

Impact of Life Skills Education on Enhancing Self-Esteem Among High School Students

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to examine the impact of life skills training on adolescent students. This research is a quasi-experimental study conducted on 160 students in the city of Bhubaneswar. Participants in the study were randomly chosen from a list of students in all schools within the Bhubaneswar city limits and then randomly assigned into two groups. A trained counselor instructed the study group students in life skills, while 80 reminder subjects were designated as the control group. Following the completion of the training program, participants completed the Cooper Smith self-esteem questionnaire (58-item version). The results of the research showed that life skills training resulted in a notable enhancement of self-esteem in the study group compared to the control group participants. Programs like psychoeducation and mental health initiatives, including life skills education, may enhance essential abilities in students and reduce educational and school-related issues.

Keywords: Life skills, Self-esteem, High School Students, Learning process, Classroom training

Introduction

Nearly 30 percent of children and teens face a diagnosable mental health disorder at some point, and it is possible that 70 to 80 percent of them did not receive appropriate treatment. These disruptions often cause significant dysfunction in school, home, and family activities, which may ultimately lead to educational dropout; at times, these issues also serve as a pathway for delinquent behavior within the community (Evans, Mullett, Weist, Frans, 2005). In recent times, various maladaptive behaviors like aggression, anxiety, feelings of absurdity, and suicidal tendencies have significantly risen among adolescents. The absence of certain psychological tools appears to explain the behaviors. Self-esteem is one of the factors whose disturbances lead to negative outcomes (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2007).

Learners acting as community members in educational environments may encounter various issues without life skills and self-worth, as self-esteem is a crucial element in psychological makeup that serves multiple functions in the social-educational performance of the person. This is the reason governments should prioritize the psychological well-being of students in their initiatives. Communities with well-developed human resources have the

potential to succeed in competitions and endure in the dynamic circumstances of the world. Due to this potential, educational policies ought to implement an active strategy to enhance self-esteem through life-skills training (Muafi and Gusaptono, 2010)

Typically, life skills training emphasizes enabling students to gain the ability to function successfully within society. In this context, schools and counselors play a crucial role in developing skills that direct students' lives. Life skills are fundamentally the capabilities that enhance mental wellness and proficiency in youth as they encounter the challenges of life. At the core of life skills education is the acquisition of life skills. Life skills are 'capabilities for adaptive conduct that allow individuals to manage successfully the demands and challenges of daily life' (WHO, 2001). UNICEF and WHO concur that life skills are typically utilized in different areas of life. In contexts like health and social interactions, understanding social influences on behavior and learning about rights and responsibilities is essential, particularly when addressing health issues. Life skills empower people to convert knowledge, attitudes, and values into real capabilities – that is, knowing what to do and how to accomplish it (cited in Millia, 2009).

One of these abilities is self-worth. During the mid-1960s, social-learning theorist Morris Rosenberg characterized self-esteem as a consistent feeling of personal value or worthiness (Rosenberg, 1965; Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, 1989, 1995). In 1969, Nathaniel Branden characterized self-esteem as:

"...the ability to handle life's fundamental challenges and to feel deserving of joy"; as stated by Branden (1987), self-esteem comprises self-confidence (a sense of personal capability) and self-respect (a sense of personal value). It arises from the unspoken evaluation that each individual makes regarding, on one hand, their capacity to confront life's difficulties, meaning to comprehend and address issues, and, on the other hand, their entitlement to attain happiness, or, in other terms, to uphold and safeguard their own desires and requirements (Baumeister, Smart and Boden 1996).

Branden's description of self-esteem includes the following primary properties:

self-esteem as a basic human need, i.e., "...it makes an essential contribution to the life process", "...is indispensable to normal and healthy self-development, and has a value for survival."

Since this lasting concept positively affects individual behaviors, specialists should develop foundational courses to elaborate on it. By doing this, psychologists and mental health professionals can enhance self-esteem through various methods, including teaching skills that are crucial for dealing with life's situations.

Although numerous studies have evaluated self-esteem training programs across various populations (Creed et al, 2001), only a limited number of studies have focused on such programs for adolescent students. At school, in addition to academics, children develop social skills and interact with figures of authority beyond their parents (Matheson and Grosvenor, 1999). Students frequently seek guidance, support, and direction from adults within the school community (Brooks, 2004). Moreover, schools hold significant trust among parents and community members (WHO, 2001), thereby exerting considerable influence on children and their families. In this study, the authors aimed to examine and identify the impact of life skills training on the self-esteem of high school students

2.0 Research Methodology

This is a pseudo-experimental research with two groups in which one of them is study group and the other assigned as control group.

2.1 Coverage and samples

This study was conducted in the city of Bhubaneswar, Iran. Participants in the study were selected from a roster of male students across all schools in Bhubaneswar. Based on a random arrangement, 160 subjects were chosen at random and divided into two groups

2.2 Data collection and

Coopersmith self-esteem questionnaire (58-item version): This is a valid and reliable instrument commonly utilized by researchers and clinicians, and it can function as a screening tool. The Iranian version of the questionnaire demonstrates adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha=0.86). The survey filled out by two groups following educational sessions. Demographic Checklist: the authors created a checklist to gather SES information.

2.3 Procedure

Four licensed counselors with experience were chosen by the authors to instruct students in life skills. Prior to initiating the program, the authors held a preliminary session for counselors, staff, and students to provide information about the program, and after completing a consensus form, the main program commenced. The aim of the preliminary session was to align the program. The counselors provided a handbook for each topic. The life skills program carried on with 10 sessions held twice weekly, with each session lasting 50 minutes. Following the final session, participants were requested to fill out the questionnaire

Contents of the sessions:

The core set of skills (WHO 1997: p.1) that follow the above description are:

1. Self-awareness: This item aims to make ability to aware of self-characteristics, weaknesses, and strengths, recognizing demands of circumstances, and fears. Self-awareness help the individual to understand that whether one is under stress, and usually this is a prerequisite of empathetic social relationship.
2. Empathy: This item intended to make better understanding of others even once we are not in place of them. This skill makes the individual pay attention to others and create feeling of belongingness.
3. Interpersonal communication: This aspect instructs individuals to strengthen collaboration, trust, and work closely with one another.
4. Productive relationships: The ability teaches individuals to comprehend others, circumstances, active listening, and how to articulate needs.
5. Interpersonal communication: This item instructs individuals to strengthen collaboration, trust, and work closely together.
6. Constructive relationship: The ability teaches individuals to comprehend others, circumstances, engage in active listening, and articulate requests.

7. Managing stress: This item instructs individuals on recognizing stress and how to manage it.
8. Emotional regulation: This entails recognizing feelings, distinguishing between emotions, and ultimately determining how to react to them..
9. Emotional regulation: This entails recognizing feelings, distinguishing between emotions, and ultimately determining how to react to them.
10. Decision making: This skill enables individuals to make suitable choices in contentious situations.
11. Creative thought: This item teach the subjects how to build and discover new ideas; in this skill problems assume as an opportunity instead of a problem in which one should find fresh ways to solve problems.
12. Critical thinking: This skill teaches the students to think about accepting or rejecting others' idea specially in stressful conditions. This item focuses mostly on reasoning.

The skills presented the subjects in determined time, and after the last session they administered questionnaire of self-esteem. Recruited data analyzed in two section of descriptive and inferential statistics by spss-16 software.

3.0 Results

This research examined 160 subjects, and their school records indicated that none of them experienced psychological issues. The two groups were compared regarding their self-esteem scores. Results of the study indicate that the average self-esteem score in the study group exceeds that of the control group; an independent samples T test was conducted to assess the significance of this difference between the groups.

Table 1 : Descriptive statistics shown.

Groups	N	Mean	SD
Study Group	80	34	41/05
Control Group	80	29	41/38

In the table 2 result of the T test displayed the difference of the two groups

Table 2: inferential statistics of two groups

T	DF	Sig.
4/95	158	0.001

The results indicate that there is significant difference between two groups ($T = 4.95$; $df = 158$; $P < 0.001$), and this means that implementation of the program influenced positively scores of self-esteem in study group subjects.

4.0 Discussion

Global living conditions require ongoing coping abilities, and individuals of all ages should be prepared with these skills; thus, it is essential for educational institutions to focus

on this issue. According to the literature, Creed (1996; 2001) highlighted the significance of the skills that affect self-esteem and self-efficacy in adolescents. According to the findings of this study, such programs could enhance levels of self-esteem in individuals. The findings suggest that educational institutions play a crucial role in enhancing these constructs, which in turn influence adolescents' challenges.

Although the research indicated immediate effects of the program, it is feasible to assess long-term outcomes of the studies in subsequent trials. The students who took part in the life skills training program were able to succeed in social interactions by employing assertive behaviors. These achievements lead to favorable perceptions of an individual and enhance self-esteem. These individuals experience a positive self-perception by expressing their emotions, beliefs, and thoughts, which leads them to internalize their feelings and anxieties (concerns). It results in social harmony and self-acceptance among individuals (Aboutorabie Kashani and Bayat, 2010).

A limitation of the study could pertain to its research design; utilizing a pretest and posttest framework in such trials often yields more accurate results, and authors should take this into account in future research. The study's findings indicate the program's effectiveness in this sample and should be generalized with caution to other samples. Researchers must conduct various studies across different age groups to reach more accurate conclusions.

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