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The Impact of Learning Skills Instruction on Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem of Female High School Students

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of social emotional learning skills program on the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of female high school students. **Method:** 64 students of Behshar Schools were randomly chosen from female first year high school students of Behshar city, and were placed in experimental and control groups. Before administering skill training to the experimental group, the EQ-I (Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Sybryashryng: 30 items) & (Rosenberg self esteem scale: 10 items) was administered to both groups as pre-test. Then the social-emotional skills programs, was administered to the experimental group in 9 sessions. After finishing the instructions, the EQ-I & selfesteem scale was administered to both groups again as a post-test. Data analysis was achieved through the t-test statistical test and showed that social-emotional skills training had been effective in increasing emotional intelligence & self-esteem of students in the experimental group. **Result:** The results revealed that teaching socialemotional skills had a significant effect on increasing the experimental group students' emotional intelligence and self esteem. **Conclusion:** It can be said that supporting teenagers' abilities through social skill educational programs enhances close interaction and training self-esteem. Increasing self esteem and emotional intelligence in a person will lead to revitalizing his sense of ability and value and occurring changes such as having self confidence and enjoying interaction and cooperation with others.

Keywords: Emotional, intelligence, Self-esteem, Social, skills, program

1. Introduction

Adolescence is the period of emotional challenges regarding the training of social and emotional competence. Students entering this period encounter many problems such as the loss of self-confidence. Their social self-esteem, i.e. their confidence in finding friends and in maintaining relationship with peers and those around them will face problems. Many of them have very low self-confidence. Therefore, many of their activities such as socializing and interacting with friends and managing their emotions will be affected. Due to the sensitivity of adolescence that is called the period of pressure, adolescents often experience intense emotional swings. Adolescence is accompanied by passion, conflicting feelings and stressful physiological and emotional stimuli. This critical period has an important role in shaping adolescent's future personality.

Goleman (1995) suggests that the present generation of adolescents emotionally face more problems than the previous generations. They become lonelier, more depressed, angrier, more rebellious, more prone to worry, more impulsive and more aggressive. Thus, it is proposed that training of social and emotional skills to adolescents can help them manage their emotions and feelings and improve their relations with others. Finally, it leads to enhancing their personal efficiency and self-esteem. Emotional intelligence based on the skill-oriented model of Mayer and Salovey (quoted in Azfan et al, 2010) is considered as the ability to perceive emotions effectively, use emotions in facilitating thought, understand and manage emotions in self and others. Obviously, paying attention to emotional skills such as emotional intelligence without considering mental-personal dimensions like self-esteem doesn't seem logical. Undoubtedly, increasing emotional intelligence has a positive effect on individuals' self-esteem. Self-esteem is the result of social life and its values have an important role in all daily activities. Thus, self-esteem can be considered as one of the most important aspects of human personality that can determine behavioral characteristics (Lawrence et al, 2006). Self-esteem like emotional intelligence is one of the main determinants in emotional behavior patterns especially in students. Emotional intelligence and self-esteem are dimensions of human personality that can be developed and enhanced using training programs. Training programs of socialemotional skills can lead to the development of individuals' social and emotional capabilities and competence (Casel, 2003).

The increase of social-emotional skills can be one of the main aims of training programs of schools. To achieve this end, the identification and development of students' social-emotional skills should be taken into account. Teachers' and school officials' level of social-emotional intelligence and their awareness of how to use these skills in addition to the development and training of social-emotional skills in teachers can provide the opportunity to guarantee the optimal growth of students in all cognitive, social, and emotional aspects (Elias, 2006).

Several studies have confirmed the effect of training of social-emotional skills on increasing the level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem. Clarke (2010) has conducted a study on the effect of training of social-emotional skills on a sample of

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managers in England. Nelis, Quoidbach, Mikolajczk, and Hanson (2009) have investigated the possible ways to increase emotional intelligence.

Five studies have appeared in the literature specifically investigating emotional intelligence in project contexts. These examined relationships between emotional intelligence and either leadership or project management competences associated with "human skills", and have found some promising positive results (Turner and Lloyd-Walker, 2008; Muller and Turner, 2007; Sunindijo et al., 2007; Butler and Chinowsky, 2006; Mount, 2006).

The results revealed that the training of emotional skills led to the significant increase in emotional aspects and identification of emotions.

Researches conducted in Iran also confirm the results expressed above. Studies by Ghanbari, Hashemabadi and Bagheri (1387) are some of these studies. Regarding the effect of training of social-emotional skills on self-esteem, Tylor et al. (2007) have investigated the effect of behavioral-cognitive training on female adolescents' selfesteem.

The results revealed that behavioral-cognitive trainings led to the increase of self-esteem. The results of this study are in agreement with the results of the study conducted by Jalali and Nazari (1388).

Jalali and Nazari (1388) have investigated the effect of training of social learning patterns on self-esteem, self-confidence, self-assertiveness, and academic achievement of third grade students. The results of their study showed that training of social learning patterns increased self-esteem.

Regarding the importance of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in adolescence and the effect of training of social-emotional skills on the increase of these two variables as is expressed above, the present study aims at studying the training of social-emotional skills in educational contexts of high school adolescents. Supporting adolescents' abilities by means of emotional skills training program can aid close communications and promote self-esteem and emotional intelligence. As the majority of students at this critical period do not have high level of emotional intelligence and self-esteem and studies conducted in Iran merely focused on the relation between these two variables, the present study seeks to answer if social-emotional skills training has any effect on female high school students' emotional intelligence and if social-emotional skills training has any effect on high school students' self-esteem.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants of this study were 64 female students of a high school in Mazandaran.

2.2. Materials

2.2.1. Rozenberg Self-esteem Scale

This standard and well-known scale was developed by Rozenberg in 1965. This scale is a ten-item Likert-type scale with items answered on a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Five of the items have positively worded statements and five have negatively worded ones. Scale scores range from 10 to 40.

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The Persian version of this scale was used in the present study. Reliability of the scale calculated using Kuder Richardson in the study of Moulavi (1388) was 0.73. In the present study, researchers also calculated Kuder Richardson which was 0.82.

2.2.2. The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT)

The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) is a 33 item selfreport measure of emotional intelligence developed by Schutte et al. (1998). The SREIS has been designed to map onto the Salovey and Mayer (1990) model of EI. Items of the test relate to the three aspects of EI:

- (1) Appraisal and expression of emotion
- (2) Regulation of emotion
- (3) Utilization of emotion

2.3. Study procedure

Participants of this study were chosen using stratified random sampling. A high school was chosen from among 10 high schools of the city of Behshahr. Two classes were chosen from this high school. Students of these two classes selected as the participants of the present study were randomly assigned into an experimental and a control group. Each group included 32 persons.

Social-emotional skills training protocol used was driven from the training program of

components of emotional intelligence developed by Hatami (1387), social skills training by Ansari (1390), and parts of training programs developed by Khodayarifard. The training program of the present study was held as a workshop in 9 two-hour sessions twice a week.

2.3.1. Framework of training sessions

Session 1: emotional intelligence and its components

Session 2: training of social-emotional skills on how to start conversations in everyday communication and investigating the factors affecting self-esteem and respect to group discussion.

Session 3: training of interpersonal coping skills, appropriate social skills, group discussion and offering supplementary activities

Session 4: promoting the social skill of firmness (assertiveness)

Session 5: self-expressiveness: training of social-emotional skills related to methods of making request and asking for help, training of social-emotional skills related to rejecting illogical demands and training of problem-solving skills

Session 6: emotional self-regulation and recognition of personal characteristics; training of social skills related to expression of positive and negative emotions

Session 7: emotional self-motivation and methods of increasing self-confidence and training of happiness

Session 8: creating empathy and emotional self-control

Session 9: investigating tasks of previous sessions and giving feedback, receiving feedback from all participants about the whole sessions; evaluating the results of sessions; and asking individuals' views.

3. Results

The aim of this study is investigating the effect of social-emotional skills training on female students' emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The hypothesis of the study

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and their results are presented in this section. Table 1 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the experimental and control groups separately.

Table 1: The Mean and Standard Deviation of Gain Scores of Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem in Experimental and Control Groups

Standard of Deviation Mean Groups Variables

Emotional

Intelligence

35/47 65/15 Experimental

28/76 9/28 Control

Self-esteem

8/899 13/125 Experimental

11/214 3/718 Control

As it can be seen from the table 1, gain scores of the emotional intelligence and self-esteem in the experimental group are more than the gain scores of the control group.

Table 2: Independent sample t-test for gain scores of the emotional intelligence and self-esteem in Experimental and Control Groups

Degree of T Variables

Freedom

Level of

Significance

Mean

Effect Size Difference Power of Test

Emotional

1 .436 88/55 *J..1 62 6/92 Intelligence*

.95 .182

9/4 *J..1 62 3/71 Self--esteem*

As it can be seen from the table 2, the result of independent sample t-test is significant at $p < . /5$. This result confirms the significant effect of social-emotional skills training on the general emotional intelligence and self-esteem. It can be said that social-emotional skills training has significantly affected the general emotional intelligence and self-esteem. The effect size (43/6) in the emotional intelligence reveals that 43/6 percent of observed variance in the scores of emotional intelligence was because of the treatment used (social-emotional skills training). Statistical power 1 shows that test accuracy is 100 percent in detecting significant differences. The effect size of (18/2) in the self-esteem shows that 18/2 percent of observed variance in the scores of self-esteem is due to the treatment applied (social-emotional skills training). Statistical power of (. /95) shows that the test accuracy is 95 percent in detecting significant differences. Thus, based on the tables 1 and 2, it can be

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concluded that the social-emotional skills training has a significant effect on the emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The results of the present study revealed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and the control groups regarding their emotional intelligence and self-esteem. It can be concluded that social-emotional skills training significantly affected the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of the experimental group. The results of this study are in agreement with the results of the study conducted by Ghanbari Hashem Abadi and Bagheri (1387), Nelis et al. (2009), Wong (2007), Stern (2007), and Clarke (2010). These researchers in their study used a training program for emotional intelligence. Ghanbari Hashem Abadi and Bagheri in their study concluded that emotional intelligence skills training could improve indicators of emotional intelligence and components of management, regulation, evaluation and expression of emotions in the experimental group.

The study conducted by Clarke about the effect of emotional skills training on managers revealed that the emotional skills training had positive effects on emotional intelligence abilities, empathy and capabilities, and capacity of project management. The results of several studies using such a program show that successful application of such programs and creation of a warm and appropriate atmosphere with a high level of cooperation can provide the opportunity to increase the social and emotional intelligence and to improve social and emotional operations (Goleman, 1998).

The result of the study conducted by Javaheri Kamel (1385) showed that there was not any significant relation between students' emotional intelligence and their social skills. But the results revealed a significant positive relation between components of emotion regulation, emotion evaluation and social skill. Javaheri Kamel concluded that the lack of a significant relation was due to the instrument used in the study and explained that the low Cronbach's alpha of this component led to the obtained result. The difference in the results of the study conducted by Jalali and the present study is

because of the difference in the training methods used.

The results of the present study are in agreement with the results of the study conducted by Jalali and Nazari (1388) and Taylir (2007) regarding the use of training programs for self-esteem. Jalali in his study concluded that social learning training led to the increase of self-esteem in third-grade students. Taylir in his study investigating the effect of cognitive-behavioral training showed that social behavioral training caused the increase of self-esteem. But the results of this study are not consistent with the results of the study conducted by Hatami (1387). It can be inferred that difference in the training methods led to the difference in the results.

In general, the results of the present study are consistent with the result of the majority of studies and programs conducted on social-emotional skills training and insist on using such programs for comprehensive improvement of those acquiring the programs.

The acquisition and the use of social-emotional skills are the basis on which interpersonal relationships are constructed. Children and adolescents who use social

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skills effectively will undoubtedly be successful in entering a peer group and in finding friends. They will be able to have positive and mutual interactions with their peers. They will also display socially appropriate behaviors and will have a high level of self-esteem and social confidence. If students acquire these skills effectively, they will socially display more competent behaviors. Thus, they can evaluate, understand, and accept their limitations and capabilities more accurately.

Due to the rich theoretical background and researches done about the positive effect of social-emotional skills training on increasing and improving social-emotional skills in different people, it can be predicted that the present study confirmed the previous ones. The results obtained in the present study were not unexpected and verified the results of the previous studies.

In any type of training, the increase and improvement of traits addressed by training programs is expected. The concepts of emotional intelligence and self-esteem are not exceptions. Supporting adolescents' abilities using emotional skills training program can enhance their self-esteem and emotional intelligence and can aid close communications. If self-esteem and emotional intelligence are increased, the sense of self-worth and empowerment will be restored in individuals and positive changes such as having self-confidence and enjoying interactions will be appeared.

It should be noted that the training time was not sufficient in the present study due to limitations the researcher was confronted with. Training sessions were also held after school classes and the fatigue of participants and the lack of cooperation of school authorities were the most important problems of the current study. Regarding these limitations, other researchers may be stimulated to start a similar study with a larger sample. In order to enhance generalizability of research, it is suggested that researchers conduct a study including both male and female students. Doing a similar research with other age groups is also recommended.

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