



Construction and Validation of Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire in Iranian Women (A Case Study of Women in Tehran)

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Abstract

The purpose of the current research was to develop and validate Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire in Iranian women (a case study of women in Tehran). The statistical population included all the women of Tehran city. To select the subjects via interview 18 to 45 years old women whom experienced loneliness feeling were interviewed to saturation point. After 12 interview sessions no new code was extracted. The research method was a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures. To develop and validate the Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire in Iranian women, the participants were interviewed in the qualitative step. To assess the validation and the reliability of the questionnaire, quantitative and qualitative face validation, content validation ratio, validation content index, confirmatory and expletory factor analysis were applied. The questionnaire reliability was examined by internal consistency and halving method. The results of expletory factor analysis revealed that Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire with 13 items consisted of three factors (family loneliness, individual loneliness and social loneliness) and had proper validity and reliability. The confirmatory factor analysis also affirmed the three factors model. It could be concluded the Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire is authentic and eligible to assess the feeling of loneliness in women.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Inter-personal relationships are considered to be a human need and humans pursue attachments and durable relationships since their birth. This need is satisfied through bonding with family members and membership in peer groups. Lack of intimacy with family members and support groups results in loneliness, which seems to have a more negative effect on women and children. Women are more at risk, as across different cultures. They value interpersonal relationships more. They report more depression as a result of poor interpersonal relationships, especially in cultures where they play a central role in the family. Research shows that loneliness is a subjective phenomenon and constitutes an unfavorable and negative experience. Throughout the course of time, this phenomenon leaves a more adverse effect on women who tend to have a more emotional view point and feel stronger emotional dependence to their surrounding people. It could also negatively influence their physical and psychological health and give rise to an increase in risk of heart conditions, mood disorders, suicide, infections and social isolation. These consequences create a vicious circle, whereby women become lonelier and more isolated. In some studies, it has been demonstrated that married women feel lonelier compared to married men; it is also shown that in countries where mandatory use of the internet is more prevalent as a result of a change in social and professional conditions, depression, loneliness and stress replace happiness in women where family relationships become cold. Therefore, prevalence of loneliness depends on variables such as social norms, cultural values, economic and political conditions and environmental factors. It could be concluded that loneliness is a common and serious problem in many countries, which causes damage to the social structure and creates enormous costs. Thus, assessment of loneliness can help to understand causes and consequences and best possible interventions. There are no universally valid tools which could reliably assess loneliness in different societies and cultures. Accordingly, constructing a loneliness scale based on cultural elements can be very helpful. The Iranian society has been undergoing profound crisis including revolution, war, severe economic sanctions and a transition from tradition to modernity in addition to expansion of social networks and technology. Therefore the purpose of the current research was to develop and validate Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire in Iranian women (a case study of women in Tehran).

Methods: The statistical population included all the women of Tehran city. To select the subjects via interview 18 to 45 years old women whom experienced loneliness feeling were interviewed to saturation point. After 12 interview sessions no new code was extracted. The research method was a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures. To develop and validate the Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire in Iranian women, the participants were interviewed in the qualitative step. To assess the validation and the reliability of the questionnaire, quantitative and qualitative face validation, content validation ratio, validation content index, confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis were applied. The questionnaire reliability was examined by internal consistency and halving method.

Results: To evaluate the validity of the loneliness feeling questionnaire, internal consistency coefficient was computed. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also calculated. The coefficient was 84 per cent for the whole scale and was 89 per cent, 94 per cent and



89 per cent respectively for family loneliness, individual loneliness, and social loneliness sub-scales respectively. Split-half coefficient for the first seven questions was 0.84 and 0.81 for the next six questions. Correlation coefficient was 0.52 for the two splits. In order to check the correlation between the subjects' scores in each item and their score in the whole loneliness questionnaire, Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied. The results of the correlation of the items with the total score of the scale indicated that all the items have a positive and significant correlation with the total score and they ranged from 0/45 to 0/71. These findings showed an acceptable internal consistency coefficient for the questionnaire.

Conclusion: The results of exploratory factor analysis revealed that Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire with 13 items consisted of three factors (family loneliness, individual loneliness and social loneliness) and had proper validity and reliability. The confirmatory factor analysis also affirmed the three factors model. It could be concluded the Feeling of Loneliness Questionnaire is authentic and eligible to assess the feeling of loneliness in women.

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