

Research Paper

Psychometric Properties of the Persian Version of the Family Empowerment Scale



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ABSTRACT

Objectives The aim of the current research was to investigate the psychometric properties of the Persian version of the Family Empowerment Scale in families with children suffering from hyperactivity/attention deficit, autism spectrum and specific learning disorders.

Methods A total of 210 parents of exceptional children with the training settings from educational region 1 and 2 in Ahvaz city were selected using based-purpose and voluntary sampling method and responded to the Family Empowerment and Marital Satisfaction scales. The data were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis and statistical software SPSS-21.

Results The findings revealed that the scale consisted of three factors - empowerment with respect to family system, service system and social/politics system. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained 0.94 for the whole scale and ranged from 0.91 to 0.93 for the three factors, test-retest reliability coefficient was 0.86 and showed the convergent validity coefficient of 0.31 ($P < 0.001$) between the current scale and the Marital Satisfaction Scale.

Conclusion According to the results from this scale it can be used as an appropriate tool for measuring the ability of the parents to give services to their children with hyperactivity/attention deficit, autism spectrum and specific learning in exceptional rehabilitation settings and for identifying and explaining antecedents and consequences of this type of disorders.

Key words:

Psychometric, Empowerment, Family, Hyperactivity/attention deficit, Autism spectrum, Specific Learning

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

Family empowerment is increasingly seen as a central goal of efforts to improve services for the families where children have disabilities [1]. Empowerment is a general principle for promoting health and is relevant in all the areas of the community [2] and focuses on empowerment of family's abilities rather than deficiencies

[5]. The family empowerment concept has also taken advantages from the synergistic effect of various disciplines focusing on one idea at the same time. Empowerment has been described as both a process and a state, both an individual and collective characteristic, as well as an attitude, perception, ability, knowledge and action, and finally as a phenomenon that can be manifested in a range of circumstances and environments. Family empowering is the potential to alter the family structure. Gutierrez and Ortega introduced three measures to assess different aspects of empowerment among Latinos. Two focused on political em-

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powerment, commitment and ethnic activism and the third on personal empowerment, conceptualized as a change strategy [7]. Staples asserted that, "In addition to transformations in consciousness, beliefs and attitudes, empowerment requires practical knowledge, solid information, real competencies, concrete skills, material resources, genuine opportunities and tangible results" [8].

The framework consisted of two dimensions: 1) The level of empowerment; and 2) The way that empowerment is expressed. Regarding the first dimension, empowerment can happen at three levels: 1) Family, i.e. the immediate situation at home that primarily involves the parent's management of day-to-day situations; 2) Service system, i.e., professionals and agencies that provide services to the parent's children that primarily involves the parent's active working with the service system to get needed services for their child; and 3) Community/political, i.e., legislative bodies, policy makers, agencies, and community members concerned with or influencing the services for children with emotional disorders and their families [8].

Regarding the second dimension, empowerment can be expressed in three ways: 1) Attitudes, i.e., what a parent feels and believes; 2) Knowledge, i.e., what a parent knows and can potentially do; and 3) Behavior, i.e., what a parent actually does. Each expression can occur within each dimension level. For example, empowerment with respect to the service system can be exhibited as an attitude, e.g. "Professionals should ask me about services I want for my child"; as knowledge, e.g. "I know what measures to be taken when I am concerned about receiving my child's poor services"; and as a behavior, e.g. "I inform professionals about my opinion on services being provided to my child." Thus, combining three categories with two dimensions results in nine possible combinations, displaying empowerment being experienced or expressed at each time [8].

Koren, DeChillo, and Friesen [8] first developed the Family Empowerment Scale. Few studies have been conducted to assess and measure the reliability and validity of this scale. Studies conducted by Singh, et al., [9]; Florian and Elad [10]; Pauline, et al. [11], Vuorenma, et al. [2], Wakimizu, et al. [12], Khalati, Nefei, and Soltani [13], and Kageyama, et al. [14] all indicated the reliability and validity of this scale. However, the aim of the current research was to investigate psychometric properties of the Persian version of the Family Empowerment Scale in families with children having hyperactivity, autism, and learning disorders.

2. Method

The present research is a psychometric and methodological study. A total of 210 parents among 470 families with children having hyperactivity/attention deficit, autism spectrum and specific learning disorders based on the inclusion criteria were taken for this study. The inclusion criteria are: the length of the marriage of parents between 1 and 15 years, the tendency to participate in the study, having a minimum age of 25 to 45 years, having no marital problems, not having mood and affective problems and not using the substances like drugs were selected by base-aimed and voluntary sampling method from the children's centers at the 1st and 2nd areas of education (Shakerin, Ehsan, Bahar Living, Tolo, Misagh, Nahal, Golshan, and Kosar) from January to May 2015-2016. To measure the family empowerment of Family Empowerment Scale the Korn and colleagues in 1992 [1] and to assess the convergent validity of this scale of the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Rajabi was used [15].

3. Results

Most of the participants in this study were female parents (54.8%), having a diploma degree (32.9%) and had 2 children (41.4%). The mean and standard deviation of 30 items of the Family Empowerment Scale were 105.85 and 22.33. For factor analysis the Family Empowerment Scale was used as the first principle component analysis and then to determine the underlying factors for the test of Varimax rotation that is an orthogonal rotation method. The 3-factor model with factor loadings higher of 0.40 (based on the exact cutoff point of the 3 factors of the Screen test) gave the analysis that the percentage of variance explained the Family Empowerment Scale items by the removal of 4 items (3, 13, 26, 29) 53.15 was obtained. Finally, by removing these four items, a factor analysis was performed on 30 items of Family Empowerment Scale and the results obtained were Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin sampling test (KMO=0.94) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2=3807.24$), which explained 3-factor model 60% of variance of the scale items. In this factor analysis, the first factor of "empowerment with respect to the family system" has about 38.19%; the most share in explaining the variance of the above scale (items 2, 4, 7, 9, 16, 21, 27, 34, 31, 33). The second factor was labeled "empowerment with respect to the service system" with a loading of factor 13.08% (items 1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 18, 19, 23, 28, 30, 32). The third factor, empowerment with respect to the social/political system, was obtained with a variance of 8.72%.

The results of Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the whole scale were 0.94 and for the three factors extracted from the exploratory factor structure ranged from 0.91 to 0.93; the test-retest reliability coefficient of this scale on 92 subject

(with a 2-week interval) was 0.86 ($P < 0.001$); convergent validity coefficients between Family Empowerment Scale and Marital Satisfaction Scale was 0.31, The convergent validity coefficients among three factors of family empowerment scale (empowerment respect to family system, empowerment respect to system of services and empowerment with respect to social/political system) and marital satisfaction scale was from 0.22 to 0.27 ($P < 0.001$).

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the psychometric properties of the Persian version of the Family Empowerment Scale in families with children suffering from hyperactivity, autism and learning disorders. The exploratory factor analysis of this scale showed three factors of empowerment with regard to the family system: empowerment with regard to service and empowerment system with regards to the social/political system, that this results in studies in consistence with Koren, et al. [1], Vuorenma, et al., [2] and Wakimizu, et al. [12].

The first factor with 10 items with the title empowerment in the family indicates that parents are equipped with child-rearing practices and the ability to manage problems in everyday situations, which has led parents to adopt new ways to grow their children. They feel good about parenthood with their parents' knowledge and awareness of their ability to solve problems etc. The second factor was with 11 items of empowerment related to the service system, with parents' knowledge and information in working with services for children with developmental disorders and specialists to provide services for their children, the parents' attitude to the need for their child's services approval and their opinions are as important as experts; communication with professionals to collaborate on their relation to child's services for more information on child disorder and parents' knowledge when dealing with child problems, decisions to problems, sharing your view with experts and getting ahead included to have their child's services better [1].

The third factor was with 9 items empowerment in relation to the social/political system's ability, which to take parental actions to defend or improve services for children and families, their attitude towards their effectiveness on services that felt helpful in relation to their child's problem, knowledge about their rights and their children in the educational system, encouraging executives or legislators to listen to their conversations [1]. Evidence showed that problem some of the families are worried about obtaining appropriate services for their children. It is necessary to provide solid information that the increase in one level of empowerment stimulates other levels, or in other words

whether empowering at one level would increase it at other levels or be separated from each other.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guideline

Parents of Autism Children were selected with complete consent, knowing what this research was and what they should answer.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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