Developing Children's Self-Efficiency during Play

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ABSTRACT

Self-efficacy is the belief that one is skilled in doing a specific task which is correlated with judgments about how well an individual can organize and perform levels of action required to deal with prospective situations containing many unpredictable, ambiguous, and often stressful situations. By considering that high self-efficacy is related to high quality of life it was tried to increase children's self-efficacy during play which is a joyful activity for them. Of 12 7 to 9 years old patients attending to psychologist for their low self-confidence, 6 children with low level of self-efficacy were randomly included in the study after conducting Self-Efficacy Scale of Nezami et al. (1996). Then, Webster-Stratton methods were applied during play in 8 sessions which were followed by parents at home. For assessment changes self-efficacy scale was used in form of pre-test and post-test. At the end of the intervention, children's self-efficacy increased significantly. The change ranges of subjects' scores were between 11 to 19 points in self-efficacy scale. In conclusion, using Webster-Stratton methods during play can improve children’s self-efficacy significantly.

INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is a key concept in social learning theory [4]. self-efficacy is a “judgment of one’s capability to accomplish a certain level of performance” which is called occasional self-confidence. Confidence is the “perception that one is competent and capable of performing special perspective.” [2]. Self-confidence improves over time through continuous reinforcement of affirmative behaviors [9]. It is the belief that “one has the ability to make things happen and knows how to do something” which is named perceived ability rather than actual ability [1]. In addition, it is used to measure more generalized and abstract concepts of competence [10]. Self-efficacy is not recognized with person’s specific skills but rather with the judgments of what a person can do with those skills. Self-efficacy is related to a special situation in a specified field and that is different from the terms self-esteem and self-confidence. Self-esteem and self-confidence are personal characteristics terms and have a fixed effect on a person’s behavior. On the contrary, self-efficacy is a provisional and easy to- effect characteristic that is only situation or task-oriented and not sensed globally [17]. Self-efficacy is related with judgments about how well an individual can organize and perform levels of action required to deal with prospective situations containing many unpredictable, ambiguous, and often stressful situations. The percepts of efficacy can affect people's choice of activities [1].

Self-confidence is a construct somewhat different from self-efficacy. self-confidence concerned global attitudes about person’s capabilities in a wide area. In contrast, self-efficacy refers to the person’s perceived ability in a special task and the level of confidence he/she has in completing specific tasks. For instance, self-confidence would refer to a “broad feeling” of competence (“I feel good about reading English”) while self-efficacy is the belief that one is skilled in doing a specific task (“I can competently understand the key elements in a short passage”) [19]. self-confidence improve as people’s self-efficacy invigorates [3].

The level of self-efficacy refers to its dependence on the hardness of a particular task, generality has relationship to the transferability of self-efficacy beliefs across activities. strength of efficacy is measured by the amount of one’s certainty about completing a given task [1]. Finally, self-efficacy judgments are derived from
four sources: mastery experiences, modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states at the time of the self-efficacy rating [1].

Perceived self-efficacy should also be distinguished from other constructs like locus of control, self-esteem, and outcome expectancies. Self-efficacy is a judgment of capability; self-esteem is a judgment of self worth. They are completely different terms. Locus of control is concerned with belief about outcome contingencies whether are determined by person’s actions or by outer forces. Outcome expectancies are judgments about the likelihood of outcomes that drive from behavior [1].

One of the most important factors for the regulation of human behaviour is self-efficacy, mainly the perceived ineffectiveness that makes the person judge a situation as stressful [7]. As a low sense of efficacy is related with low self-esteem and pessimistic thoughts about self and abilities and accomplishments, people with low self-efficacy expectations avoid any action beyond their abilities. In contrary, accomplishment and personal well-being of people with high efficacy will be increased. These people approach any difficult tasks to be mastered and set themselves higher goals and are faithful to them [1].

In a second approach to self-efficacy assumes that it is important to note that play is enjoyable and motivating for children, and children spend much of their time in play. Not only is play an important part of children’s daily routine, it is also a window into their developmental levels. According to piaget children learn about the abstract world by play. They interact with their environment and conceptualize their surroundings based on their experience through play [16]. Play is a context where valuable teaching and learning can occur. The benefits of play for healthy cognitive development [21], language development [18], and social competence [13] have been well established. Play has the power to aid in normal child development. In addition, it helps to alleviate emotional and behavioral difficulties.

Therapeutic play with children is an effective clinical intervention that has been successfully utilized by therapists for many years [23] and it is used as a therapeutic method for children with neurotic disorders [8]. Various techniques of play therapy have been used ranging from free play to structured projects [23]. Play therapy is developmentally appropriate for children and engages them to learn, and enhances communication by using both verbal and non-verbal techniques, and provides a safe environment for children to express their emotions [11].

Webster-Stratton develops and evaluates training programs for families with 5 to 12 age’s children with conduct difficulties. This treatment version can be applied by therapists in working with little groups of children (five children per group) displaying high rates of noncompliance and aggression. It has been demonstrated effective in decreasing counterpart aggression and promoting suitable conflict management skills, concluding more cooperative behaviors, and growing children’s self-efficiency and their self-confidence [25].

As a result, using Webster-Stratton method is one of the key methods is used in this study to develop children’s self-efficiency and decrease their behavioral disorders which is included constant and serious aggression and minor antisocial problems [15], through play.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this research, the effect of using Webster-Stratton method on children’s self-efficiency was studied through play. Of 12 7 to 9 years old patients attending to psychologist for their low self-confidence, 6 children with low level of self-efficacy were randomly included in the study after conducting Persian Adaptation of the General Self-Efficacy Scale of Nezami et al., The average age of children in experimental group were 7.11.

**Measures:**

For assessing children’s self-efficiency, the self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire which was the Persian Adaptation of the General Self-efficacy Scale constructed by Nezami, Schwarzer and Jerusalem was used. The questionnaire consists of 10 likert-scale items. For each child, the questionnaire was read and the researcher asked them to notice each statement and decide if they: (1) strongly disagree (2) moderately disagree (3) moderately agree (4) strongly agree. A value of 1 is assigned to "strongly disagree", 2 to moderately disagree, 3 to moderately agree and 4 to "strongly agree". Therefore, the lowest value is 10 and the highest value is 40 for each subject. This questionnaire has efficient validity and there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire's items and self-esteem and optimism and a negative correlation between questionnaire's items and anxiety and depression. According to studies, this questionnaire is a valuable scale for assessing self-efficacy [14]. Kadivar [14] used Cronbach's alpha for determining the test’s Reliability which was 0.80 [14].

**Procedure:**

Current research is an experimental study in form of pre-test, post-test without control group. Pre-test included applying self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire. After performing pre-test and getting memoir and psychotic examination of each child individually, based on children's psychotic needs, Webster-Stratton method
was conducted in 8 sessions (45 minutes, twice a week) through play. One week after ending sessions, post-test was conducted.

Therapeutic method was designed based on Webster-Stratton method. In this method, 8 sub levels are mentioned which were applied through conducting some structural plays [25]:

- Providing positive patronage for children’s play.
- Recognizing the abilities of young children.
- Supporting children develop creative and imaginative play.
- Learning children to solve problems.
- Making learning pleasurable through play.
- Developing children’s reading proficiencies and story telling via “interactive dialogue,” open-ended questions, and praise.
- Understanding the significance of adult listening skills and attention for children.

These items are content and objectives of the “Incredible Years Supporting Your Child’s Education Parent Training Program (Ages 5–12)” which are designed to promote children self-confidence and their self-efficacy. During play these key points are conducted and parents were asked to apply the technique at home in various situations specially during plays [25].

**Results:**

At the end of the intervention, there was a significant change from baseline to follow-up on the self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire. The change ranges of subjects’ scores were between 11 to 19 points in self-efficacy scale (for more information, see table 1 and chart 1).

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**Chart 1:** The results of pre-test and post-test of self-efficacy beliefs questionnaire in therapy based on Webster-Stratton method.

**Discussion:**

Previous study assessed the effect of Webster-Stratton method through plays on self-efficacy in children with behavioral problems. By comparing results of pre and post-test in experimental and control groups, this is concluded that using Webster-Stratton method through plays have good effect on self-efficacy of children with behavioral problems in experimental group and improve their self-efficacy significantly. Whereas these changes were not clear in control group.
Self-efficacy has an extensive knowledge base [1], and has a crucial role in human functioning because it directly affects behavior and indirectly it has impact on other determinants such as goals and desires, outcome prospects, affective proclivities, and conception of impediments and occasions in the social setting [1]. Efficacy beliefs effect on people’s process of thinking to think strategically or erratically, pessimistically or optimistically. They also effect people’s determination on what they want to do and pursue, their selection of challenges and goals and their commitment to them, how much endeavor they put forth in given efforts, the results they anticipate their efforts to make, how long they persevere in the face of barriers, their resilience to difficulty, the condition of their spiritual life and how much depression and stress they tolerate in coping with strain environmental requests and the life selects they make. In addition, self-efficacy influence on human self-development, adaptation, and changes [20,24]. In continue, self-efficacy can improve the ability of problem solving [22].

More than mentioned effects of self-efficacy, it influence on learning and performance in three ways [2]: it influences manner of choosing goals, the effort that people exert on their activities, and the persistence with which people attempt new and difficult tasks. In fact, it is concluded that self-efficacy is a powerful determinant of performance [6]. High level of self-efficacy relate with better quality of life and less level of depression [12].

The series of Webster-Stratton method is successful in reducing, and treatment of conduct problems among children with conduct disorder, and oppositional defiant disorder and to enhance their social competence. It has been demonstrated effective in reducing peer aggression and increasing appropriate conflict management skills, such as cooperative behavior, and increasing children’s self- efficiency and self-confidence [25]. This method was applied in this study to improve children self-efficacy and decrease their behavioral problems. In conclusion, by considering the effects of self-efficacy on human functioning, thinking, determination, emotional life, life choices, self-development, adaptation, learning and performance it is expected that improving children’s self-efficacy improve their ability of problem solving and self-management which are resulted in decreasing behavioral problems in children. As this method applied in play setting, children became attracted to take apart in playing and continue the sessions which is resulted in increasing the effect of intervention.

According to conducted surveys about the effect of self-efficacy on improving life style and people’s achievements, it can be concluded that promoting self-efficacy in childhood can be crucial and resulted in high quality of life in later period of life.

Conclusion:
The results are promising with regard to the use of Webster-Stratton method [25] through plays on self-efficacy of children with behavioral problems. By comparing the results of pre-test and post-test in experiment and control groups its indicated that designed intervention have significant effect on children's self-efficacy, improved their behavioral performance, and reduced behavioral problems symptoms. The positive points of this method is in applying method in terms of play which is appealing for children and enhance their motivation, in addition there are easy to apply and don't need to use specific instrument, and parent or even teachers can easily perform this method in every situation. On the other hand, using Webster-Stratton method through plays improve the relationship of therapist with subject which is accompanied subject to complete the process of treatment.

REFERENCES


