# Korean Version of the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale : Reliability and Validity Test

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## I. Introduction

Through the stages of growth and development, people constantly strive to meet the need for interpersonal intimacy by connecting with other persons. Human contact provides feelings of acceptance, support, love, wholeness, and fulfillment. The change and loss of human contact frequently interferes with maintaining human contact and intimacy, thus resulting in the feeling of loneliness (Shearer & Davidhizar, 1994). The phenomenon of loneliness occurs in people of all ages but may be a particular problem in older adults(Donaldson & Watson, 1996).

Persistent loneliness may jeopardize an individual's psychological well—being and increase the risk of suicide(Blai, 1989 ; Conwell, Rotenberg, & Caine, 1990 : Draper, 1995 ; Hughes, 1992). Loneliness was found to be related to physical health (Baum, 1982 ; Olsen, Olsen, Gunner, & Waldstrom, 1991 ; Proffitt & Byrne, 1993 ; Walker & Beauchene, 1991 ; Weeks, 1992).

Although loneliness is considered a common human experience, it is felt differently by people under varing conditions(Rokach, 1989). Old age in itself provides fertile ground for the feeling of loneliness because of the increase of multiple changes and losses(Ryan & Patterson, 1987). Loneliness is perceived as an important consideration in older adults, but there is no clear understanding of what loneliness is, or of what may contribute to or exacerbate its development among older adults(Mullins, Johnson, & Andersson, 1989). It is essential that the phenomenon of loneliness in older adults be further explored and that existing knowledge about potentially pervasive and divesting human affliction be shared and commonly understood(Ryan & Patterson, 1987).

Several measures of loneliness have been developed. The most widely used measure of loneliness is the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale(RULS) (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980). Even though, the RULS was developed and initially evaluated with young adult Caucasians, it is recommended to be used in studies with populations of more diverse cultural backgrounds to evaluate the usefulness and to apply the results in cross—cultural nursing care. Improvement of cross—cultural research methods is

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essential to the ultimate goal of building a sound research base for cross-cultural nursing practice (Jones, 1986).

Use of quantitative measures in cross-cultural research requires translation of the measurement instrument into the language of the cultural group being studied(Jones, 1986). One of the most important factors in undertaking research projects involving the cross-cultural use of measurements is the translation and validation of the instruments. If proper procedures are not utilized, such studies suffer from the possibility that the results obtained are due to errors in translation rather than differences in the people or the variables being measured (Berkanovic, 1980 ; Chapman & Carter, 1979). Berkanovic's study(1980) showed that the effect of the interview of Hispanics' responses to a health survey in which no back-translation was utilized reveal both lower reliabilities and lower bivariate correlations among Hispanic subjects interviewed in Spanish than among Hispanic subjects interviewed in English.

The most common and highly recommended procedure for verifying the translation of a questionnaire or test is the procedure of back-translation. In this procedure, the instrument is rendered into the second language by one translator ; the resulting version is then translated back into the original language. Items with apparent discrepancies between the two translations are then modified and a second back-translation conducted (Chapman & Carter, 1979).

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the applicability of the Korean version RULS to Korean older adults through an examination of aspects of the instrument's internal consistency and construct validity.

## Ⅱ. Literature Review

Humans are social animals with a need for social contact and interaction with others. When this need is not satisfied, the result is loneliness(Sullivan,

1953). Loneliness has most typically been defined as the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relationships is deficient either qualitatively or quantitatively(Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Peplau and Perlman noted that this definition of loneliness shares three points of agreement as held by most scholars, namely :

1. Loneliness results from deficiencies in a person's social relationships ;
2. Loneliness is a subjective experience ; it is not synonymous with objective social isolation ; and
3. the experience of loneliness is unpleasant.

There are diverse conceptual and theoretical perspectives to a loneliness construct, such as cognitive, interactionist, phenomenological, existential-humanist, and sociological(Peplau & Perlman, 1982). Some theoretical approaches to the construct of loneliness-the cognitive, interactionist, and sociological-are particularly relevant to social support. The most common cause of feelings of loneliness is thought to be due to a limited opportunity for social contact. Thus, social support can presumably prevent and redress loneliness, which may in turn influence health(Stewart, 1989).

Peplau and Perlman(1982) and de Jong-Gierveld(1987) stressed the cognitive approach. The cognitive approach proposed that loneliness occurs when a person perceives a discrepancy between desired and achieved levels of social contact. The most salient aspect of this approach is its emphasis on cognitive as a mediating factor between deficits in sociability and feelings of loneliness.

Loneliness is a condition that is wide spread and distressing for the individuals affected(Weiss, 1973). The feeling of loneliness is often more intense in older adults because it is they who most often face many changes such as loss of a spouse and friends through death as well as declines in income and physical functioning(Cox, Spiro, & Sullivan, 1988 ; Ebersole & Hess, 1994 ; Holmen, Ericsson, Andersson, & Winblad, 1993 ; Holmen, Ericsson, Andersson, & Winblad, 1992 ; Jylha & Jokela, 1990 ; Page & Cole, 1991 ; Ryan & Patterson, 1987).

According to the data from Jones, Victor, and Vetter(1985), 24% of the urban older adults in the community studies were lonely at least some of the time. In a Swedish study, Lindgren and associates (1994) reported that 42% of older adults felt lonely sometimes or often. Ferraro(1992) examined the severity of common life problems among older adults through two national cross–sectional surveys conducted by the Louis Harris Center for the National Council on Aging(NACOA) in 1976 and 1981. In both studies, loneliness was ranked fourth in severity among serious problems for older adults. It was preceded by poor health, financial difficulties, and the fear of crime. Koh and Bell(1987) identified six major serious problems for older Koreans who lived in the New York city area, and found loneliness ranked third among them.

## Ⅲ. Method

### 1. Translation of the RULS

The RULS was initially translated into Korean to investigate the loneliness in older Korean adults who live in the United States by a Korean bilingual. Another Korean bilingual who had never seen the English version of the RULS then translated the Korean items back into English. The back–translated English version was compared with the original version and the few identified items with discrepancies in meaning by the investigator and an American professor in the College of Nursing in the USA. Eleven items with discrepancies in meaning were secondary translated into Korean and back–translated into English by two bilinguals respectively. In this process, one item had discrepancy in meaning. Therefore third back–translation cycle was repeated using different translators. In the translation and back–translation cycles, six bilinguals who earned master or doctoral degree in the USA were involved, three translating from the English to Korean, another three translating back from Korean to English. Two versions of the instru-

ment were thus developed : (a) the target language(Korean) version〈Table 1〉, and(b) second source language(English) version, the result of back–translation.

〈Table 1〉 Korean version RULS

| |
| --- |
| 1. 나는 내 주위 사람들과 기분이 통한다. |
| 2. 나는 사람들과 교제가 부족하다. |
| 3. 나는 의지할 사람이 한 사람도 없다. |
| 4. 나는 혼자라고 느끼지 않는다. |
| 5. 나는 친구들 모임에 속해 있다. |
| 6. 나는 내주위 사람들과 많은 공통점을 가지고 있다. |
| 7. 나는 더 이상 아무하고도 가깝지 않다. |
| 8. 주위 사람들은 나의 관심사와 생각들을 나와 함께 나누지 않는 것 같다. |
| 9. 나는 외향적이다. |
| 10. 나는 가깝게 느끼는 사람들이 있다. |
| 11. 나는 혼자 남겨진 느낌이 든다. |
| 12. 사람들과 나와의 교제는 피상적이다. |
| 13. 어느 누구도 나를 잘 알지 못한다. |
| 14. 나는 다른 사람들로 부터 소외감을 느낀다. |
| 15. 내가 교제를 원할 때 나는 친구들을 사귈 수 있다. |
| 16. 나를 진심으로 이해해 주는 사람들이 있다. |
| 17. 나는 소외된 것 같아 슬픈 느낌이 든다. |
| 18. 사람들은 내 주위에 있는 것이지 진정 나와 함께 있는 것이 아니다. |
| 19. 나와 함께 얘기를 나눌 수 있는 사람들이 있다. |
| 20. 나는 의지할 사람들이 있다. |

### 2. Subjects

A convenience sample of 203 Korean older adults who lived in the United States completed a survey instrument which included Korean version RULS. Korean older adults were recruited at the Korean churches and the Korean Senior Citizen Centers in California, Illinois, and Missouri by research assistants. The subjects were informed of the purpose of the study and assurance of confidentiality.

The sample ranged in age from 60 to 79 years (Mean=68.94, Median=68), 62.0% were women, and 38.0% were men. Sixty percent were married and 34% were widowed. Fifty–four percent lived with their spouse and forty–two percent lived with their children. Fifty–four percent had Protestant religion and eighteen percent had Catholic religion 〈Table 2〉.

<Table 2> Demographic characteristics of subjects

| Characteristics | Subjects | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | n | % |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 77 | 38.0 |
| Female | 126 | 62.0 |
| Marital status | | |
| Married | 122 | 60.0 |
| Separate /divorce | 8 | 4.0 |
| Widowed | 69 | 34.0 |
| No response | 4 | 2.0 |
| Education | | |
| None | 24 | 12.0 |
| Elementary school | 41 | 20.0 |
| Middle or high school | 81 | 40.0 |
| College | 49 | 24.0 |
| No response | 8 | 4.0 |
| Religion | | |
| Protestant | 110 | 54.0 |
| Catholic | 37 | 18.0 |
| Buddhism | 12 | 6.0 |
| Other | 36 | 18.0 |
| No response | 8 | 4.0 |
| Living arrangement | | |
| Living alone | 37 | 18.0 |
| Living with spouse | 110 | 54.0 |
| Living with children | 85 | 42.0 |
| Living with sibling | 4 | 2.0 |
| Household annual income | | |
| Less than $ 10,000 | 49 | 24.0 |
| $ 10,000-19,999 | 57 | 28.0 |
| $ 20,000-29,999 | 16 | 8.0 |
| $ 30,000-39.999 | 20 | 10.0 |
| over $ 40,000 | 37 | 18.0 |
| No response | 24 | 12.0 |
| Total | 203 | 100 |

### 3. Instrument

The survey instrument included the Korean version RULS and demographic items. Loneliness was measured by the 20—item RULS(Russell et al., 1980). The subjects were asked to rate each of the 20 statements on how often they feel the way described. The respondents completed the instrument.

When the subjects had some problems to read, the research assistants read the instrument. The answer choices are "often(4)", "sometimes(3)", "rarely (2)", and "never(1)" with a total possible score of 80 to 20. The RULS includes 10 items which reflect satisfaction with social relationships and 10 which reflect dissatisfaction. The scores of items that are positively worded(1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15, 16, 19, and 20) were reversed before summing. High scores on the measure indicate greater loneliness.

Russell and associates(1980) reported a coefficient alpha of .94. In a validity test(Russell et al., 1980), loneliness scores were significantly correlated with scores on the Beck Depression Inventory($r = .62$). Discriminant validity was indicated by evidence that loneliness scores were not confounded by social desirability. The RULS has been used with an elderly population(Foxall, Barron, Dollen, Shull, & Jones, 1994).

### 4. Data analysis

Analysis of data was performed using SPSS. To assess construct validity of the Korean version of RULS the data were subjected to factor analysis with principle factors using $R^2$ communality estimates with iterations and a varimax rotation. Eigenvalue one was the criteria used as a cutoff point for extracting. A Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the Korean version of RULS.

### IV. Results

Principle factor extraction was used to identify the underlying factors. Four factors had eigenvalues of one or more, and these four factors explained 70. 3% of the variance. Subsequently, the three factor solution(which explained 65% variance) was rotated and found to have a better approximation to simple structure and to provide the most psychological meaningful and parsimonious construction of the data.

⟨Table 3⟩ Factor loadings of the Korean version RULS

| Item | Factor 1 Intimate Others | Factor 2 Social Others | Factor 3 Belonging & Affiliation |
|------|------|------|------|
| 2. I lack companionship | .50 | | |
| 3. There is no one I can turn to | .55 | | |
| 4. I do not feel alone | −.51 | | |
| 7. I am no longer close to anyone | .74 | | |
| 8. My interests and ideas are not shared by those around me | .66 | | |
| 11. I feel left out | .63 | | |
| 12. My social relationships are superficial | .73 | | |
| 13. No one really knows me well | .59 | | |
| 14. I feel isolated from others | .57 | | |
| 17. I am unhappy being so withdrawn | .73 | | |
| 18. People are around me but not with me | .55 | | |
| 10. There are people I feel close to | | .83 | |
| 15. I can find companionship when I want it | | .70˙ | |
| 16. There are people who really understand me | | .56 | |
| 19. There are people I can talk to | | .63 | |
| 20. There are people I can turn to | | .88 | |
| 1. I feel in tune with the people around me | | | .74 |
| 5. I feel part of a group of friends | | | .82 |
| 6. I have a lot in common with the people around me | | | .79 |
| 9. I am an outgoing person. | | | .65 |
| Eigenvalue | 9.09 | 2.23 | 1.67 |
| Percent of variance explained | 45.5 | 11.2 | 8.3 |
| Cumulative percent | 45.5 | 56.7 | 65.0 |

The scale was submitted to principle factor analysis with an orthogonal varimax rotation. Three factors labeled in terms of loneliness regarding Intimate Others, Social Others, and a feeling of a lack of Belonging and Affiliation(Austin, 1983). Table 3 presents the three factors, the scale items, and each item's loading on each factors.

The first factor was labeled "Intimate Others" and was measured by eleven items. The items in Factor 1 indicate a lack of others to disclose to and a feeling of isolation. The second factor was labeled "Social Others" and was measured by five items. In Factor 2 the items reveal a feeling of not having a social network members to relate to. Finally the third factor was labeled "Belonging and Affiliation" and was measured by four items. The items in Factor 3 convey a feeling of a lack of belonging and affiliation.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha was computed on the RULS data to estimate the internal consistency reliability of the Korean version of RULS. A coefficient alpha of .93 was obtained which indicates overall homogeneity of the content on the scale. Cronbach's alpha was also computed for the three factors to assess homogeneity within each factor. Respective alpha coefficients obtained were .88 for the Factor 1, .90 for the Factor 2, and .84 for the Factor 3. Three alphas meet standards for reliability.

V. Discussion

In this study, a coefficient alpha of .93 was obtained, which indicates overall homogeneity of the content on the Korean version RULS. Similarly, Russell et al.(1980) obtained an alpha .94 on loneli-

ness data from 162 undergraduate students in the United States. Barron, Foxall, Dollen, Shull, & Jones(1992) obtained an alpha of .87 on the RULS from 56 low−vision older women. The RULS has been found to be reliable in cross−cultural studies in Iran(Hojat, 1982) and Japan(Kudoh & Nishikawa, 1983).

Factors analysis of the Korean version of RULS yielded three factors similar to those reported in the Unites States by Austin(1983). Austin reported a three−factor solution : Intimate Others, Social Others, and Belonging and Affiliation. Austin's study supports the construct validity of the RULS in cross−cultural use in Korean older adults.

Several factorial solutions have been reported for the RULS. Wilson, Cutts, Lees, Mapungwana, & Maungaidez(1992) obtained a two−factor solutions. One factor was Intimate Others and the other was Social Others. Knight, Chisholm, Marsh, & Godfrey(1988) obtained a two−factor structure ; positively worded items loaded on one factor and negatively worded items on the other.

In this study the factor structure seems to reflect the wording of the RULS items ; the ten nega- tively−worded items and one positively−worded item load on the first factor while the nine posi- tively−worded items are splited between the two factors. It might be argued in the way loneliness may be conceptualized(Austin, 1983). This in- terpretation needs confirmation by future study.

The results of this study suggest the possible util- ity of the RULS in identifying a person's sense of separation from intimate or significant others. The present results also indicate that the social dimen- sion of loneliness may be more precisely conceptualized and measured by the RULS as having two components, the feeling of a lack of social network members with whom to connect or communicate and the sense of not belonging or be- ing affiliated with others around oneself(Austin, 1983).

During the data collection, some subjects had dif- ficulties in responding to the 4−point scale response options : Never, Rarely, Sometimes, and Often. Usually subjects understand the questions ; how- ever, some subjects were confused to respond to answer choices in negatively worded items. They needed more time to match their answer to the re- sponse options and needed other's help to under- stand the options, especially in Item 4, "I do not feel alone". The coefficient alpha was increased from .93 to .94 when eliminating item 4. The item that con- taining double negative may be difficult for elderly respondents to understand(Russell, 1996).

According to Anderson & Malikiosi−Loizos (1992), a Greek translation of the RULS was intern- ally reliable($\alpha$=.89), after eliminating Item 4. This may mean that Item 4 decreases the reliability in some cultural situations. So I recommend eliminating or modifying Item 4 in order to avoid confusion and increase the reliability. In addition, the interval scale of the response options is more recommendable than the ordinal scale.

Knowledge of loneliness may aids health professionals, family caregivers, and personnel working with older adults to understand their loneli- ness thus providing better health care.

## VI. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the ap- plicability of the Korean version RULS to Korean older adults through an examination of the internal consistency and construct validity.

A convenience sample of 203 Korean older adults who lived in the Unites States completed a survey instrument which included Korean version RULS. The subjects completed the instrument. When the subjects had some problems to read, the research assistants read the instrument for them.

In this study, the Korean version of RULS was found valid and reliable. A coefficient alpha of .93 was obtained, which indicates overall homogeneity of the content on the Korean version RULS. Factor analysis of the scale yielded three factors : Intimate Others, Social Others, and a feeling of a lack of

Belonging and Affiliation.

This study does not examine the extent to which the RULS adequately reflects the experience of loneliness in Korean older adults cultural context. In a future study, the content validity should be tested. Also further studies need to be conducted on this instrument to determine the soundness and replicability of this scale in cross-cultural study.

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－국문초록－

주요개념 : 외로움, 한국어 UCLA 외로움사정도구, 신뢰도, 타당도

# 한국어로 번역된 UCLA 외로움 사정도구의 신뢰도 및 타당도 조사

## 김 옥 수*

인간은 사회적 접촉을 필요로 하고 타인과의 상호작용을 원하는 사회적 동물이다. 외로움은 한 개인의 사회적 관계의 망이 양적이나 질적으로 부족할 때 발생하는 불유쾌한 감정이다. 외로움은 매우 보편적인 감정이나 고통스러울 수 있으며 이러한 경험이 지속되면 정신적, 신체적 건강을 해칠 수 있을 뿐 아니라 자살을 초래하기도 한다. 특히 노인은 여러 가지 종류의 변화와 상실을 경험하기 때문에 외로움을 더 느낄 수 있다.

본 연구의 목적은 번역과 역번역 과정을 통해 Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale에 대한 한국어 UCLA 외로움 사정도구를 만들고 이 도구를 한국노인에게 적용하여 신뢰도와 타당도를 조사하는 것이다. 개정판 UCLA외로움 사정도구는 각각 3번씩의 번역과 역번역 과정을 통해 원본 영문도구와 역번역된 영문도구 사이에 의미의 차이가 없다고 판단될 때 까지 만들어졌다. 번역과 역번역과정은 미국에서 석사나 박사학위를 취득한 6명의 한국유학생들에 의해 이루어 졌으며 원본 영문도구와 역번역된 도구사이의 의미의 차이는 본 저자와 미국인 간호학 교수에 의해 사정되었다. 번역된 한국어 외로움 사정도구는 미국의 3개 주에 거주하는 203명의 한국노인들을 대상으로 신뢰도와 타당도 조사가 이루어졌다.

한국어 UCLA외로움 사정도구의 신뢰계수는 .93으로 한국어 도구의 내용이 전반적으로 동질성을 띈다는 것을 알 수 있었다. 이는 Barron 등(1992)이 미국인 노인여성을 대상으로한 연구에서 얻은 신뢰계수 .87보다 높은 것이었다. 한국어 도구의 구성타당도를 조사하기 위해 요인 분석을 실시한 결과 본 도구는 친밀한 주변인, 사회적 주변인, 및 소속감 등의 3개 요인을 가지는 것으로 분석되었다. 구성타당도에 대한 이러한 결과는 미국의 대학생들을 대상으로한 Austin(1983)의 연구결과와 일치하는 것이었다. 각 요인에 대한 신뢰계수는 .88(제 1요인), .90(제 2요인), .84(제 3요인)로 나타났다.

전반적으로 대상자들은 한국어 도구에 대해 이해를 잘 하는 편이었으나 부정문인 4번 항목, '나는 혼자라고 느끼지 않는다'에 대해서는 응답을 할 때는 다른 항목에 비해 시간이 더 소요되거나 연구보조자에 의한 반복 설명이 필요하기도 하였다.

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