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Efficacy of life skills training on increase of mental health and self esteem of the students

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to achieve to effects of life skills training on providing mental health and self esteem of university students. The study method was experimental research method. The type of design was before- after test design with control group. Statistical society of the present study comprised all boys' students accepting at 2009 and studying at University of Mohaghegh Ardabili in 2009. Also, this study was conducted only on the individuals who gained 28 or more in DASS questionnaire (which evaluates three subscales of anxiety, depression, and stress), (n=210). At the next stage the needed sample (i.e. 40 boy students {20 individuals in control group and 20 individuals in experimental group}) was selected randomly and distributed in two mentioned groups, randomly. Then, life skills were taught to experimental group for 8 sessions in four week) and no variable was exposed to control group during this period. At the end, 3 individuals from experimental group were omitted; finally the achieved data from 37 individuals was analyzed by descriptive statistics methods (frequently and percentage) as well as inferential statistics methods (independent t test, MANOVA). The results showed that *life skills training* affects on decreasing mental disorders symptoms especially anxiety, depression and stress of students suspected to the mental disorder. This study showed that *life skills training* is a good method in decreasing mental disorders symptoms among the students suspected to the mental disorder.

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Introduction

Life skills include group of skills and abilities which help individual's far efficient resistance and also in attending to life situations and conflictions. These skills enable the individual to act adaptive and right in connection with environment and provide self-esteem. Mental health means that anybody who comes with his/her deep problems, compromises with others and the self and not be paralyzed against internal inevitable conflicts and thrown by community (American psychiatric association, 2000). Also self esteem refers to personal feeling of being valued and the domain in which human beings valued and love them (Lane and et al, 2004). According to world health organization ten skills include the skills of life, those are the ability for effective a communication skills, the ability far effective

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interpersonal relationship, decision making ability, problem solving ability, creative thinking ability critically thinking ability, the ability of being aware of the self, the ability of having sympathy with others, the ability to deal with emotions (failure, anxiety, depression and ...) and the ability to deal with stress.

An important point is, all of these skills are attainable. These skills help individual in controlling problems such as depression anxiety, lone lines, rejection, diffidence, anger, confliction in interpersonal relationship lack and failure (Smith, 2004). Several studies have attended to these problems (Ramesht and Farshad, 2009), in a sample consisted of 500 students showed that life skills training is effective in increasing mental and physical health and also in decrease behavioral and social problems. It also considered that in conveying the efficiency life skills trainings on student's mental health, it is the life skills trainings.

Those cause students mental health promotions (Corrigan and Basit, 1996) in a research as generalizing social skills for individuals with severe mental illness, showed that giving coping skills cause the improvement of performance and growth of quality of life in people with severe mental illness. But this improvement would not be transferred anywhere (Hong, 1998) Scrutinized the effectuality of giving coping skills on reducing test anxiety on 54 students (positive self saying, spirit of hope in the self, empathy of calm ,...), the results showed that such trainings play an important role in reducing anxiety. Weitlauf and et al (2000) in a study on women under the title of conveying the effect of coping skills training on the self – efficiency, assertiveness and aggression showed that such as training caused the growth of assertiveness and self efficacy on individuals. Also in interpersonal relationship significant reduction was found in levels of aggression on hostility.

Also this study emphasized on keeping this track in conveying other researches. Smith's study (2004) showed that life skills training significantly decrease alcoholic use and drug in young people Sukhodolsky and et al (2004) showed in their research that the training of coping skills caused the improvement of interpersonal relationship and the reduction of aggression and behavioral problems in instructed people. Smith and colleagues showed that life skills training had a significant effect on management and leadership abilities of young people. Also Mishara and Ystgaard (2006) showed that students following coping skills with stress, (tended to be more satisfied, and report the least study-mentally pressure.

Matsuda and Uchiyama (2006) showed in a research that giving copped skills with stressed situation caused the prevention and reduction of mental disorders and psychosomatic diseases in many people.

Since one of the problem solving is participating in group programs and activities And in group treatment conditions, distortion of perception, communication failure, insufficient emotional response, stereotype behaviors and thruster operations and alienation are conveyed and being change and because the majority of students have the access to life skills instruction in their universities, this can be implemented as a universal which it's consequence will be the growth of students universal information. So, this study attends to conveying the effect of training life skills on the improvement of mental health and also the self esteem of male students of Ardebil Mohagegg University. The main question of the study is "to which variable under investigations, the study of life skills has more effect?"

Method

The method of such study is experimental. Also study design is as pretesting and post testing with control group. The statistical study formed by all male students in Ardebil Mohaghegh University in the first semester of 1388-1389. (N=400).for selecting the required sample, random sampling conducted in two stages. In the first stage all the students selected, then the questionnaires of depression, anxiety and stress administrated among samples. In the next stage (before the independent variable) among student who had the marks 28 and above, 40 people through using simple random sampling were selected, and replaced in experimental and control groups. Also selecting the sample size (n=40), since the method of study is experimental, has been done. Since the sample size at least 15 for each subgroup but in this study to increase the external validity of the plan, 20 people has been considered for each group. In the experimental group three of them refused to attend in training sessions, so the data of 37 people were analyzed. Life skills training were instructed in eight sessions, each weak 2 sessions on group work.

For data collecting the lewinda's questionnaire of anxiety, depression and stress and also the Rosenberg' self esteem scale and the Mohaghegh questionnaire had been used, the questionnaire include questions which has categorized students from the view point of economic, social, personal and family. The next test is rosenberg's self esteem scale which has been made in 1960,Consist of 10 items and be used for measuring general self esteem. (Rosenberg, 1986). Also a six item version is available from this scale, which shows good internal stability on American African. (McCreary and et al, 1996).The stability of the distance was 82% to 88%, and the alpha of krunbakh for different

samples was 77% to 88% (for details see Blascovich and Joseph Tomaka, 1993, and Rosenberg 1986). This scale has 21 provisions. Lots of research has been done on the stability and validity of this scale, krunbakh alpha coefficient for this scale on a 0.77 norms, was as follow Depression 0.81, anxiety 0.73 and stress 0.81.

The method of data processing in descriptive level is through using central tendency indicators and dispersion and frequency and percentage, and in analytical level, the hypothesis of this study is conveyed through using t test for independent groups and used for evaluating the research question of variance analysis (MANOVA).

Result

The life skills instruction on which variable under study has more effect?

The analysis result of multivariable variance shows the dependant variable between control and experiment group. The obtained $F=9/32$ in the test of reliability in the experimental and control group on $R < 0/001$ level is significant. Means of two groups at least in one dependant variable are different from one another. So due to the significant of reliability the research question is conveyed.

Table 1- Effect of test result between subjects

Source	Dependent variables	Total square	Df	Average square	F	Sig.
Group	Anxiety	19.95	1	19.95	13.68	0.001
	Stress	71.59	1	71.59	37.12	0.000
	Depression	5.41	1	5.41	4.70	0.03
	Self-esteem	6.23	1	6.23	4.90	0.03
Error	Anxiety	51.02	35	1.45		
	Stress	67.49	35	1.92		
	Depression	40.31	35	1.15		
	Self-esteem	44.47	35	1.27		

a.R Squared=0.28 (Adjusted R Squared=0.26)
b.R Squared=0.51 (Adjusted R Squared=0.50)
c.R Squared=0.11 (Adjusted R Squared=0.09)
d.R Squared=0.12 (Adjusted R Squared=0.10)

Due to the result of the table 1, it is concluded that in surveying the efficient of life skills instruction on students anxiety, depression, stress and self, the stress variable have had the most reduction on other variables. Also the R coefficient would be 0/51 for stress variable. While R coefficient for variables of anxiety, depression and self esteem are respectively 0/28 , 0/11 and 0/12 . So it is concluded that life skill instruction had been affected on stress variable.

Table 2 – result of t test for scores difference in depression, anxiety, stress and self esteem

Variable	Group	M	sd	df	t	P
Difference pretest – post test self-esteem	Experimental	-0.82	1.42	35	-2.21	*
	Control	0.05	0.79			
Difference pretest – post test anxiety	Experimental	1.82	1.38	35	3.70	***
	Control	0.35	1.03			
Difference pretest – post test depression	Experimental	1.11	1.21	35	2.16	*
	Control	0.35	0.93			
Difference pretest – post test stress	Experimental	2.94	1.78	35	6.09	***
	Control	0.15	0.93			

In the second table, mean difference of scores of experimental and control group on self esteem variable has been compared. The observed t, shows that the difference of scores average of self esteem between experimental and control group has significant difference ($P < 0.05$). Means of life skills instructions is effective in increasing the students self esteem, those who are suspected to mental disorder.

Also the difference of anxiety scores average is significant between experimental and control group ($P < 0.001$). Means of life skills instruction is effective in decreasing the anxiety of students who are suspected to mental disorder. The difference of depression scores average between experimental and control group is effective ($P < 0.05$). Means of life

skills instruction is effective in decreasing the depression of students, who are suspected to mental disorder. Also the following findings show that the difference of stress scores average is significant between experimental and control group ($P < 0/001$), so it is concluded that life skills instruction is suspected to mental disorder.

Conclusion

The question to study was, to which one of the variables under study, the life skills instruction has the most effects variables under study, the life skills instruction has the most effects in conveying the efficiency of life skills instructions anxiety, depress and self esteem, the stress variable has had the greatest reduction than other variables. Also the R coefficient was 0.51 for stress variable. While the R coefficient for anxiety, depression and self esteem variable was respectively 0.28, 0.11 and 0.12. So it is concluded that life skills instruction had more impact on stress variable.

In explaining the findings we can say that stress is placed much under the impact of individual's present status in regard to anxiety, depression and self esteem variable. Si it seems logical reducing or omitting environment stressors and confronting with them in 8 session life skills instruction will be effective more and fast than the changes individuals characteristics such as belief changes, negative schemas and self respect. This result accords with the following researches. (Ramesht and colleagues 2009) concluded that life skills instruction is effected in the growth of physical health. Keefe and colleagues(1996) Showed that copped skills instruction cause the reduction of pain and related behaviors.

Matsuda and Uchiyama (2006) also showed that the coping skills instruction in stressed situation cause the prevention and reduction of psych mental disease. In patient individuals. The next result showed that life skills instruction was effected in increasing the self esteem of students who were suspected on mental disorder. The result accords with the following findings. (Ramesht and Farshad 2009) showed in conveying the effectuality of life skills instruction on students mental health, that life skills instruction causes the growth the student's mental health, also in considering the foreign findings, following results accorded with such a finding. Phuphaibul and colleagues(2005) showed that after the copped skills instruction, the experimental group paraded better coping behaviors than control group, and gained higher mental health. Matsuda and Uchiyama (2006) express that students following coping skills instruction, announced less educational mental pressure and coping skills instruction cause the prevention and reduction of mental disorders in patient individuals.

The reason of impact of life skills on students self esteem is expressed as such. The individual with playing simple roles and expressing them discharges the unconscious contents of the mind and also due to interpersonal techniques the individual attain calmness and pleasure. And shows the individuals feeling, anger and ... in a sensible form. At the other hand since there is a negative relationship between depression, anxiety and self esteem, and this relationship has been confirmed in various researches. (Teasdale and colleagues 2000), so simultaneous with cognitive rehabilitation in individuals and reducing anxiety and depression among them, the self esteem is raised too finally attending to individual and his/her solicitation and also an effort in recognizing. (Sukhodolsky and colleagues 2004) showed in their result that coping skills instruction causes the improvement of interpersonal relationship and the reduction of aggression and behavior problems in trained people.

The last finding of this study was the efficient of life skills instruction on reducing the stress of students, who were suspected on mental disorder. In general, in explaining the findings of the result it is concluded that, individuals who have lower mental health and also suffer from anxiety, depression and stress, often don't have sufficient information of this disorders and don't know how to cope with them. As we know skills such as problem solving, feelings expression, setting goals, decision making, planning, identification, registration the negative thought and replacing the positive ones, mental relation, positive imaging, use of supported systems, not being avoider, being dominated, and other methods are given to individuals in life skills instruction.

So those who learn methods of coping with life challenges exposed less on the open to mental disorder. For example those who is an anxious in order to lest being crazy have often the feeling of fear and frigt, But through training domination and introducing anxiety symptoms for them, also explaining that anxiety never causes insanity and via life skills instruction which hinted above these people gradually attain their health.

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