A Scale Proposition on the Discourse Curiosity of Aging

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Abstract

This study focuses on the effects of discourse on aging. Whether the discourse of aging causes curiosity of aging is revealed with this study. In order to create a survey of 10 questions to be applied to the participants, an item pool was created with 145 participants in Adana-Turkey. The data obtained with the item pool were transformed into 12 questions with the qualitative method (Conceptualization, Classification, Component analysis). 12 questions were voted by the committee of 7 academicians who experts in different fields were. A survey of 10 questions obtained as a result of the voting was applied to 121 participants selected from Hatay-Turkey for the pre-test. As a result, the sample of the study consisted of 112 adult individuals (40-50 years of age range). The study was carried out in Mersin, Turkey in 2021. The results of the study showed that the aging discourse caused curiosity in middle-aged individuals. According to the results obtained, measurement ranges/scores were determined to rate the discourse-based curiosity of the individuals. The participants' discourse-based aging curiosity was at a high level. In the context of sensitivity to aging, it was determined that the participants were moderately sensitive.

Keywords: Aging discourse; Aging curiosity; Discourse curiosity scale; Social work; Social policy

Introduction

While today's elderly population is increasing rapidly, the effect of aging on individuals is also increasing. The super-aging population affects the socio-cultural and economic dynamics of many countries [1-3]. This acceleration, whose pressure on individuals, society, systems, and law is increasing, necessitated the development of important policies related to aging [4,5]. The principles developed with social work and social policy continue to seek solutions to the current problems of aging [6,7]. This seeking is not enough to solve the multi-factor structure of aging, which has critical effects on society and the individual. While the biological, social, economic, and physical effects of aging on individuals continue, many unknown questions about the factors based on curiosity and discourse are waiting to be answered [8-13]. What

are the effects of discourse about aging on individuals? Does the aging discourse affect the curiosity of individuals? Answering these questions is the first step to explain the aging tendencies of individuals, their psychology, way of seeking information, and curiosity-based behavior. For this reason, the aim of the study is to reveal the curiosity behaviors of individuals against discourses about aging and to guide researchers in this regard. On the other hand, with the findings revealed as a result of the research, information that can inspire practitioners is obtained.

Methods

The qualitative and quantitative research method was adopted in the study (Mixed method) [14]. In order to reveal the effects

(situation analysis) of aging discourse on aging curiosity, it was necessary to determine the questions of the survey. An extensive literature review was conducted to determine the survey questions [15]. Then, an interview was conducted with 145 participants in order to create a pool of questions and items that would form the basis of the survey questions. Questions about aging curiosity and discourse were asked to these participants, whose random sampling method was chosen in Adana, Turkey [16,17]. Participants were asked to write what "aging curiosity" and "aging discourse" mean to the online survey created via Google Form. 1842 unique words obtained from the participants were subjected to qualitative analysis (Conceptualization, Classification, Component analysis) [18-20]. The framework revealed by the results of the qualitative

analysis focused on 12 basic questions. 12 questions were put to the vote of a committee of 7 academicians, who were experts in different fields. As a result of the voting, 2 questions were excluded. Ten questions were included in the study (Appendix).

The final 10 questions were analyzed by a pre-test [21,22]. The pre-test was carried out with 121 participants selected by random sampling method in Hatay, Turkey. A 5-point Likert-type scale was applied in the questionnaire (1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3= Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree). The obtained results were evaluated in terms of validity and reliability. According to the results of exploratory factor analysis, inter-item correlations were calculated above 0.4. Cronbach's alpha values of the items were calculated over .90 [23-24] (Table 1).

Table 1: Reliability Statistics.

α	α based on SI	CR
,948	,971	,973
α= Cronbach's alpha; CR= composite reliability; SI: Standardized Items		

Since the study is not the development of a scale (a scale proposition), all steps of the scale development were not implemented. For this reason, it is thought that the results (related to the validity and reliability of a quantitative method) will be a source of inspiration during the scale development phase. According to the pre-test results, Discourse Curiosity of Aging (DCA) and demographic information questions consisting of 10 questions were applied to 112 middle-aged individuals aged 40-50 in Mersin, Turkey, by random sampling method. The reason why the age range of 40-50 is preferred is to measure the curiosity behaviors of individuals against the discourse regarding aging. These perceptions of elderly individuals might not make a

significant difference due to insensitivity. However, researching this subject for future studies can provide important contributions to the literature.

Findings

Demographic information according to the survey results applied in the study is shown in Table 2. As can be seen from the table, in the sample determined to create an item pool, 46-50 age range, single, and female participants were more than other groups. In the study conducted for the pre-test, there were more married, male and 46-50 age range participants compared to the other groups (Table 2).

Table 2: Demographic Variables.

Variables	Range	Sampling for item pool*		Sampling for pre-test**		Sampling for target Sample***	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
	Age Range						
	40-45	62	42,76	56	46,28	71	63,39
	46-50	83	57,24	65	53,72	41	36,61
Marital status	Single	91	62,76	40	33,06	88	78,57
	Married	54	37,24	81	66,94	24	21,43
Gender	Female	79	54,48	48	39,67	76	67,86
	Male	66	45,52	73	60,33	36	32,14
Total		145	100	121	100	112	100
N*=145; N**=121; N***=112; f=Frequency; %=Percent							

Finally, among the 112 participants, who constitute the final sample of the current study, there were more 40-45 age range, single and female participants compared to other groups. Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, Cronbach's Alpha Based on standardized items, mean, minimum, maximum, and variance

values of the scale were calculated for the discourse curiosity of the aging status of the participants, which was tried to be measured with 10 questions. Calculated values for items are presented in (Table 3).

Table 3: Reliability and item statistics.

α	α based on SI	CR	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Variance
,921	,934	,952	3,63	2,83	4,33	0,20
α= Cronbach's alpha; CR= composite reliability; SI: Standardized Items						

Table 4 presents the statistical values of the scale. According to the findings, participants' discourse-based curiosity about aging was determined at a high level (Table 4).

According to the results obtained, measurement ranges/scores were determined to rate the discourse-based curiosity of the individuals. This measuring range is shown in (Table 5).

Table 4: Scale Statistics.

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation
36,298	38,377	61,950

Table 5: DCA scores and degrees.

Degree/Aging Curiosity	Low	Medium	High	Very High
Score	0-14	15-29	30-44	45-50
Inference	Discourse exists, there is little to no aging curiosity.	Discourse exists, aging curiosity is at a low or moderate level.	Discourse exists, aging curiosity is at a high level.	Discourse exists, aging curiosity is at a very high level.
Degree/ Sensitivity to aging	Neutral	Less/Mild	Moderate	Severe
Inference	Insensitive to aging	Less sensitive to aging	Sensitive to aging	Very sensitive to aging
Note: Participants can score from 0 to 50.				

When the results of the research and Table 5 are evaluated together, it can be said that the participants' discourse-based aging curiosity was at a high level. In the context of sensitivity to aging, it was determined that the participants were moderately sensitive.

Discussion and Conclusion

Aging is a multidisciplinary field [25]. Studies in the literature emphasize the social, physical, cultural, biological, medical, and economic aspects of aging [26]. In the studies, the effects of discourse on aging have not been examined. This is an important shortcoming for the aging literature. Because discourse is a phenomenon that has critical effects on the individual and society. Discourse-based psychology of individuals can change, revealing information-seeking behaviors [27,28]. Curiosity is one of the reasons for knowledge-seeking [29]. News and columns about aging in visual, written, and virtual media can trigger the curiosity of individuals [30]. Thus, the information that needs to be learned about aging can cause curiosity based on discourse other than motivation [31,32]. The discourse-based curiosity revealed by the findings of our research reveals an important situation regarding aging. The fact that individuals between the ages of 40-50 (middle-aged) are extremely sensitive to the aging discourse triggers their curiosity on this subject. This can have significant medical, psychological, social, and cultural consequences. The findings of the study aim to be an inspiration point for future studies on aging. The scale can be developed based on the items suggested in this regard. Thus, the relationship between the scale to be developed and different scales can be tested. It is recommended that future studies be applied to different samples with the questions raised by the research. It may also be interesting to examine the effects of this scale on elderly individuals. Although the research is not a scale development study, it is groundbreaking as it aims to reveal the current situation and there is no similar study in the literature on this topic. Although the necessary statistical methods were followed in determining the sample, determining the factor loadings as a result of the exploratory factor analysis of the study with a larger sample size and revealing its dimensions will make significant contributions to the literature. Many aging theories claim that aging is a process. However, the aging-related effects of curiosity and discourse, which affect human psychology, need to be developed theoretically. On the other hand, the effects of discriminatory and violent discourses about aging on individuals should not be ignored in the theories to be developed. In addition, the curiosity-based effects of discourse on middle-aged individuals should be taken into account by policymakers. Social work and social policy should take a leading role in taking the necessary measures in this context.

Acknowledgement

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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