Effectiveness of emotional intelligence on assertiveness and self-esteem in high school girl students

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Abstract

Objectives: The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching emotional intelligence on assertiveness and self-esteem in female students. This research was quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test and control group. The participants were allocated to two matched groups based on their pre-test scores. They were assigned randomly to the control and experimental groups. The used tools in this research were Coopersmith’s self-esteem inventory and the assertiveness scale of adolescent (ASA). Unilateral and multivariate analyses of covariance were employed to analyse the data.

Result: The findings indicated there is not a significant difference between mother with or without children with speech disorder in positive, negative and expressed emotion ($p<0.05$). Also, there is a statistically significant difference between these two groups in caregiver burden ($p<0.05$). Besides, the results revealed that there is a significant association between caregiver burden and expressed emotion ($p<0.005$).

Conclusion: According to these findings, it seems that emotional intelligence in students can be one of the preventing factors in behavioral problems.

Key words: self-esteem, assertiveness, (ASA), Emotional intelligence, students
Students with higher trait emotional intelligence and stronger social skills were less likely to present with emotional and behavioral difficulties. Trait emotional intelligence along with the acquisition of social skills were influential factors of students’ emotional and behavioral difficulties (1). Therefore, emotional and social competencies are major components of intellectual ability and personality (2). Previous studies have shown emotional intelligence associates with many aspects of life and it plays an important role in the interactions and adjustments in daily life (2). Emotional intelligence is an effective factor in determining one’s ability to succeed in life (school and career) also in interpersonal relationships (3,4,5). Psychologist and counselors notice emotional intelligence as a moderator in cognitive issues and adjustment programs (6,7,8). Emotional intelligence is a capacity to evaluate and convey the apt emotion and moderate the emotional adjustment. There are two approaches in the defining of emotional intelligence; Mayer and Salovey’s ability model and Goleman and Bar-On’s Mixed Model. Currently, Goleman’s model is referred to as a competency model and Bar-On’s as a trait model (9, 10). The findings showed that emotional intelligence is significantly related to the social adjustment and social communication skills (11). The components of emotional intelligence are emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, empathy, interpersonal relationship, stress tolerance and impulse control (12). Previous study has highlighted the positive relationship between emotional intelligence subscales and mental health (13, 14) and the negative relationship with psychotic disorder(15).

Emotional intelligence influences the cognitive system and selective attention (16). As Caruso (2008) observes, “emotions direct our attention and motivate us to engage in certain behaviors (11). Bar-on believes that individuals with higher emotional quotient (EQ) are more competent in coping with demands, challenges and pressures of everyday life (17). On the other side, the previous studies indicated that the important factors in increasing mental health are assertiveness and self-esteem. Assertiveness is referred to as an ability to convey feelings, beliefs, and thoughts without undue anxiety and to express personal rights without denying the rights of others (18). Assertiveness contributes to accept the responsibility of behavior, maintain and increase self-esteem and self-confidence (19). Assertive individuals are more satisfied with their life (20). The findings from the various clinical research showed the influence of teaching emotional intelligence in coping with stress in students (21,22), improving mental health(23,24), and increasing psychological adjustment in runaway girls(25). Also, emotional intelligence is associated with decreasing behavioral problems (26) and aggressive behavior in students (27), increasing assertive behavior and positive belief in runaway juvenile (25).

**Objective**

As noted above emotional intelligence has an important role in quality of life and mental health. On other hand, the period of adolescence is a great psychological change. So, this study was investigated the influence of teaching emotional intelligence on self-esteem and assertiveness.

**Patients and Methods**

**3.1. Participants and Plan**

This study was conducted in 2014 in Karaj city of Iran; the present study is a quasi-experimental research with pre-post test and treatment group. Firstly 70 students completed the assertiveness scale for adolescents and Coopersmith self-esteem inventory. Then 40 students were randomly selected based on the results of the questionnaires. This sample was assigned to the research and control group with random assignment. Teaching Emotional intelligence was implanted in 8 sessions (one and half-hours for each session) for the research group. So the appropriate technical aspects of emotional intelligence was taught to students such as; knowing one’s emotions, emotional management, and motivating oneself, recognizing emotion in others (29).

The following content was taught to the students in these sessions through the method of role playing and pantomime:

- **First session:** definition of emotion and recognize different types of emotion in life
- **Second session:** recognize facial expressions and the thoughts with these emotions
- **Third session:** study the relationship between automatic thoughts, emotions and behavior through practical behavior
- **Fourth session:** how to identify others’ emotions
- **Fifth session:** diverse methods of expression of emotions and the necessity of emotional management in the life
- **Sixth session:** emotion control (emotional self-control)
- **Seventh session:** emotional control through changing the status, relaxation and emotional keys
- **Eighth session:** teaching the method of emotional problem solving skills, expression of emotions in appropriate and controlled manner

**3.2. Measurements**

Coopersmith’s self-esteem inventory: This questionnaire was designed by Coopersmith (1967) based on the scale of Rogers and Diamond (1954). It contains 58 items. 4 subscales of this questionnaire are total self-esteem, social self-esteem, family self-esteem, educational self-esteem. The scores of consistency reliability (Cronbach’s alpha) of the subscales are 0.80, 0.79, 0.84, and 0.89 in the Persian version (28,30).

**Assertiveness Scale for Adolescents: The ASA is a 33-item questionnaire designed by Lee et al. It describes interpersonal situations and what would the respondents...**

**Background**

...
usually do in each situation. Participants respond to each item on a 3-point Likert-type scale and are classified as assertive, unassertive, and aggressive. The original study reported the internal consistency reliability as 0.84. The internal consistency reliability was reported in the Farsi version as 0.64 (31).

**Results**

As shown in Table 1, the variables of self-esteem and assertiveness are normally distributed. In Table 2, the results of covariance show that there is a significant difference between the two groups in all subscales of self-esteem (general self-esteem: MS= 82.34, DF=1, F= 45.95, P= 0.001; Family self-esteem: MS=7.88, DF=1, F= 5.84, P= 0.024; social self-esteem: MS= 44.4, DF=1, F= 29.06, P= 0.001; educational self-esteem: MS= 9.02, DF=1, F= 10.71, P= 0.003; total self-esteem= MS= 517.96, DF=1, F= 76.32, P= 0.001). Regarding the results of Ancova (Table 3), the dependent variable (emotional intelligence) has influenced assertiveness. So, the difference between the two groups is significant (MS= 140.83, DF=1, F= 46.43, P= 0.001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Z Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General self-esteem</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>0.670</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>0.864</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family self-esteem</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>1.290</td>
<td>0.072</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>0.961</td>
<td>0.315</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self-esteem</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>0.769</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>1.183</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational self-esteem</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>1.010</td>
<td>0.259</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>1.043</td>
<td>0.227</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total self-esteem</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>0.683</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>0.776</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Pre test</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>0.533</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>0.775</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: The results of MANCOVA in self-esteem**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General self-esteem</td>
<td>82.34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>82.34</td>
<td>45.95</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family self-esteem</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>0.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social self-esteem</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>29.06</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational self-esteem</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.02</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total self-esteem</td>
<td>517.96</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>517.96</td>
<td>76.32</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The aim of the current study is influence of emotional intelligence in improving self-esteem and assertiveness in female students in the first year of secondary school. The results showed that teaching of emotional intelligence can increase the self-esteem and assertiveness in students. Therefore the result of current study showed the emotional intelligence is an effective method to improve assertiveness in female students. This result is in line with the previous study (32). So, this method teaches the student to recognize and manage their emotions (stress, aggression, and so on) and use it in their interpersonal relationships. The previous studies indicated that teaching of emotional intelligence contributes to decreasing of aggressive, educational problem, health problem, increasing of assertiveness, positive feeling, problem solving, and mutual respect in students (33,34). Rey et al (2011) showed the association between perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and focusing on the role of potential mechanisms such as self-esteem involved in the link between perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in adolescents (35). Carmeli et al (2009) indicated the association between emotional intelligence and psychological components - self-esteem, life satisfaction, self-acceptance, and somatic complaints (36). Sanchez et al (2014) showed emotion management, assertiveness, emotion regulation, stress management and impulsiveness, emotional stability and self-worth were associated with aggressive behavior (37). Also the results of the present study indicated that the self-esteem and its subscales in the research group are more than the control group. This result is in line with the previous study (38). Also, previous findings indicated emotional intelligence is a strong determinant of self-esteem and self-esteem acted as mediators of the relationship (39,40). Moreover, self-esteem plays an important role in self-enhancing humour and life satisfaction (41). Students in this method learn self-awareness, manner expressing dissatisfaction, ability to cope with environmental demands and pressures. On the other hand Emotional intelligence is the key for the adjustment of young people in that its lack causes aggressive behavior and drug use (42). It could be argued that teaching emotional intelligence plays a preventing role in behavioral problems. Hence, according to these results and previous studies, it suggests that emotional intelligence will be considered as a necessary teaching program at schools to improve the social and educational function in students. It could be beneficial to involve parents in this program. One of the limitations of this study is the ability to generalize findings to other groups since the participants were female students.

Acknowledgement

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References

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