

The efficacy of training life skills on the students' self esteem¹

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ABSTRACT

The current research was conducted with the aim of the efficacy of training life skills on the Payame Noor students' self esteem, Saghez branch. The research population includes all the Payame Noor students, Saghez branch who were studying in the educational year of 2013-2014. In this research 40 students were selected through the random sampling method available as the research sample volume. From among this number, 20 students were selected through the random sampling method available as the research sample volume who was participating in the educational workshop of life skills and 20 more students were also chosen as the control group. The method applied in this research is semi empirical with two groups of experiment and control. The experiment group was placed under 8, 120 minute sessions of training life skills. To collect data the 58 item Cooper Smith questionnaire was used. To analyze data, the descriptive statistics (Average, standard deviation,...) as well as inferential statistics (covariance analysis) were applied. Results indicated that the average self esteem scores in the experimental group posttest is higher than that of the posttest in the control group.

Keywords: Training life skills; Self esteem; Students

1. INTRODUCTION

With the start of the academic years, one of the most important life stages begin, because one can during the educational period prepare himself for the life after education. If people look at the educational period at the university simply for obtaining a degree for finding a suitable job, the possibility of the fact that this period to leave amazing effects on the peoples' lives will be weak. However, in case, this mentality is formed among them that a favorable life has various requirements and on top of them, mastering a set of skills is of high importance, the academic courses will become the most effective stage in the personal life. Scientific evidence are indicative of the fact that the mental health is among the most important human needs in today's life that in order it is fulfilled, man has to recognize himself exactly, comprehends others and hence establishes an effective relationship with the others.

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More importantly, he should identify his own negative emotions and daily stresses and bring them under his control and furthermore he should solve his problems, and adopt appropriate decisions. He should not have cliché thoughts and refuse information without processing. The necessity of meeting the above mentioned main needs is to master life skills.

It should be noted, life skills are considered to be among the mental health promotional-preventive plans that have been introduced by the World Health Organization (Naseri, 2007). Training life skills as a program was formulated by the WHO in 1993 in order to prevent and increase the people's mental health levels. This organization introduced 10 main skills as life skills, categorizing them in 5 groups: 1. Self consciousness-empathy (with emphasizing on skills of enhancing self esteem and confidence level), 2. Communication-interpersonal relationship (with emphasizing on interpersonal skills and expressing oneself), 3. Decision making-problem solving, 4. Creative thinking-critical thinking, and 5. Containing emotions-coping with stress. The importance and necessity of training life skills is once determined when we recognize that training life skills could lead to the promotion of the social-mental abilities. These abilities will aid the person to effectively deal with life situations and strives, assisting them to effectively and competitively act with other men, his own culture and environment and the society as a whole, thus materializing his own mental health. Thus, practicing life skills will render in boosting or changing attitudes, values and human conduct (Naseri, 2007). As a result, as healthy and positive behaviors appear, most of health problems will be preventable. Based on the done research such factors as self esteem, interpersonal skills, establishing a favorable relationship, determining the goal, decision making, problem solving and determining and identifying personal values have a positive role in preventing or reducing all sorts of mental disorders and behavioral malpractices (Alimardani, 2005). In accordance with the importance of life skills with the various goals of preventing and promoting the mental health level, the necessity of training such skills to the youth will become clearer. One of the preventive programs taken into account at the global level is training life skills to the students. The WHO has provided a plan for preventing social - mental problems titled as training life skills. Since then, this plan has been considered in most countries (WHO, 1993) Self esteem is the sense of being satisfied with oneself and the feeling of being valuable (Bandura and Adams, 2002). In other words, by self esteem, it is meant that how people think about themselves, how they like themselves, how they are pleased with themselves and in particular how is their feeling with regards to familial, social and educational points of view and most importantly how ideal their feeling of coordination and how much their real self is (Hosseini, et al, 2007).

Health and security are considered as primary rights of every individual in the society which governments are obliged to provide them for all the people of the society (Ramazani et al, 2013). Feelings and ideas about abilities, merits and own characteristics will determine self esteem. In Laport's and Swigney's opinion, good self esteem means: to be aware of one's weakness and strength points, to approve of him and to accept oneself with what is more personal and more valuable. The purpose is that to shoulder one's responsibilities, to approve of oneself, to respond to his own needs, to have goals, and to select ways to achieve them. Good self esteem brings about personal integration and caring for others (Vanderzenden, 2008). Self esteem is the degree of approval, adoption and acceptance as well as feeling valuable that the person has towards himself (Abolghasemi et al, 2010). The feeling of self value and self esteem is thought to be the main need for the mental health and are considered as needs that our satisfaction in life extremely require. Self esteem means some values that has inter self concept information for the person, originating from the personal beliefs with regards to all the characteristics and traits that exist in him (Biabangard, 2005). Given the

modern problems, the WHO in 1994 has formulated a plan titled as training life skills for the prevention and reduction of social problems. Life skills are mental - social skills for effective and positive conducts that enable people to address daily life challenges more appropriately. Training these skills will pave the way for the promotion of social personal development, personal rights protection, observance of others' rights, and prevention of the mental health problems. Self consciousness and empathy, communication and interpersonal relationship, decision making a problem solving, critical thinking, dealing with emotions, dealing with stress are main and fundamental skills (Sarkhosh, 2005).

Thus, it can be concluded that training life skills could exert positive impacts on peoples' lives. The academic years for the students are the critical stage of self esteem development. Their self assessment is challenged and their judgments are criticized by the external factors. Often times this stage is a stage of reduced self value (Haghighi et. al, 2006). Hence, training skills to the students which are helpful and beneficial are of high importance and are regarded as factors to further their abilities. Schechtman (2005), examined the impact of training life skills on the promotion of self esteem and teachers' understanding of the working environment and concluded that these trainings would lead to an improvement of the working environment understanding as well as the promotion of teachers' self esteem. Wichroski (2000) has maintained that training life skills will lead to increased self esteem and flexibility against changes and promote positive attitudes in the direction of the feeling of self sufficiency. Results by Sajedi et al (2009), with the subject of the impact of training life skills on the interpersonal relations, self esteem and expression of oneself among the blind girls showed that these trainings have been effective on the blind girls' self esteem, leading to their enhanced self esteem.

Thus, in accordance with the existing research literature, not only do the life skills affect the students educationally, but it also, prepares them to address problems of adapting to the society, increasing self esteem, and transition from this critical period. Given the fact the students account for a huge part of our society, hence, the aim of the present research was to determine the efficacy of the life skills on the self esteem of the students.

2. METHODOLOGY

The current research was conducted with the aim of the efficacy of training life skills on the Payame Noor students' self esteem, Saghez branch. The research population includes all the Payame Noor students, Saghez branch who were studying in the educational year of 2013-2014. In this research 40 students were selected through the random sampling method available as the research sample volume. From among this number, 20 students were selected through the random sampling method available as the research sample volume who was participating in the educational workshop of life skills and 20 more students were also chosen as the control group. The method applied in this research is semi empirical with two groups of experiment and control. The experiment group was placed under 8, 120 minute sessions of training life skills. To collect data the 58 item Cooper Smith questionnaire was used. To analyze data, the descriptive statistics (Average, standard deviation ,...) as well as inferential statistics (covariance analysis) were applied.

Results indicated that the average self esteem scores in the experimental group posttest are higher than that of the posttest in the control group.

2. 1. Cooper Smith self esteem questionnaire

Includes 58 items that has yes or no answers. The items of each of the subscales are: 26 item general scale, 8 item social scale, 8 item family scale, 8 item professional;-educational scales, 8 item lie scale. The subscale scores as well as the overall score will provide the possibility of determining a situation in which qualified people possess a positive understanding of themselves (Ostadyan et al, 2009). Cooper Smith et al, (1990), have reported the retest coefficients of this questionnaire in two stages after 5 weeks at 0/88 and at 0/70 after 3 years (Hasanvand and Khaledian, 2012).

2. 2. Summary of sessions

First session: Preparation and goal setting, familiarity with the members of the group

Second session: Expressing problems, discussing the life skills, and talking on addiction effects on mental disorders

Third session: Training self consciousness - empathy (with emphasizing on skills of enhancing self esteem and confidence level)

Fourth session: Training communication-interpersonal relationship (with emphasizing on interpersonal skills and expressing oneself)

Fifth session: Training decision making-problem solving

Sixth session: Training creative thinking - critical thinking,

Seventh session: Training containing emotions - coping with stress

Eighth session: Summary and summing up of the session s and ending, speaking of what has been learned, reviewing the life skills training

3. FINDINGS

Table 1. Descriptive information of self esteem scores in the pretests and posttest of the control and experimental groups.

Group	N	Control		Experimental	
		Average	SD	Average	SD
Pretest	20	30	2.54	29.45	2.33
Posttest	20	29.9	2.12	33.95	2.63

The content of the table (1) shows the descriptive information in the pretest and posttest with regards to self esteem among the control and experiment groups. The average self esteem of the people in the experimental group in the pretest is 29/45 and 33/96 in the posttest while the same number for the students' self esteem in the other group are 30 and 29/9 respectively.

Table 2. the results of the homogeneity of slopes assumption test.

Variables	Sum of Squares	d.f	Mean Square	F	Sig	Eta square
Group	0/068	1	0/068	0/052	0/821	0/001
Pretest	169/956	1	169/956	131	0/001	0/784
Pretest group	1/96	1	1/96	1/51	0/227	0/04
Error	46/706	36	1/3			

Findings of Table 2 indicate that the homogeneity of slopes with the value of $F(1,36) = 1/51$ for self esteem has not been significant, hence, the homogeneity assumption of the regression slopes has not been fulfilled for the variable of self esteem. Given the above data, to examine the hypothesis in question the covariance was used whose results have been provided in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the covariance analysis on the average pretest and posttest averages in the control and experimental groups with regards to self esteem.

Variables	changes sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Eta square
Self esteem	Pretest	168/08	1	168/08	127/8	0/001	0/775
	Group	202/08	1	202/08	153/64	0/001	0/806
	Error	48/66	37	1/315			

The content of Table 3 indicates that the F value ($F = 153/64$) and significance level of (0/001) in the variable of group shows that there is difference between the two groups in the posttest. Based on the results, training life skills are effective on the self esteem of the students.

4. DISCUSSION

The current research was conducted with the aim of the efficacy of training life skills on the Payame Noor students' self esteem, Saghez branch. Findings of the research suggest that these sorts of life skills are effective on the mental health of the students. The findings of this research are in line with those of the research by Sajedi, et al, (2009), *Wichroski* (2000), *Schechtman* (2005). To explain these data, one can say that life skills are considered as a

larger group of mental-social interpersonal skills that could help people make decisions and positively establish communications while expanding their personal management. Life skills could guide personal behaviors and other people conducts, leading to enhanced self esteem, and more feeling of social and mental comfort (UNISEF, 2003). The WHO have provided a plan for preventing social-mental problems titled as training life skills. Since then , this plan has been considered in most countries (WHO, 1993). Self esteem is the sense of being satisfied with oneself and the feeling of being valuable (Bandura and Adams, 2002). In other words, by self esteem, it is meant that how people think about themselves, how they like themselves, how they are pleased with themselves and in particular how is their feeling with regards to familial, social and educational points of view and most importantly how ideal their feeling of coordination and how much their real self is (Hosseini, et al, 2007). The most important function of human's thinking is the understanding of how to manage his life. the life skills program, introducing such concepts as self consciousness, anger, stress and problems , attempts to help people to understand their life affairs while these people play the most exclusive role in their own lives, Because each person is obliged to attain his own life skills and convert them to successive practices and knowledge. The end goal of life skills is that people should accept their own responsibility and increase their own sense of pleasure and self esteem.

In this regard, no research has been conducted in the city of Saghez and given the Kurdish language and culture, this research could pave the way for future researches , hence students are assisted and their life skills programs being established. In case life skills among the students are boosted, their mental health will increase and the sense of being valuable and satisfaction will also rise. Most importantly, the level of self esteem will improve in case these life skills are enhanced.

5. CONCLUSION

The importance and necessity of training life skills is once determined when we recognize that training life skills could lead to the promotion of the social-mental abilities. These abilities will aid the person to effectively deal with life situations and strives, assisting them to effectively and competitively act with other men, his own culture and environment and the society as a whole , thus materializing his own mental health. Thus, practicing life skills will render in boosting or changing attitudes, values and human conduct (Naseri, 2007).

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