

The Relationship between Life Skills Training with Social Adjustment and the Self-esteem of Mentally Retarded Boy and Girls Students in the Primary Schools of the Jam City

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Abstract

Extensive studies have been done on the effectiveness of life skills training on students' behavior. However, little studies have been done about the effectiveness of life skills training on the behavior of students with disabilities. Given that the need of these groups of students to these skills is more than others, planning and implementation is particularly important in this regard. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between life skills training with social adjustment and the self-esteem of mentally retarded boy and girl students in Jam. The plan of the study was a quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test with control and experimental groups. The population of the study was 60 mentally retarded boy and girls students in the primary school of Jam which were selected by census method and were divided into two experimental and control groups, each group has 30 students. The experimental group were taught life skills in twelve session, each session lasts for one-hour. Social adjustment and self-esteem of both groups were estimated before and after training using social adjustment Bell Standard Questionnaire (1961) and Self-esteem criteria (1964). To analyze collected data, Pearson Correlation test was used. The results of this study showed that in compared to control group, experimental groups had better performance in the test. Life skill training significantly increased social adjustment and self-esteem.

Key words: life skills, social adjustment, self-esteem, mental retarded students, Jam city

Introduction

The distribution of intelligence in humans is based on the principles of individual differences in the normal form that majority of them (68%) are low and above the average in terms of IQ in the range of SD. Based on psychological classification, about 14 percent of people in the society are border students or from educational point of view, slow-learner students that their intelligence are between one or two standard deviation below the mean. IQ of this group of students that are children with special needs (Exceptional students) is in the range of 85 to 70 standard score based on the Wechsler Intelligence scale (Anastasia, 1990; McMillan et al. 1988; Williams, 1988). Before 1370, there was no specific and organized program for identification and training location for primary school students, but from 1370 onwards, with the implementation of “plan measure” based on the review and assess vision, hearing and academic preparation (general intelligence) for those children that are ready to enter school are done that identify those group of slow-learner students and some of them are allocated in special classes as “annex class” in ordinary school.

Slow-learning students that are allocated in classes and regular schools have problems in acquiring basic knowledge of reading, writing, and numeracy and if special education services do not provide to them, background crises such as lack of self-esteem and academic crises will happen for them such as low academic achievement, failure and drop out (Parker & Asher, 1987).

Some slow-learning students that are allocated in ordinary schools are also provided with special services like “special teachers” and can successfully finish syllabus of primary education in accordance with the department of education (Akbari, 1375).

Family and other social institutions such as schools are the most important factor in terms of values and social norms (Kartrij and Melbourne, 1985). We are living in complicated world and it is necessary to learn some social skills in order to be successful in the world. On the main objectives of the education of slow-learning students is achieving social harmony and effective relationship with others and accepting social responsibility, social skills training that are necessary for these kinds of students. One of the characteristics of social skills is its acquisitiveness and now many of the scholars agree that most social behaviors are to be learned because those children that are grown in inappropriate environment, have socially undesirable behavior (Harji et al. 1994).

Theoretical Foundation

Life skills training to slow-learning students for attending in the public with high quality and have suitable behaviors are necessary. The acquisition of life skills is considered the main axis of social development, the formation of social relationships, the quality of social interaction, social adjustment and mental health of the individuals (Theodorou et al, 2005).

Life skill training is the basic needs of all people especially those that are mentally retarded. Those that are mentally retarded due to their limitations in acquiring some kinds of skills are in trouble. The need to communicate usefully with others, maintaining from abuse, decision making and participating in social interactions is their basic needs (Sharifi Daramadi, 1998).

Different studies showed the effectiveness of social skills training on social skills and its psychological characteristics and increase the confidence of blind girls (Mostalami, 2006). In addition, in other studies, the effectiveness of life skills training is approved, included that it

reduced stress of the mothers of mentally retarded students and promote personal and social adjustment of female students (Amiri, 2009).

Hypotheses

The main hypothesis

There is a significantly meaning relationship between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.

Accessory Hypotheses

- 1- There is a meaningful relationship between life skills training with the improvement of social adjustment among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.
- 2- There is a meaningful relationship between life skills training with the increase of self-esteem among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.

Mythology

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam and to determine the empirical relationship among life skills, social adjustment and self-esteem of mentally retarded students and also to add to the applied knowledge of this field. The present study is descriptive and correlational based on the applied research and the method of data collection. The population of the study consisted of 60 mentally retarded students (30 boys and 30 girls) from the Jam exceptional schools. And then randomly divided into two

experimental and control groups (30 in each group). They were selected by census method and were measured by using a pre-test and post-test in two experimental and control groups.

Methods of data collection (intervention program and implementation)

Current study tried to teach necessary life skills to the mentally retarded boy and girl students and to examine its relationship with social adjustment and self-esteem. In the following, a meeting with their parents was organized in order to collaborate and to cooperate together. After parental and students consent to collaborate, in coordination with school principle, life skills' questionnaire was distributed among them.

For this purpose, first students' life skills with Hu checklist were measured and then, those skills that students have had problems with were selected as the necessary skills to teach. In addition, life skills training program, according to the research backgrounds and the opinion and confirmation of a number of experts and professors of psychology, were designed, developed and implemented for 12 sessions.

The aim of the training of life skill program includes problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, decision making, the ability to be aware of your ability, the ability to empathize with others, the ability of an effective relationship, the ability to cope with the excitement and the ability to fight with stress, etc.

Intervention program was implemented in 12 sessions of 60 minutes (2 sessions in each week) on experimental group in one of special school in Jam. Students participating in the experimental groups were asked not to share those issues that arise in the life skill training classes with other students (control group). Of course, the control group did not receive these kinds of tests.

First session: familiarity and get to know the members of the group, the expression of group regulation, discuss the importance of life skills, the individual feedback on the first session and the importance and their level, homework on how to make the right decisions and success in life

Second session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, how to make right decision and identify and review existing solutions and adopt and implement appropriate solutions and to evaluate appropriate problem-solving process and give appropriate homework.

Third session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, practice problem solving, identify and evaluate existing solutions, give homework about generating ideas and another kind of seeing.

Fourth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, discuss about the importance of generating ideas, different ways of thinking and give appropriate homework about the ability of the objective analysis of existing information

Fifth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, the objective analysis of existing information with respect to personal experience, verify the accuracy of something with evidence and reasoning and then acceptance or rejection of them, give appropriate homework about the ability to communicate effectively.

Sixth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, discuss the importance of establishing and maintaining interpersonal skills, positive interaction with people especially family members in everyday life, and give appropriate assignment about self-awareness.

Seventh session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, discuss the identification of wants, needs and feelings and strengths and weaknesses, give appropriate assignment about the task of empathy.

Eighth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, training on how to express emotions, provide a template on how to express various emotions, such as joy, anger, sorrow and their impact on others and self-behavior and give appropriate assignment

Ninth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, training in ways to reject unreasonable demands, talk about how to "say no" to unreasonable requests, give appropriate assignment on how to reject unreasonable demands and refusal skills.

Tenth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, discuss why we should criticize, assignment about providing feedback to others and apologize skills from others and accept an apology from others.

Eleventh sessions: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, training skills about coping with stress and the skills of problem-solving and coping with failure.

Twelfth session: give the report about last session's homework and also feedback report, provide a summary of presented materials, summary and evaluation of the results of sessions and self-evaluation.

The present intervention program tried to increase the understanding of life skills in slow-learning students and to put under consideration improvement of life skills. Then, it emphasized the maintenance and the generalization of life skills. 60 questionnaires were distributed and all the questionnaires were analyzed appropriate.

Results

In order to analyze all the assumptions, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used.

Check the main hypothesis of experimental and control groups: There is a significantly meaning relationship between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.

Table 1- correlation between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem in both experimental and control groups

	Experimental group	Control group	
According to the obtained results, H ₀ hypothesis is rejected.	0.490	0.190	Pearson Correlation coefficient
	0.001	0.001	Significance level
	30	30	Number

According to the obtained results, since the level of significance is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between two components. There are also significant differences between the experimental and control groups. And it can be seen that the correlation coefficient of control group is 0.190 and it is 0.490 for experimental group. Hence, we can conclude that life skills training causes the increase of social adjustment and self-esteem in mentally retarded girl and boy students.

- 1- *The first sub-hypothesis test:* There is a meaningful relationship between life skills training with the improvement of social adjustment among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.

Table 2- correlation between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem in both experimental and control groups

	Experimental group	Control group	
According to the obtained results, H0 hypothesis is rejected.	0.303	0.103	Pearson Correlation coefficient
	0.003	0.002	Significance level
	30	30	Number

According to the obtained results, since the level of significance is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. And it can be seen that the correlation coefficient of control group is 0.103 and it is 0.303 for experimental group. Hence, we can conclude that life skills training causes the increase of social adjustment in mentally retarded girl and boy students.

2- *The second sub-hypothesis test:* There is a meaningful relationship between life skills training with the increase of self-esteem among the retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam.

Table 3- correlation between life skill training with the increase of self-esteem in both experimental and control groups

	Experimental group	Control group	
According to the obtained results, H0 hypothesis is rejected.	0.411	0.148	Pearson Correlation coefficient
	0.000	0.002	Significance level
	30	30	Number

According to the obtained results, since the level of significance is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected. So, it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between the two components. And it can be seen that the correlation coefficient of control group is 0.148 and it is

0.411 for experimental group. Hence, we can conclude that life skills training causes the increase of self-esteem in mentally retarded girl and boy students.

Discussion and conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between life skill training with social adjustment and self-esteem among the mentally retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam. The results of the study showed that life skills training had positive and meaningful effect on the improvement of social skills and self-esteem of the mentally retarded boys and girls students in the primary schools of Jam. Although other studies regarding the effectiveness of life skills training on psychological variables in individuals and specific groups are different in terms of method, since in majority of them the effectiveness of life skills training were approved, it can be said that the results of this study is correspondent with them; so that the results of this study is correspondent with the research findings of Aghajani and Filler, Mouritius, Hatfield, Griffin and Bootfit.

In another study, Hatfield showed that education such as these can have positive effects on family relationship and can cause the growth of human emotions such as friendship and cooperation in the participants. Filler and Hayat stated that life skills training had positive effects on assertiveness, self-esteem and responsibility of the individuals.

Sepahmansour examined the effects of life skills training on motivation, self-expression and social adjustment. The results of his research showed that life skills training had impact on improving the level of motivation achievements, self-expression and social adjustments of the students.

In addition, as the study of life skills training (training component related to life skills) has an impact on the performance of the individuals and in particular persons with certain physical, mental, emotional or behavioral, and emotional disabilities, it can be said that life skills training increase social skills of children that have problems with hearing. And these intervention methods increase the ability of these children in the skills of cooperation, assertiveness, and self-control.

Perhaps it can be said that as education causes the change in attitudes and beliefs, and changes in attitudes cause the change in behavior, this program by considering the contents and methods of intervention and different teaching methods could cause the change in attitudes, beliefs, and the behaviors of mentally retarded students. And the intervention programs used in this research can have positive effect on the improvement of social adjustment and self-esteem of the mentally retarded students in Jam.

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