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Development of the elementary school counselor self-efficacy Scale

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Abstract

In this paper, school counselor self-efficacy scale with 21 items was developed to measure the elementary school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs (ESCSE) and the validity and reliability of this scale was investigated. The results of exploratory factor analysis indicated that ESCSE measure the elementary school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs reliably and validly. The scale, which has three factors named as "Counseling", "Consultation" and "Coordination", explains 62% of the total variance and its cronbach alpha coefficient is .92

Keywords: Elementary School Counselor, Self-efficacy Scale

1. Introduction

Self-efficacy, one of the core elements of Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1995) social cognitive theory refers to a person's belief in his or her capability of achieving desirable consequences at a given task. As an important component of career performance, it has been shown to have an important role in successful teaching, counseling and coping with change (Bandura, 1995; Larson and Daniels, 1998; Badenhorn and Skaggs, 2005). Counseling self-efficacy, (CSE) based on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, is defined as "one's beliefs or judgment about her or his capability to effectively counsel with a client in the near future" (Larson and Daniels, 1998). "If a person believes that he is capable of achieving the duties he is expected to do, then it means that he has a high level of motivation and job performance in his job (Bandura, 1995). In a review of counselor self-efficacy research, Larson and Daniels (1998) concluded that counselor self-efficacy beliefs are the primary causal factor in carrying out effective counseling. Some counseling self-efficacy studies reported that there is a positive relationship between CSE and counselor performance (Larson et al., 1992; Munson, Stadulis and Munson, 1986; Watson, 1992), and also some other researchers demonstrated positive relationship between self-efficacy and work adjustment, job satisfaction and stress reduction (Lent and Hackett, 1987; Bodenhorn and Skaggs, 2005). Persons with higher counseling self-efficacy would be more likely to view their anxiety as challenging, to set realistic, moderately challenging goals; and to have thoughts that are self-aiding (Larson & Daniels, 1998).

Accepting counseling self-efficacy beliefs as the fundamental source of effective counselor skills (Larson & Daniels, 1998) makes counselor self-efficacy indispensable in counselor training and supervision. Emphasizing this issue during the education of counselor candidates can facilitate counselors' training by developing self-efficacy beliefs. Moreover, by examining the self-efficacy beliefs of counselor candidates during training, it becomes possible to determine to what extent counselor training programs are effective on developing self-efficacy. In order to carry

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out such activities which have potential for developing counselor self-efficacy beliefs, at first valid and reliable measurements related to counselor self-efficacy beliefs should be obtained.

Although self-efficacy belief has received many researchers' interests in last 25 years, there are very few studies on school counselor self-efficacy in literature. According to Larson and Daniels' (1998) review of literature on counselor self efficacy, 32 studies on counselor self-efficacy were conducted in the USA in between 1983-1998 and 10 scales were developed. Most of these scales were related to counseling areas other than school counseling, e.g. four of these scales were on individual counseling, two of them were on both individual and group counseling, while three of them were regarding specific counseling area, one of them was about the counselors' perceptions regarding their efficacy in response to 19 categories of the responses counselor gives to videotaped client.

Out of these scales, the only scale that was related to school counseling and developed to measure the school counselors' self efficacy beliefs was Counselor Self-Efficacy Survey (CSS) (Sutton and Fall, 1995). It was the modified version of Gibson and Dembo's (1984) Teaching Self Efficacy Scale to adapt for school counseling. This scale, which was developed to be used in the first study on school counseling self-efficacy belief (Sutton and Fall, 1995), includes three factors, namely "Efficacy Expectancy of Multifaced Roles", "Efficacy Expectancy for Individual Counseling" and "Outcome Expectancy".

Furthermore, there are two more scales developed after Sutton and Fall's (2005) scale, to measure school counselors' self-efficacy beliefs. One of them is School Counselor Competency Expectation Scale by Yiyit (2001). This scale was conducted with Turkish school psychological counselors, but it was limited to measure the school counselors' competency expectations and it involved three factors; "Psychological Counseling Skills", "Guidance Skills" and "The Skills difficult to be Applied".

After Sutton' s and Fall's scale (2005) the second scale on school counselor self-efficacy beliefs in literature is School Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (SCSE) including 48 items developed by Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005). This scale has five factors such as Personel and Social Development, Leadership and Assesment, Career and Academic Development, Collaboration and Cultural Acceptance.

These scales on school counseling self-efficacy beliefs (Sutton and Fall, 1995; Yiyit, 2001; Bodernhorn and Skaggs, 2005) are not peculiar to either elementary, middle or high school counseling but related to all school counseling. In fact, there is no specific scale on elementary school counseling in literature. However, it should be underlined that elementary, middle and high school counselors' duties differs due to the different aims of the school they work, their students' different developmental characteristics. For instance, elementary school counselors spend less time for vocational and academic counseling than high school counselors while they interact with parents, teachers and administrators much more. Besides, they allocate most of their time for administrative aims apart from psychological counseling (Beemak, 2000; Coll ve Freeman, 1997; Hardesty and Dillard, 1994; Morse and Russel, 1998). A scale that takes into consideration the differences of the elementary school counselors can give reliable and valid results on the features to be measured.

1.1. Purpose

In this study, it was aimed to develop the elementary school counselor self-efficacy scale with a sampling group of only elementary school counselors to measure their self-efficacy beliefs.

2.Method

2.2. Participants

This study was conducted with 286 elementary school counselors working at three different regions in Turkey. 164 of these counselors had 1-11 years of working experience while 122 of them had 12-20 years of counseling experience. Moreover, 132 counselors were male and 154 were female.

2.3. Development Process of SCSES:

At the beginning of the study, a-31 item initial list of Elementary School Self-Efficacy Scale (ESCSE) was prepared according to definition of elementary school counselors' practice and their major responsibilities: counseling, consultation and coordination (Muro and Kottman, 1995). This list was presented to 10 experts who had at least master degree at psychological counseling and guidance, and then according to their opinions it was

rearranged. To apply the final version of the scale, three hundred copies of ESCSE were posted to local educational authorities in three cities of different regions of Turkey. The number of the returned scales was 295. When the ones that were not appropriately filled were extracted, the data obtained 286 school counselors were analyzed.

In factor analysis, to reveal the factor structure of ESCSE, factor loading of .40 was accepted to determine which item is loaded on which factor. Moreover, it was agreed that the scale items loaded on the factor should be consistent with the factor in terms of meaning and content and the difference of each item’s factor loading on one factor from other factors should be at least .10.

3. Findings

Before the factor analysis, the assumptions of factor analysis was checked. The results showed that most of the correlation coefficients at correlation matrix were above .30, besides Kaiser_Myer Olkin value was .95 and Bartlett’s test of sphericity was statistically significant. According to these results, it was concluded that data was appropriate for factor analysis.

Without applying any kind of rotation method, the results of principle component analysis revealed that five eigen values were greater than 1.0. These initial factors accounted for 66% of total variance. However, when the scree test was checked, it was observed that there was a clear break after the third component. Factor structure of the scale was examined through varimax rotation solutions involving five components. Reviewing of each of these five solutions for its interpretability, it was decided that the most consisted with school counselors major responsibilities which are known as counseling, consultation and coordination, so the scale was thought to be based on three components.

During the repeated varimax rotation operation, eight items that did not meet the criteria were extracted, and finally a scale with 21 items was developed. Factor analysis results were presented in Table 1. The ESCSE scale a five point likert scale consists of positively worded items. Participants stated their opinions about their self efficacy beliefs regarding counseling duties by choosing the alternatives from 1 to 5. The range of score changed between 21 and 105. Mean of the scores was found as 88.3.

Table 1. Factor Analysis Results of ESCSE

| Components | | | | Components | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------|------|------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| Items | 1 | 2 | 3 | Items | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31 | .819 | .194 | .11 | 30 | .372 | .644 | .371 |
| 19 | .789 | .167 | .172 | 27 | .382 | .586 | .356 |
| 12 | .788 | .184 | | 7 | | .506 | .386 |
| 3 | .772 | .125 | .159 | 4 | .193 | | .782 |
| 1 | .761 | .204 | .188 | 15 | .202 | .285 | .716 |
| 5 | .728 | | .274 | 2 | .240 | .297 | .667 |
| 10 | .712 | .146 | .251 | 25 | .217 | .372 | .650 |
| 26 | .672 | .338 | .165 | 6 | .173 | .259 | .647 |
| 24 | .164 | .807 | .215 | 18 | .142 | .314 | .469 |
| 28 | .161 | .774 | .222 | Variance | | | |
| 23 | .142 | .747 | | Explained | 25% | 19% | 17% |
| 29 | .321 | .696 | .317 | | | | |

As seen in Table 1, factor loadings of items under three factors changed between .81 and .46. The first component consisted of eight items and account for 25% of the total variance, named “Counseling”. The second component called “Coordination”. It contained seven items and explained 19% of the total variance. The third component labelled “Consultation” consisted six items and explained 17% of the total variance. All components

were positively correlated with each other and these correlations ranged from .48 to .64. Finally, internal consistency was calculated. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .92 for overall scale and for the subscales scores were .91 for Counseling, .88 for Coordination and .80 for the Consultation. Test-retest correlations were .86 for three week interval and corrected item total correlations ranged from .37 to .71. Considering validity and reliability results of the ESCSE, it was decided that this scale can be used for assessing self-efficacy beliefs of elementary school counselors.

4. Conclusion

Three factor structure of Elementary School Self-Efficacy Scale (ESCSE) was consistent with the “Counseling”, “Consultation”, and “Coordination” duties, accepted as fundamental duties of elementary school counselors. Explanation of 62% of the total variance by 21 items indicates that it measures the most of the intended construct. Furthermore, factor loadings of ESCSE change between .81 and .46, and most of these items’ factor loadings were high. Moreover, “Consultation” subscale explaining the least of the total variance (17%) was above 10%. These results indicated that ESCSE is a valid instrument. Cronbach alpha coefficient of .92, and test retest correlation of .82 prove that ESCSE is a reliable scale. Although the concurrent validity of ESCSE was not investigated because of unavailability of the scale only for assessing elementary school counselors’ self-efficacy beliefs, it may be possible to evaluate this scale’s concurrent validity by using the scales that will be developed in the future.

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