

Life skills training on the components of psychological positivism (hope and happiness) in irresponsible and orphaned children in Isfahan Province

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Abstract

Psychological needs of the orphaned and irresponsible children are considered as one of the first priorities of the community and especially the welfare organization. The aim of the present study is investigating the effectiveness of life skills on the components of psychological positivism (hope and happiness) in the irresponsible and orphaned children and adolescents in Isfahan province. The present study is a semi-experimental study with pre and posttest plan and control group (classic). The research population of this study includes all the orphaned and irresponsible adolescents of Isfahan city. The statistical sample of this study consists of 30 adolescents. The results of the statistical survey shows that the intervention of life skills training in both variables of hope and happiness has led to significant increase in performance in the test group compared to the control group in the posttest step. The independent variable in the dependent variables of hope and happiness explains 22% and 13% of the variance respectively. So it can be concluded that these skills increase the ability of individuals for effective dealing with the requirements of life and act as a primary prophylactic factor and enable the individual to accept the responsibilities related to his or her social role and to effectively confront to the challenges and problems of everyday life.

Keywords: Life Skills, Components of psychological positivism, Hope, Happiness, Irresponsible and Orphaned

Introduction

The orphaned and irresponsible children include the children under the age of eighteen who are deprived of the educational, psychological and effective supportive presence of their parents and living in a family (Asghari Nekah and Heidari Darbandi, 1389). Poverty, parental death, drug addiction, alcoholism, parents involvement in terminal physical illness or mental disorder, imprisonment, absence of one parent (usually the father) and street mothers are considered as the factors affecting on the orphaned and irresponsible children in the world. (Tambny, 2010. Abud and Samuel, 2002) by studying orphaned children between 5 to 14 years old and comparing them with the children having parents found that this children show less interactions and poorer attachments in their interpersonal relationships with adults (Abud and Samuel, 2002). Newcomb also showed that adolescents who have had stress in their lives and have deprived of good and strong family and motherly support, will have more problems in psychological competence and skills (Newcomb and Loeb, 1999). Feeling lonely is one of the basic psychological needs of orphaned and irresponsible children. This feeling is rooted in the sense of lack of belonging and as a global phenomenon means the need to a stable social relationship with a caring person, so loneliness is introduced as a cognitive – emotional response to the threatening of this need. The cognitive component of the loneliness is the gap between the desired and actual social relationship and the emotional component of the loneliness is the negative emotions arising from loneliness such as sadness. A lonely child can not enjoy the effective presence of the parents or other important people in his/ her social world and thinks that in the case of a problem there is no supportive person to help him in certain situations (Lin Schartel, 2008). Feeling lonely is one of three basic components in the structure of hope. Hope is of essential components in the field of positive psychology and means the ability for believing the better feel in the future (Drude, 2010). Having positive emotions and physical and mental health is one of the human's coping sources for compatibility with problems and lack of life expectancy is one of the most important predisposing sources of psychological problems and negative emotions (Esfandabadi, Shams et al. 2007; Wells, 2005; Feldman and Schneider, 2005; Catherine et al, 2003). Despair is a system of negative schemata that a person has about his/ herself and also about his/ her future (Aipac, 2010). The method of semanticization to events and inefficient problem solving skills are the factors affecting on the despair. Negative semanticization to childhood events such as abuse and attributing them to the internal factors (internal attribution style) exposes people to disappointment (Courtney, Jeffrey and Eloy, 2008). The lack of a coherent family as a negative event can help children develop the feeling of loneliness and not belonging. To have the sense of loneliness is of the basic syndromes in diagnosing depression disorder followed by losing hope and happiness. And reciprocally, having the sense of happiness or positive emotions expands the scope of attention and thus increases people's awareness about physical and environmental conditions (Steger et al, 2008; Aspinwall and Schtudinger, 2001). Parents with various problems such as addiction, poverty and so on as an unpleasant and unpredictable event cause severe and Numerous damages to the body of the family; Damages such as blocking the path of the family development, preventing the normal growth and creating maladaptive and inefficient patterns of toleration. The researches in the field of health show that happiness, among the psychological factors, along with environmental and genetic factors plays an important role in acting to the health-related behaviors, mental welfare and physical disease (Piqueras et al, 2011; Roy semb et al, 2003). So according to the above matters, one of the applications of psychology science in today's world is applying the psychological principles in finding modern ways of living and preventing of the individual, family and social problems. Life skills training programs is a set of capabilities that according to UNICEF (1999) is an approach based on the changing or shaping the behavior with the aim of creating balance in the three areas of knowledge, attitude and skill. These skills increase the ability of individuals for effective dealing with the requirements of life and act as a primary prophylactic factor and enable the individual to accept the responsibilities related to his or her social role and to effectively confront to the challenges and problems of everyday life (Patman, 2004; Wilford, 2005). Low

ability for creating prospect, lack of emotional self-regulating and loss of flexible response to the unpredictable events makes it harder for children (than in adults) to experience disappointment and necessitates the psychotherapy interventions in this area (Williams, 2008). Researchers have shown the positive effect of life skills training on increasing the happiness and hope (Vatankhah and Mehrabizadeh, 1392; Salimi and Abedi, 1392; Mahdavi Hajji, Mohammadkhani and Hatami, 1390; Yadavari, 1383). Positive psychology is the field of a modern thinking including extensive dimensions of the strengths and paying attention to the human identity reinforcing dimensions, but novelty of this field is a factor for shortage of attention and importance to this wide variable. Assigning this field just to the families who live in complete mental health might have been a mistake we have made in this path. In this study we considered it necessary to survey the psychological positivism dimensions in the adolescents who are deprived of the right of healthy lives for various reasons so that we can increase their positive performance for digesting the occurred problem in the light of appropriate training programs. In fact the importance and necessity of training the life skills becomes clear when we understand that this training promotes the mental – social abilities and helps the individuals for dealing with the life conflicts and difficult situations and leads to an effective and compatible dealing with human beings, society, culture and the environment and ultimately will provide mental health and peace for the individuals.

Research methodology

The population, sample and sampling

The present study is a practical one in terms of purpose and is semi-experimental in terms of method with pre and posttest plan and control group (classic) in which we used a test group named life skills based training and a control group. The research population included all of the orphaned and irresponsible adolescents in Isfahan city. The statistical sample consisted of 30 adolescents. For selecting the sample group we used the available sampling method in which the clients with mental problems referred to the explainer counseling center after filling the hope and happiness questionnaires and attaining a higher level of disappointment and happiness and in terms of satisfaction were selected and were randomly replaced in two test group (15 people) and control group (15 people).

Research tools

Schneider Hope Questionnaire: In concurrent validity, a positive correlation with optimism and self-esteem and a negative relationship with disappointment and depression were obtained (Dvmayn, 2006). In Schneider et al concurrent validity (1991) the correlation of this scale with the Beck Depression Scale is reported about -0.44 (Koohsarian). Also a significant positive correlation between this scale with positive affect, optimism, life satisfaction and self-esteem; and a significant negative correlation with anxiety and pessimism is obtained. Alaeddini et al also obtained a significant correlation between this questionnaire with positive emotion and optimism. The reliability of this scale in Schneider et al Research (2000) by retest method is equal to 0.85, in Kermani et al Research using Cronbach's Alpha method it is equal to 0.86 and with the use of retest method it is equal to 0.81. The 12 items scale with 8 degrees likert is between totally disagree to totally agree. Oxford Happiness Inventory was prepared by Argyle and Lu in 1989. The final form of this inventory consists of 29 multiple-choice questions that an individual judges about his/her unhappiness to his/her immense happiness. In terms of construct validity, the correlation of Happiness Questionnaire with Bradburn Positive Affect Scale is calculated 0.32, with Argyle Satisfaction with Life Index is equal to 0.57 and with the Beck Depression Inventory is equal to 0.52 (Francis et al, 1998). In Sabet and Lotfi Kashani Research (1389) for calculating the construct validity, the correlation scores of 30 subjects in this test and Beck Depression test were calculated about -0.90. The reliability of this scale in Argyle research with Cronbach's alpha coefficient is equal to 0.90, in retest method it is equal to 0.78, in Abedi et al research (1385) with Cronbach's alpha method it is equal to 0.85, in split-half type with Spearman method it is equal to 0.79, with Gutmann method is equal to 0.78 and in retest method is equal to 0.73.

Life Skills Training Program

In the present study, the training of life skills were offered during 37 sessions each for 1.5 hour from December 2014 to May 2015. These training sessions were held along with dialogue, group discussion, brain storming and excitement expression.

Table 1: The summary of life skills training program

Session	Title	Description
1-3	Decision-making skill	The person will be able to choice one or more ideal solutions after evaluating the available solutions.
4-7	Problem solving skill	The person will be able to solve the problem by dividing it to smaller components.
8-10	Creative thinking skill	The person will be able to understand the issues beyond his/her direct experiences.
11-14	Critical thinking skill	The person will be able to question and reason the subject and then to accept or reject it.
15-18	Group and interpersonal relationships skill	The person will be able to express his/her views, needs and excitements and request help from others when needed.
19-22	Self-awareness skill	The person will be able to recognize his/her strengths and weaknesses and will be able to answer to the question "Who am I?"
23-26	Emotion management skill	The person will be able to identify his/her positive and negative emotions and to express each of them in the proper situation and with the efficient method.
27-30	Empathy skill	The person will be able to care for others and to love them and also himself/herself be beloved by others and to become closer to others by creating better social relationships.
31-33	Stress coping skill	The person will be able to recognize stress sources and how it influences so that he/ she can reduce stress by proper behavior.
34-36	Conflict management skill	The person will be able to manage conflict at proper time and place with thoughts, description of sensory information, expressing expectations, summarizing proposed discussions and offering solutions.
37	Summing up and implementation of the post-test	Implementation of Hope and Happiness Questionnaires.

The Analysis of Data

To analyze the findings we used the descriptive and inferential statistics including covariance analysis with software spss21.

Research Findings

In this section the study findings is analyzed with the use of software spss21 in descriptive and inferential level. At first the average and standard deviation of the study variables is offered and then for examining the hypothesis we used the covariance analysis method (for controlling the pre-test scores).

Table 2: The mean pre-and post-test experimental group

post-test		pre-test		Variable
SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
6.31	86.13	7.72	82.26	Happiness
5.52	58.26	3.84	55.06	Hope

Table 3: The mean pre-and post-test control group

post-test		pre-test		Variable
SD	Mean	SD	Mean	
6.16	63.40	5	62.33	Happiness
2.87	35	4.06	36.33	Hope

According to the above tables, it is determined that the average of test group in post-test step has increased in both variables compared to control group. To study the difference of averages we used covariance analysis after excluding the effect of covariate variable (pre-test) from the dependent variable (post-test). Also for studying one of the most important assumptions of covariance we used the Box test.

Table 4: Test box to check defaults the same of matrix variance

sig	F	Test box
0.16	1.71	5.58

By examining the above table, the results showed that the amount of Box is not significant and thus there is congruence default between the covariance. This means that the equality condition of variance is observed and in the case of observing other defaults the F test will not encounter with any limitation.

Table 5: The results of multivariate analysis of variance to compare the post-test groups

Power test	Eta	P	Df 2	Df 1	F	Amount	Resource
0.88	0.35	0.004	25	2	6.88	0.35	Pillay effect
0.88	0.35	0.004	25	2	6.88	0.64	Wilks Lambda
0.88	0.35	0.004	25	2	6.88	0.55	Hotelling effect
0.88	0.35	0.004	25	2	6.88	0.55	Roy

The results of the table No.5 shows that in the studied groups at least in terms of one of the dependent variables there is a significant difference between the groups. Effect coefficient shows that 35% of the variance related to the linear combination of dependent variables can be explained through the group differences.

Table 6: Univariate analysis of variance impact of life skills-based intervention

Power test	Effect size	sig	F	Mean Square	Df	Sum of squares	Dependent variable	Resource
0.75	0.22	0.01	7.61	109.837	1	109.837	Hope	Group
0.47	0.13	0.05	3.89	71.80	1	71.80	Happiness	
				14.425	26	375.038	Hope	Error
				18.429	26	479.149	Happiness	
					30	69834	Hope	Total
					30	172667	Happiness	

As the results of table No.6 shows the intervention of life skills training in both variables of hope and happiness has led to significant increase in performance in the test group compared to control group in the post-test step. The independent variable in the dependent variables of hope and

happiness explains 22% and 13% of the variance respectively. Statistical power in all five variables indicates the adequacy of sample size in using the analysis.

Conclusion:

The present study aims to examine the effect of life skills training on the components of psychological positivism (hope and happiness) in orphaned and irresponsible students. The results of the variance analysis showed that life skills training on the components of psychological positivism has a significant positive effect in this group of parents and this finding is equal to the research findings of Vatankhah and Mehrabizadeh, 2014; Salimi and Abedi, 2014; Mahdavi Hajji, Mohammadkhani and Hatami, 1390 and Yadavari, 1383. In explaining these results it can be stated that in the present century it is not desirable to just maintain the usual form of life, but the main effort of the societies is to promote the quality of life. To have desirable quality of life, we will need to active and positive creators. Mutually, the presence of members who are deprived of the ability and the art of healthy living will mean the less environmental health. The decline of economic power, the reduction of time for being with the family members and cutting the useful and positive social relationships are all considered as a criteria for mental health and thus a criteria for life satisfaction and the increase of hope and happiness (Rayan and Danel, 2004; Vitalyona et al, 2003). Accordingly, among the basic life skills and training programs a special attention is given to the expanding and improving the interpersonal communication skills for creating an effective and efficient communication with others and this ability is considered as one of the basic variables in predicting the health. Having a good communication skill helps people to enjoy the healthy and satisfying relationships, while a defect in this skill leads to misunderstanding and negative feelings (Attapour, 2015). So that all components of life skills such as self-awareness, empathy skill, effective communication skill, stress coping skill, anger management skill and problem solving skill are an interpersonal skill that an individual experiences it in effective and efficient interactions (Ebrahimi, 2012). In fact, the group members can achieve a wider understanding and insight about themselves and their issues and can better come to terms with these issues by interacting with each other and through the self-disclosure, receiving support, empathy and also through the feeling of common pain. The connection that is created between the members of test group provides an opportunity for the members to explore their inner and to focus on their subjective experiences in a space free of judgment. Moreover, the lack of appropriate social support and interaction can make people weak and disable in using the effective and adapted strategies for dealing with everyday problems. On the other hand, the studies show that there is a relationship between the high level of hope and the high mental and physical health (Kooshadel, 2006; Schneider, 2002; Schneider et al, 2002). The orphaned and irresponsible children compared to normal children and adolescents experience higher levels of stress and are more exposed to the psychological disorders such as depression and thus hope for the future will reduce among them (Nadi and Sajadian, 2011). In such circumstances, due to the loss of hope for improving the conditions the other family members may face a failure in decision making process by resorting to defense mechanisms to the extremes. Life skills for training the empathy skills, decision making skills and problem solving skills are an effective step in creating effective mechanisms for conflict resolution and increasing the hope to capabilities; because principally there is always a necessity that an individual must decide effectively about the issues of life and before any decision he/she must be able to investigate the different aspects. In other words, the training of problem solving skill teaches the person a rational and systematic thinking process and while facing with problems helps him/her to search the numerous solutions and then choose the best option (Maleki, 2010). Also obtaining the ability of expressing emotions prevents the larger problems in the family, and family members can identify their emotions in a positive direction and by expressing their needs and creating empathy power they can use all their potentials. This social support in the family realizes the other family members' potentials, reduces the disappointment and also will lead to a trying for finding another window towards the development and progress, and the development of these capabilities might lead to the

development of new and more appropriate wishes to child's abilities and will create new openings of hope in the parents. So it can be stated that providing the life skills training program in the form of predicting the situations, addressing the inconsistencies, recognizing the feelings, classifying the subjects and mind peace reduces the negative thoughts, anxieties and negative emotions and finally increases the hope and self-esteem in dealing with the difficult issues of life. Numerous studies have shown that the use of life skills training strengthens the individual's self-confidence and self-respect, helps to the strength of interpersonal communication, prevents the mental and behavioral and social problems and increases the self-esteem while facing with the problems (NikParvar Fard, 2005). In other words, life skills are important coping strategies that enhance the individual's ability for personal and social development and reduce its psychological problems. Because these skills strengthen the basic and default skills in the life and review them. In this regard, the power of self-expression as one of the basic skills in creating a productive and constructive relationship can lead to the feeling of happiness and self-esteem. Therefore the training of self-expression skill creates courageous behaviors and social skills, leads to the struggle with the social anxiety caused by the presence of an incompatible member, and increases the self-esteem, decision-making power and the individual's accountability in the face with the life stresses. Because the aim of training the self-expression is to create the necessary ability for dealing with the stressful problems and through this provide the person's mental health. In addition, the presence of an unhealthy member and inability in using of an effective and constructive social communication is one of the most important factors that cause tension and stress in the families. So according to the noted findings, the skill obtained by the subjects of the test group for creating a productive communication leads to the stress reduction and finally reduces the individual's psychological problems. Generally, life skills include a set of capabilities that enhance the power of compatibility and the efficient and positive behavior. As a result the people will be able – without damaging to themselves or others – to accept the responsibility for their social role and to effectively encounter with the everyday life challenges and problems. Researchers confirm the positive effect of using the intellectual and cognitive capacities and capabilities on the prevention of inefficient behaviors and on the increasing the self-reliance and self-confidence. The enhance and the strength of all the present skills creates a positive mood and emotion and as a result leads to the life satisfaction and will provide the overall feel and the ultimate goal of the life - that is the psychological welfare – which means the lack of negative emotion, the presence of positive affect and the life satisfaction. So that the training of conflict management in the families will create positive problem solving approaches and instead of referring to non-sensitive issues will focus on the crisis postulate. Interpersonal conflicts are destructive and reducing these conflicts is considered as a management method. Conflict management approach in life skills includes more agreement, the balance of power, the creative approaches to crisis solving and facilitating the change so that it will be based on a positive problem solving approach and it means that this approach includes clear, constructive and non-compulsory answers which aims to solve a conflict in a dialogue in connection with the conflict issue (Sepahmansouri, 2007). Executive restriction is the first limitation in this study. Due to the lack of an organization which is formally responsible for the census of the orphaned and irresponsible children, we don't access to an exact statistic about these children and are faced to some limitations for choosing the sample group. Lack of cooperation of the related organizations and institutes in the form of family-like centers led us to use the available sampling method and naturally reduced the external validity of the study. Due to the lack of the students' cooperation because of the frustration caused by the presence of numerous psychologists we were forced to use the double blind method in this study. The sample group consists of the students of Isfahan Province, therefore it is recommended that the similar study should be done among the students of other cities so that the cultural effects of the study work reduces. Because of the numerous problems that the incompatible families are faced to, it is recommended that this training method should be done on the other psychological variables. It is also recommended that some special

centers should be established for doing research on orphaned and irresponsible children so that the useful studies don't face to the problem because of the executive facilities.

Practical suggestions:

The results showed that the life skills of hope and happiness are positive and significant effect, so it is suggested to other researchers:

This method of training to improve the positive psychological variables used in children and adolescents affected.

It is better to separate these training methods of other groups (girls or boys) to be used.

It is suggested to generalize the findings to a similar study done in other cities.

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