Effect of the counselling course on the attitude of the students of pre-school teaching towards the children’s masturbation behaviour

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to examine whether the counselling course that the pre-school teaching students have taken in the Near East University, has affected the attitudes of students towards the masturbation behaviour of the 3-6 years old children or not. The sample of this descriptive analysis is the 160 students of the Pre-school Teaching Department of the Near East University. ‘The Attitude Scale Towards the Masturbation Behaviour of the 3-6 Years Old Children’ that has been developed by the researcher (2009) is used to determine the attitudes of students towards the masturbation behaviour of 3-6 years old children. The obtained data was analyzed by the 17 package program of SPSS with ANOVA and multiple comparison tests of LSD. According to the statistical analysis, significant results are achieved on the attitudes of the pre-school teaching students who took the counselling courses.

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1. Introduction

Masturbation is the normal part of the sexual development of the children. Of course, the sexual feelings of the children are different from the adults. While adults give psychological meanings to sexuality and focus on genital region, masturbation in the children is not aiming sexual stimulation or pleasure (Chinichian, 2005). Many observations about the sexual activities of the early childhood use the term of playing with their sexual organs instead of masturbation. In the early ages children are investigating and observing parts of their bodies. The aim of this behaviour is exploratory rather than sexual. According to Yavuzer (2006) starting from the five-six months, the children realize that they can create a good feeling by touching some parts of their bodies such as; ear, hair, foot and sexual organs. Although some of 20-30 months old children would not show easy understandable emotional excitement or increasing stimulation, they play with their sexual organs for a certain extent of pleasure. Although it seems that there is huge congruence between playing with sexual organ and masturbation, there is an important differentiation between them. In the first years of their life, children have no necessary conscious ability to make us to call their behaviour as masturbation. They only have a physical pleasure by touching their sexual organs. This pleasure is enough to convert this behaviour to a habituation (Poroy, 2006).
From medical point of view, masturbation has no negative effect on a child (Yang, Fullwood, Goldstein, Mink, 2005). However, sometimes a child that masturbates could be seen as uncomfortable or sick. The child that masturbates can perspire; gasp for breath, cry or colour. Some children could have unusual body action and standings. This can be understood by the nursing people in a way that the child has an attack, a big pain, abdominal pain or neurotic or medical problems since there is no genital erection during the masturbation of the child (Yang et al., 2005).

There is no rhythmic hand motion during a masturbation of the child before 2.5 or 3 years old. The lack of small muscle control could be the possible reason of this. On the other hand the main muscle control has developed and coordinated by the child till the sixth month. After that, some children have developed a way to rhythmic and continuous rub of their sexual organs (Wulff, Ostergaard and Storm, 1992). While the children are easily bothered or interrupted while playing with their sexual organs with hand, they prefer to masturbate by rubbing. The children are spending a big power and tension during rubbing when they are not bothered and not interrupted. Most of the children have the behaviour of rubbing either before sleeping or after wake up. Most of them give up this behaviour before the age of 1.5 or 2, but some of them continue until three years old (Yeşilay and Akbaba Altun, 2000). According to Semerci (2008) most of the three years old boys masturbate by pulling, flexing or playing with fingers their sexual organ. During the toilet training at these years they focus on their sexual organs again and this may start masturbation behaviour (Yavuzer, 2006). This means that, at these ages boys are usually masturbated by twisting on their belly at a flat place during the activities like watching a television. Some of them weightlessly levitate their body and move forward and backward until having a sexual pleasure by rubbing his sexual organ. Few of the children have tried to get pleasure by rubbing themselves to hard pillows, chairs, adults’ leg or their own arms. For the girls, there are many kinds of masturbation as from the three years old. Masturbation can be seen in many ways such as; pressuring on hipbone; rubbing the genital region to a blanket or a plush toy; hitting to vagina walls or clitoris and randomly placing an object to the vagina (Unal, 2000).

There could be some other reasons for the masturbation behaviour of the child. As Freud mentioned in his psycho-social theory, three or four year’s old children may masturbate to relax while he/she stressed or has been frightened. The fear of castration, fear of cutting off his penis by his father as Freud mentioned, could be the reason of this behaviour (Baysan and Artan, 2004). Child’s masturbation could also be the sign of emotional distress; this means that, the child may masturbate while playing a game or listening a tale. In such a case, children’s health care professionals could help to understand the problem and solve it (Yavuzer, 2006).

From three years old the sexual memory is formed and in the following years these are remembered from time to time. Most of the sexual memories of the children are those emotional ones, because in the following years the children identify some feelings and thinking with the sensation of pleasure. At these times using the words ‘What are you doing! Disgraceful!’ make the child to matching up this sensation with disapprovement. After this warning, the child may block the behaviour despite his/her physical desire. Present researches mentioned that prohibition of masturbation in the childhood would affect the sexual life in the adulthood in a negative way (Ucar, 2001). In addition to this, it was founded out that, the children that were warned by their families create the feeling of guiltiness, embarrassment and anger, and accordingly their psychological thinking about sex has been affected. The families may teach their children to make masturbation in their room or in bathroom; however it must be kept in mind that it takes time for children to understand the difference between normal and private area activities. This shows us that just like the families, the pre-school teachers also have to take responsibility about their reactions towards masturbation of the children. In order to have a healthy sexual life in their adulthood, teachers have to teach the children that masturbation is a natural thing like to clean his/her nose or to scratch somewhere his/her body (Poroy, 2006).

In this respect, the importance of the pre-school teachers’ education is increasing. In general meaning, the education is a process of changing the behaviour and is an important mean in changing the general attitudes. Consequently, it is expected that the attitudes and behaviour of the educated person would change in a positive way. In addition to converting the negative attitude to positive ones, education is also based on the idea of gaining positive attitudes. In our society the development of positive attitudes of young generation, who is growing out especially with sexual prejudices, could only be possible with education.

In today’s terms, the most important element in increasing the importance of education is the teacher, because educated candidate teacher is in a position to be affected by the researches; is applying the new education politics
that is developed by these researches; and is re-developing and effecting these politics if it is necessary (Varış, 1973). For this reason, the candidate pre-school teachers have to gain necessary knowledge, ability and attitude about the masturbation. Gaining necessary abilities also about the childhood sexuality is the part of the development of being a skilled teacher. In this respect, the students of pre-school teaching, at departments of education have to take counselling courses in ordered to develop their attitudes, their communication and behaviours towards students in addition to the content knowledge about childhood sexuality. In this way, the candidate pre-school teachers have to gain more positive attitudes in addition to the social norms of being a teacher and could assist the process of healthy education, like in all other fields, in sexual development of the children (Küçükahmet, 1993). In this respect, this research has examined whether the counselling courses in education would change the attitude of the pre-school teaching students towards the masturbation behaviour of the children or not.

2. Methodology

2.1 Field of Research and Sample

The field of Research is composed of the students of Pre-school Teaching Department of the Atatürk Education Faculty of the Near East University. Because of the importance of taking counselling course during the determination of the sampling group, the simple random sampling method which is one of the methods depending on probability was used according to the number of the 4th year students (40 students) that have been taken this course before. For the simple random sampling, a list has been prepared that includes 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students. Classes are determined by using the random numbers table. For the research, a questionnaire were applied to 160 students from seven different classes (of which 40 of them have taken counselling course, 40 of them have taken development course and 40 who neither took counselling nor development courses). 40 of the samplers were 1st year students, 40 of them 2nd year students, 40 of them 3rd year students and 40 were 4th year students.

2.2 Tools of Collecting Data

The Attitude Scale that has been developed by the researcher was used in the research in order to determine the levels of the attitudes of pre-school teaching students towards the masturbation behaviour at 3-6 years old children. At the first stage of developing the Scale, 40 common items was determined from the outcome of existing domestic and foreign researches about the masturbation behaviour of children. After taking the expert opinions, the Scale for developing its own validity and reliability has been applied to 85 persons that is more than double of the standards of Barbara’s validity and reliability (Cohen, 1996) number 40. In order to test the reliability of the Scale, internal consistency factor was calculated from the unreliability attitudes. Cronbach Alpha factor was calculated and interpreted in order to determine whether the internal consistency factor is proper for the research as a scale or not. In addition to the calculation of the Cronbach Alpha factor, item analysis was also applied to confirm the coherence of every single behaviour sentences of the Scale with the total scale (Karasar, 1991). 10 of 40 items were eliminated, while they were under the .20 of total item correlation. At the second stage of the reliability test, the rest 30 items were analyzed within their own dimensions as a whole and as a result of their statistical analyses; their own Cronbach Alpha internal consistency factor is calculated for each of them. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency factor is calculated as .92 as a result of the statistical analyses between the reactions to each item and to the scale as a whole. The content validity and structure validity dimensions were used for analyzing the validity of the Scale. The content validity was approved by expert opinion and structure validity was approved by scale factor analysis. It was tested by the factor analysis whether the 30 items of the scale is measuring the related attitude or not. According to the results of analysis, likert survey is used in the research that each of 30 items’ first factor value is above .30. The more than .30 value of each item shows us that the items of the scale measured the desired concept.

2.3 Collecting Data

The scale is applied by the researcher to the students of Pre-School Teaching Department of the Atatürk Education Faculty of the Near East University of 2009-2010 Spring Semesters during their course hours. The aim of the research was explained to the students and they were also informed that filling the scale is not compulsory.
Filling the scale was approximately 20 minutes. Within the content of the research names and surnames were not asked in order to make the students to express themselves easily.

2.4 Analysis of Data

During the analyzing period unilateral variation analysis (ANOVA) is used to determine the differentiation towards the attitude levels of the pre-school teaching students of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes. LSD test was used to determine which classes were differentiated if there would be a meaningful differentiation at the variation analysis. The obtained data were analyzed by the 17 package program of SPSS. The meaningful level of the research is determined as 0.05.

3. Findings and Comment

Examining the Table 3.1 shows us that there is a meaningful differences (p<0.05) between groups when the class levels of pre-school teaching students and their attitudes towards the masturbation behaviour of the 3-6 years old children are compared. The results of LSD test to determine which classes are differentiated according to unilateral variation analysis are given in Table 3.2.

When the Table 3.2 is examined it is observed that the 4th class students’ attitudes towards masturbation behaviour of 3-6 years old children is more positive in comparison to first, second and third class students. This shows that the counselling courses that are taken at 4th class would affect the attitudes of students towards the masturbation behaviour of the children in a positive way. The results also show that the counselling courses taken in the last year has more effect on developing a positive attitude than those development courses taken in the first years.

4. Conclusion and proposals

As a result of this research it was found out that the 4th class pre-school teaching students have more positive attitudes towards masturbation behaviour of the children. This shows the importance of counselling courses taken in the last year beyond other field courses.

The child development course is the main course in the department of pre-school teaching that the students receive main information about children’s sexuality. In many universities, this course is given at 2nd and 3rd classes and the results shows that in comparison to the counselling courses this course would not create a meaningful
difference on the attitude of students. This result also shows that the students are still carrying the norms of their own society in their attitudes during the general courses of department, however they start to revise the society and their norms with the counselling courses and start to move to more positive attitude. These differences are originated from the main contents of counselling courses. The counselling courses both help the students to have self perception and related with this, offer them different alternatives to understand and help the pre-school children. As a natural result of this, students can improve their own point of view to develop more positive attitude towards the sexuality of children.

Sexuality, especially the sexual development of children is a new subject for our society and for this reason people do not talk about it and suppressed it. For this reason, there is not much research about this subject in our country. With this work, it was intended to interrogate if we could develop different point of views among young people through counselling applications on this very sensitive issue, which has an important place on the improvement of attitudes in educational life. As the results came out in line with our expectations, the importance of counselling courses was emphasized once more.

Training individuals that can think in accordance with scientific methods and principles make research; understand social problems and question social norms are becoming an essential principle of education system in our developing country. In terms of enhancing these innovative and up to date approaches, counselling courses should be given on all education faculties that train teachers. By this way, more conscious teachers and thus healthier younger generations can be grown up.

References