

Dating Anxiety in Adolescents: Scale Development and Effectiveness of Cognitive-Behavioral Group Counseling

Melek Kalkan*

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Abstract

Problem Statement: The understanding of adolescents' dating anxiety is important for the clinical and developmental process. Several studies indicate that dating anxiety is related to social skills, depression, loneliness, substance abuse, and marital anxiety. The studies using cognitive-behavioral techniques have been quite successful for individuals with dating or social anxiety.

Purpose of Study: The study was conducted in two discrete parts. The aim of the first study was to develop a dating-anxiety inventory for adolescents, and the aim of the second study was to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral group counseling in decreasing the level of dating anxiety in adolescents.

Methods: Four hundred and forty adolescents were selected randomly from students in their first to third year of high school. The students were evaluated using the Dating Anxiety Inventory-Adolescent Form (DAI-A) and Shyness Scale. For the phase of group counseling, twenty adolescents with dating anxiety determined by the DAI-A were randomly assigned to experimental (n=10) and control (n=10) groups. In the data analysis of scale development, the Pearson correlation coefficient, principal component factor analysis, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistencies were applied by using the SPSS. The Mann-Whitney U Test and the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test were used to determine whether there were any differences between the measures of the pre- or post-test scores for members on the experimental and control groups.

Findings and Results: Factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted on the item responses of the inventory. Three factors, the eigenvalues of which are greater than 1.00, accounting for 50.26% of the total variance, were chosen. For the concurrent validity, the correlations were computed

*Asst. Prof. Dr., Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Education, mlkalkan@superonline.com

between the scores of the DAI-A and the Shyness Scale. The DAI-A and Shyness Scale total scores correlated strongly ($r=.72$). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .96 for the total DAI-A, .94 for the first subscale, .90 for the second subscale, and .88 for the third subscale. The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test on the DAI-A total and subscales showed that the differences between the post-test scores of the experimental group and control group were significant. The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank test on the DAI-A total and subscales showed that the differences between the pre- and post-test scores of the experimental group were significant.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The psychometrics properties of the Dating Anxiety Inventory-Adolescent Form are found to be satisfactory and may be used to assess dating anxiety. In addition, the cognitive-behavioral group counseling decreases the dating-anxiety level of adolescents significantly.

Keywords: Dating anxiety, adolescent, cognitive-behavioral approach, group counseling