The Effect of Life Skills Training on Increased Self-esteem among the First-year High School Students of Dashti County

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this research was to study the effect of life skills training on self-esteem among the first-year female high school students of Dashti County in the year 2013. The statistical population consisted of the first-year female high school students of Dashti County of which 50 persons were selected through random multistage cluster sampling and placed in two experiment and control groups (25 persons per each group). This research was semi-experimental with pretest and posttest with control group. Corresponding tools used in this research was Copper Smith’s Self-esteem Questionnaire. For hypothesis of the effect of life skills training on self-esteem, pretest and posttest difference of the score of self-esteem of both groups has been obtained. Using T-test for independent groups, the said scores were analyzed. The results reveal that there is a difference between pretest and posttest score average of experiment group. The results of this research show that life skills training causes an increased self-esteem among the students of experiment group compared to that of control group.

INTRODUCTION

Considering increasingly changes and complications of the society and extended social relations, it is necessary to prepare individuals to confront with knotty situations. Thus, in order to prevent mental disorders and social abnormalities, psychologists have launched life skills training all over the world and across schools. “Life skills training refer to a collection of abilities that provide suitable grounds for positive and useful behavioral compatibility. This ability enables an individual to accept his/her social responsibility and face the wills, expectations and daily problems in intra-individual relations in more effective form without harming himself and others [10]. Life skills have been identified as knowledge, ability, attitude and behaviors that are learned for happiness and success in life [13].

Life skills refer to the skills that are taught to promote mental and social abilities of individuals and enable an individual to encounter with life requirements and conflicts more effectively. In other words, life skills are a collection of abilities that enable an individual to act more effectively and adaptively while communicating with other humans, society, culture and environment and realize their mental health [9]. The goal of life skills training is to promote mental and social capabilities and eventually to committing harmful behaviors and to promote mental health level. It is expected that after receiving life skills training by an individual, he/she may achieve such abilities as getting self-awareness, self-esteem, establishment of relation with others, capability of cooperating, ability to cope with emotions and stresses and ability to express wishes and hopes. Different researches [2,17,12,1,8,11,4] reveal that children and adolescents who benefit from acceptable life skills, enjoy...
higher self-esteem and are accepted by peers and establish more effective relation with others. Moreover, they are popular with their friends. Self-esteem is a degree of confirmation and value that a person feels about him/herself or judgment of an individual of his/her value [16]. Self-esteem is among the most significant and useful skills that plays an effective and determining role in mental health and success of an individual and eventually a healthy life. Thus, individuals with awareness about these skills are able to quick adjust conditions and remove the obstacles under problematic and dangerous circumstances and obtain great achievements. Gazdar et al [7] reveal that there is a relationship between life skills and welfare. The individuals of higher levels of life skills enjoy higher self-esteem and welfare and they are able to achieve ideals and wishes in life and consider life critical conditions as solvable accordingly. For example, Haghighi et al [8] have validated the positive and effective effect of life skills training on mental health and self-esteem of high school students. In this regard, Dokaneh Fard [6] conducted a research and came up with this conclusion that life skills training have a significant role in decrease of ashamedness and promotion of self-esteem. Many studies have revealed that life skills training have caused an increased self-esteem and improvement of social skills and inter-individual relations and increase of positive social behaviors and social compatibility and promotion of satisfaction with family system and adaptability with family and increase of confrontation skills [3]. Wichroski [17] showed that life skills training promotes an increased self-esteem, flexibility before changes made and positive attitudes toward feeling of self-confidence. Shectman [14] conducted a research and studied the effect of life skills training on promotion of self-esteem and perception of work environment by teachers. It has been revealed that such training has led to an improved perception of work environment and promoted self-esteem of teachers.

Copper Smith [5] conducted a research and came up with this conclusion that the children who enjoy higher self-esteem are the individuals expressing themselves relying on self-confidence and benefiting from their aptitude and creativity. They are easily affected by environmental factors. Life abilities and skills are necessary for humans living in the 21st century. The students who construct the future of a society must benefit from these skills in order to achieve such characteristics as flexibility, compatibility, multidimensional attitude, sense of responsibility, seeking for truth, participation, self-esteem, and ability to recognize themselves, capability of confrontation with failures, conflict, ambiguity and skills of solving the problems and living under difficult conditions.

Relying on above statements, the main question of the research raises: “Does life skills training cause an increased self-esteem among students”? In this regard, the following hypotheses were studied:

1. Life skills training cause an increased self-esteem.
2. There is a significant difference between self-esteem of the students that have learned life skills and those who have received the said training.

Research Methodology:
This research is an experimental study of pretest-posttest with experiment and control groups.

The statistical population of this research consists of all first-year high school female students of Dashti county namely Andisheh, Fatemieh, Eshragh, Tooba, Al-Zahra, Jannat and Hadith high schools, who were engaged in studies in the academic year 2012-13.

Statistical sample and sampling method:
The statistical sample of this research consists of 550 first-year high school female students of Dashti County. Multistage cluster random sampling method was used to select the said sample. Thus, from among female-student high schools of Dashti County, five high schools and two classes from each class and five persons were selected at random. Then, fifty persons were selected and divided into groups of 25 persons per each group by random. One of the said groups was selected as experiment group and another as control group.

Measurement tools (Data Collection Tools):
Student self-esteem was measured using the Cooper Smith Self-Esteem Inventory (CSEI), a self-report scale consisting of 58 items, 50 of which measure self-esteem and eight lie items which constitute a social desirability scale [3]. The self-esteem items are measured on a two point scale as “like me” and “unlike me”. The inventory yields scores between 0 and 100. Higher scores obtained from the inventory indicate positive self-esteem. Cooper Smith (1967) reported a test-retest reliability coefficient of .88 after a five-week interval and .70 after a three-year interval.

This questionnaire was translated in Iran by Dr. Shekar Shekan and Mr. Nafisi (1984-64) and was put into effect on the students of the 1st to 3rd classes. Validity of this questionnaire was obtained using retest method as 93% for male group and 93% for female group respectively. Reliability coefficient has been obtained as 74% for male group and 71% for female group respectively. In Iran, validity and internal homology coefficients (Chronbach’s Alpha Coefficient) of the said scale have been reported by Ebrahimi, Ghavam (1990) on a sample
of students as 82%. After six weeks, internal homology and retest coefficient of this scale has been reported as “very satisfactory”.

Procedure:
In this research, the contents of life skills training have been taken from “the guidebook of program for life skills training of World Health Organization”. The said program consists of ten chapters: 1. Knowledge of oneself and one’s abilities 2. Orientation with how to establish relation with other 3. Orientation with decision making 4. Creative thinking 5. Confrontation with emotions 6. Empathy 7. Intra-individual relations 8. Problem solving 9. Critical thinking 10. Confrontation with stress. The subject of training meeting was drawn up in 10 sessions for 45 minutes each so that half of very session was allotted to presenting scientific contents about the subject of meeting. After a break, the second half of the meeting was held in from of group discussion about corresponding drills related to the subject of training. The first meeting was allotted to introduce the members of the group and to indicate the principles of group therapy, briefing and familiarization, and to designate headlines and general structure of meetings and goals of training, agreement to conditions of the meeting especially its time and location, agreement of the group members and healthcare provider on expectations, presenting duties and responsibilities for the next session, importance and necessity of life skills for arrival in adults’ life and its role in having the most significant choices in life such as choosing field of study, job and spouse and the ones. The second meeting was assigned to knowledge of oneself and one’s abilities (self-awareness), and the third meeting to knowledge of the phenomenon of relation and how to establish relation with others, the fourth meeting was allotted to decision making and its stages and the fifth meeting to creative thinking, the six meeting to confrontation with emotions, the seventh meeting to empathy, the ninth meeting to inter-individual relations and the tenth session was assigned to critical thinking.

Statistical Analysis Methods:
For analysis of data analysis T-Test and Pair-Sample test have been used to compare the two variables. In order to analyze the collected data, SPSS software, version 18, was used. Moreover, in order to test the hypotheses, the level of significance as 0.001 was considered. According to Table 1, distribution of frequency of experiment and control group has been given in the variable of “Self-esteem”.

Research Findings:
The research findings of both sections provide descriptive findings and those related to hypotheses. Descriptive findings include statistical indices namely average, standard deviation, difference between pretest and posttest scores, given in tables 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 1: Distribution of frequency and percentage of pretest and posttest results of both experiment and control groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Status</th>
<th>High self-esteem</th>
<th>Low self-esteem</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest of Experiment group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest of experiment group</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest of control group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest of control group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relying on the results given in Table 1, in pretest of experiment group, 64% was evaluated at high self-esteem and 36% at low self-esteem level. Then, in posttest, 84% was evaluated at high self-esteem and 16% at low self-esteem level. Regarding pretest of control group, 64% of individuals was evaluated at high self-esteem and 36% at low self-esteem level respectively.

Table 2 indicates average, standard deviation and difference between pretest and posttest scores of repliers regarding the variable of self-esteem. As you can see in the said table, the average of self-esteem of repliers in posttest was more noticeable compared to pretest. However, no change has been found in control group.

Table 2: Average, standard deviation and difference of pretest and posttest scores of repliers for self-esteem

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic Test Status</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment group</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relying on the results given in table 3, there is a significant relationship between pretest and posttest of experiment group. Thus, there is no significant relationship between pretest and posttest results of witness group.
Table 3: Comparing the difference among averages in pretest and posttest conditions of experiment and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics Test Status</th>
<th>Difference among averages</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>t quantity</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest and posttest of experiment group</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest and posttest of control group</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion:

In this research aiming at study the effectiveness of life skill training on an increased self-esteem of students, the results have revealed that life skills training led to a significant increased self-esteem among students. Wicherosky believes that participation in life skills training classes creates self-esteem. According to a theory, self-esteem strengthens motivation, increases flexibility against changes and promotes positive attitudes for progress, and sense of self-sufficiency. The results of research have revealed that life skills training for women leads to an increased self-esteem, social support and sense of self-confidence. This reveals the importance of this program.

The results of research conducted by Verdi (2004) have shown that life skills training has a positive effect on expressing oneself, self-esteem and sense of responsibility and causes a significant increase of any of variables. Moreover, the results of data analysis obtained from the aforesaid hypothesis reveal that there is a significant relationship between self-esteem of the students who have passed life skills training and those who have not been trained. It means that the students who have been trained are higher than those who have not received such training. The results of this research are consistent with those of Allen et al [2] Wicherosky [17], Pick et al [12], Albertine et al [1], Haghighi et al [8], Pasha [11], Shirani [15] and Conrad [4].

Due to limitation of statistical population, generalization of the results of this research to a wider population is limited (the age group of 15, 1st grade, female, Dashiti County). Presently, this course is presented at schools as an optional credit. Thus, responsible authorities are recommended through change of this course to a core course and through precise and practical training for all students at all levels, they may cause promotion of the students in different dimensions more.

It is recommended that life skills will be studied and compared between the Iranian students and those of other societies and nations in the region. Since most of researches have been conducted in the field of the effect of life skills training on mental health, self-esteem, self-recognition, expressing oneself and the ones, it is recommended that a research will be managed to study the effect of life skills training on other behavioral and ethical behaviors including violence, aggression, behavioral disorders and the ones accordingly.

REFERENCES


