

## **A Step toward Construction, Validity and Reliability of Measurement Scale for Students' Deviant Behaviors**

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### **Introduction**

During the last few decades, all studies carried out on social deviances have encountered some ambiguity in defining deviant behavior. Generally speaking, deviant behavior refers to all acts and attitudes which are in contrast to the expectations of individuals, groups and institutions and are in conflict with the moral principles and common rules of the society, and therefore face legal hindrances or ethical and social disapproval. In addition, such behavior is considered to be abnormal, hurtful, unethical, harmful and blameworthy. Social deviance is a social phenomenon which is relative according to time, place, social position, individuals, different cultures and subcultures, and diverse ideologies and social groups. On the whole, deviant behaviors are those which are not approved by the society; they lie in the category of the community-oriented disorders, implying that such disorders are somewhat optional, in which case they are different than anxiety and mental disorders. In other words, although anxiety disorders and depression are the problems experienced by people, community-oriented disorders and substance abuse are the cases wherein people engage. The major characteristic of such people is that they do not bind themselves by social rules and may even enjoy violating from them. Studentship period plays an important role in job and future social formation due to transition from adolescence and entry to the young age. Student life results from academic, intellectual, scientific, guild, political, social, art, and dormitory-residential experiences, and although it is a super-instructive course which is also encompasses official academic activities, it is restricted to them, and includes such activities as attending clubs, teams, reactions, types of constructive and destructive behaviors, discussions, and student interactions inside and outside the university. In other words, student life is a reflection of the sense of identity, distinctive behavioral patterns, ideal-seeking, curiosities, interactions, and subcultures of students in experiencing living with one another which they share upon entering the university. When it comes to school and university students, deviant behaviors could be consumption of any drugs and addictive substance, vandalism, robbery, sexual perversion and so on. Multiple studies have been conducted on identification of the factors behind emergence and development of deviant behaviors among samples of school and university students in local and international research which undoubtedly point to significance of investigating this matter. Considering the extensiveness of the issue, lack of precision instruments for measuring deviant behaviors shows a gap ignored in the previous research, such that one could claim that in none of the studies carried out in Iran, constructing measurement tools and scales for deviant behaviors and their normalization have not yet been taken into account by the researchers dealing with this area. Of course, each of the tools available for measuring deviant behaviors in different countries have specific features and characteristics and their goals, target population and construction underlying theories are completely different. At the same time, the most important issue is constructing a tool based on definition(s) and instances of deviant behaviors according to the intended context. Another important point is designing and constructing such tools on the base of recent theories of measurement. Since the issue of measuring deviant behaviors and constructing its measurement tools and scales have not seriously considered in Iran thus far, and in view of dire need of the society and various organizations, particularly the Ministry of Science and National Youth Organization, presence of scientific measurement tools which are in agreement with the cultural structure of Iran is demanded more than ever. Therefore, developing the relevant tests given the social culture is necessary and essential so that they assist the authorities, decision-makers, counselors and therapists and thereby one could ultimately prevent or reduce the damages and ills experienced by the students, and accordingly, their families. In view of the foregoing, this paper is primarily aimed at developing a standard tool for measuring students' deviant behaviors.

### **Materials and Methods**

The research method in this study is survey and of cross-sectional nature. The statistical population is

composed of all male and female students studying in Tehran state-run universities in the academic year 2012-2013, to whom a total of 440 questionnaires were

distributed. Once the incomplete questionnaires were eliminated, 416 questionnaires were analyzed. In order to select the research sample random sampling method was used by which Tehran and AllamehTabatabae universities were selected from among the state-run universities located in Tehran. Next, the respondents at each university were selected with access method.

In order to gather the data, self-reporting technique was employed. The initial researcher-developed scale for deviant behaviors deals with some of the instances of such behaviors in six general aspects (substance abuse, use of psychedelia and alcoholic drinks, vandalism, robbery, cheating, aggression and sexual perversion), designed based on Likert scale and its primary form has 26 items out of which, in the item analysis process, the items that had low correlation with the other items of each aspect and were in contrast with them were treated as inappropriate items, and ultimately 21 items were designated as the final form of this scale.

In order to analyze the data, SPSS and Amos software programs, item analysis method (loop), construct validity and content validity (factor analysis) and reliability (computing the coefficient of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for all items) were adopted. Reliability of the final form of the research scale using Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was put at 0.924.

### Discussion of Results and Conclusion

According to results of the factor analysis, four factors were identified, namely "substance abuse, use of alcoholic drinks, psychedelia and sexual perversion", "vandalism and robbery", "cheating", and "aggression". Reliability of this scale was put at 0.924 according to calculation of the Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . According to the research results, one could state that this scale is adequately valid and reliable and the factors originating from the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses can appropriately measure the students' deviant behaviors.

This scale could be applied by the researchers in humanities research, especially in the area of social science, and may therefore be employed as a tool for determining the students' weaknesses and strengths with respect to deviant behaviors for the purpose of taking decisions to decrease their deviant behaviors.

**Keywords:** Reliability, Validity, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Deviant Behaviors.

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