validity method was used.

The total variance that the five factors of the old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale have explained is 56.19%. 30.75% of this variance stems from the first factor, 7.48% from the second factor, 6.42% from the third factor, 6.14% from the fourth factor, and 5.39% stems from the fifth factor. The scale was estimated as unidimensional, because the first factor meets 30.75% of the total variance.

Internal consistency coefficient of the scale that was applied to the individuals belonging to the group of 60-years old and above was found as .87. Reliability coefficient of the scale was found as .87 in the reliability study carried out via test-retest method, while its reliability was found as .83 with the split-half method. Those obtained values are considered as sufficient for the reliability level of the old people's guidance and psychological needs scale.

It can be deduced that old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale, that is valid and reliable in general, can be used to determine guidance and psychological counseling needs of the old people belonging to the group of 60-year-old and above, and to decide the quality of the psychological support that will be given to those people. It is known that both an individual approach and group approach are effective for the elderly who are in the cycle of socio-cultural, economic, biological system changes, and psycho-physiologic problems (Mardoyan and Weis, 1981). Behaviorist, psychodynamic, and cognitive approaches are effective for the elderly who experience depressive symptoms (Myers and Harper, 2004). In the studies conducted on which approach is affective for the old counselees, it was confirmed that cognitive-behaviorist therapy and life review therapies are especially good for old people's depression. Life review therapy was specially designed to be used with old people, and it uses some techniques that will help them achieve the feeling of consolidation by looking back through all their lives (Hill and Brettle, 2006). Family continues to be an emotional and physical support source for the old people (Florsheim and Herr, 1990). So family therapy is a co-sensorial approach examining how the family perceives the situations that the elderly go through and how these situations affect the family (Göka and Aydemir, 2000).

Guidance and psychological counseling needs of the old people from the group aged 60-60+ should be determined by means of old people's guidance and psychological counseling needs scale by taking all these characteristics into consideration. They should also be helped to control their feelings of anxiety and helplessness and to increase their self-worth by providing them the group therapies or individual cognitive therapies.

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