The relationship between life skills and self-confidence among primary students in Robat Karim city, Iran

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Abstract
The aim of this paper is to study the relationship between life skills and self-confidence among primary students of Robat Karim. To this end, 392 students in 4th, 5th and 6th grade of elementary school in this region were randomly chosen to respond to the standard questionnaires of self-confidence (Eysenck, 1977) and social skills (Saatchi et al., 2010) and finally, results of these questionnaires were analyzed by bivariate regression and test results showed that there is a significant correlation in self-awareness, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, coping with stress, emotion management, problem solving, decision making and critical thought with confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim (P <0.01). However, no significant correlation was observed between empathy and critical thinking of students confidence (P <0.05).

Keywords: Life skills, self-confidence, primary students of Robat Karim

Introduction
One of the positive characteristics that have profound effect on different aspects of human’s lives is having self-confidence. Without self-confidence reaching to goal or peace would be impossible. Self-confidence will empower us to be dominated on our life and future. Self-confidence is derived from the Perceived self (a literal picture of yourself) and Ideal self (the thing which person considers as worthy and likely to desire) in a way that the more the difference, the less the self-confidence (Baharestan et al, 2010). We can identify so many factors that determine the level of self-confidence such as “life skills”. Life skills are group of mental, social and interpersonal skills which can help people with knowledge to take decisions, communicate effectively, develop their coping skills and self-management as well as having a healthy life and productivity. UNICEF (2003) categorizes life skills into three general categories with sub-categories which is presented as follows: 1) communication and interpersonal relationship skills including interpersonal relationships, negotiating skills, empathy, cooperation , work group , and advocating skills. 2) Making skills and critical thinking skills including problem-solving and decision-making, and critical thinking skills, and 3) coping skills and personal management skills to enhance the source of control including the skills to manage emotions and stress management skills.

In another categories of life skills by UNICEF (2007), life skills are divided into 10 components, each of these skills is the knowledge, training and deploying them more and more in everyday life:

• Self-awareness
• Empathy skills
• Effective communication skills
• Interpersonal skills
• Coping skills
• Emotional management skills
• Problem-Solving skills
• Decision-making skills
• Creative thinking skills
• Critical thinking skills.
The overall goal of life skills training is to enhance mental and social capabilities as well as preventing harmful behaviors and improving mental health status. It is expected that each person acquire capabilities including self-confidence, communication, the ability to cooperate, ability to cope with emotions and mental ability to express wishes and hope after receiving life skills training (Albertyn et al., 2004). Given the role of confidence in the field of education and training and if the educational system seeks for successful people with mental health, it needs programs to increase the level of confidence the children. Success or failure in the education is one of the major concerns of the educational system in all communities.

Life skills programs are seen to be effective in diverse programs such as the prevention of sexual promiscuity (Olweous, 1990), prevention of AIDS (WHO, 1994) Peace Education (Prutzman et al., 1998) self-esteem and self-confidence improvement (Tacchade, 1990), and drug abuse prevention programs (Botvin et al., 1984 and 1980, Pentz, 1983). The above mentioned life skills show the importance and values of different preventive programs as well as health promotion ones (Albertyn et al., 2004).

According to the content of this research which is to study the relationship between self-esteem and life skills among elementary students of Robat Karim, we hope that the findings of this research clarify the difference between these two variables as well as the variables between students.

Review of literature

Zollinger, Saywell, Muegge, Wooldridge, and Cummings (2006) studied the effect of life skills education on knowledge, attitude, and ability of school children to choose healthy lifestyles that result of research showed a positive educational effect.

Smith, swisher, vicary, Bechtel, and Minner (2004) showed that life skills training increases personal and interpersonal skills, problem-solving, and also coping skills. Moshtarak (2011) in his study entitled "Effectiveness of life skills training on reducing aggression without support" got to the conclusion that life skills training have a positive impact on a large extent on the amount of aggressive teens and can cope with problems they raise.

Khalatbary and Aziz Zadeh (2011) in their study entitled "The Impact of life skills and coping with stress on the mental health of female students in Rasht" have come to the conclusion that life skills and coping with stress significantly increased mental health of students. Also, comparing the effect of coping with stress and life skills training that teach coping with stress was found to be more effective than life skills training to female students is depression.

Kazemi et al (2011) in his study entitled "Effectiveness of teaching life skills to students with dyscalculia Ardabil social competence" concluded that life skills training, social competence, and its components in students with math dyscalculia increased significantly. These results suggest that training in life skills increases the social competence of students with mathematics disorder.

Poor S. et al (2010) in his study entitled "Effectiveness of life skills adaptation on visually impaired students in Isfahan" have come to the conclusion that life skills training program is an effective way to increase blind students' social adjustment with their own social environment.

Shaibani and Akhavan Tafti (2010), in their study entitled "Effectiveness of cognitive source of control based on the self-esteem of students in Yazd" has come to the conclusion that the cognitive approach in promoting self-knowledge is effective, but had no significant effect on educational improvement.

Rokh Fard (2009) in his studies entitled "Effectiveness of life skills training on social adjustment and self-esteem of mental backwards students in Isfahan’s high school" come to the conclusion that life skills training have a positive impact on social adjustment and self-confidence.

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The participants
The population of this study included all students in fourth, fifth and sixth grade of elementary school in Robat Karim. The sampling has been used in this research is cluster random sampling. From among 86 schools in the area, 5 Schools were chosen and then out of these schools 12 classes were chosen as a sample who finally turned out to be 392 students.

Instruments
Data collection in this study was done through questionnaires. In this study, ranging confidence was measured by standard questionnaire Eysenck (1977), and life skills as well as life skills by standardized questionnaire Saatchi et al (2010). The questionnaire has 30 questions with two choices of confidence (yes and no) and life skills questionaire has 62 questions with 5-choice Likert scale (very low to very high). The reliability of the questionaire was determined through Cronbach's alpha test that the rate for the questionaires turned out to be .98 and .94, respectively.

Data analysis and results
In order to test the research questions in the study a bivariate linear regression was used to test the results which can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: The effect of life skills on self-confidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R2 adj.</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Consciousness</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>28.58</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-1.28</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Communication with others</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>35.81</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-2.57</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress Coping skills</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>32.77</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement management</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>32.46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving ability</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>33.58</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to make decisions</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>37.01</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Thinking</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 1: Are there any significant relationships between self-awareness and self-esteem among primary school students of Robat-Karim?
Regression testing results showed that there is a significant relationship between the self-awareness and self-esteem of elementary school students in Robat Karim, ($R^2 = 0.75$, $P < 0.01$).

Research question 2: Is there any significant relationship between empathy and confidence among elementary school students in Robat Karim?
Regression test results showed that there is no significant relationship between empathy and confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim ($R^2 = 0.00$, $P > 0.05$).

Research question 3: Is there a significant relationship between effective communication with others and the confidence among elementary students of Robat Karim? Regression testing results showed that there is a significant relationship between effective communication with others and the confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim ($R^2 = 0.76$, $P < 0.01$).

Research question 4: Is there a significant relationship between the individual and the confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim?
Regression test results indicated that there is a significant relationship between the interpersonal relationships with others and the confidence elementary students of Robat Karim ($R^2 = 0.01$, $P < 0.05$).
Research question 5: is there a significant relationship between the stress coping skills and confidence of elementary students of Robat Karim?

Regression test results indicated that there is a significant relationship between stress coping skills and confidence elementary students of Robat Karim (0.73 = R² adj.; P <0.01).

Research question 6: Is there a significant relationship between the excitement management and confidence of elementary students of Robat Karim?

Regression testing results show that there is a significant relationship between the excitement management and confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim (0.73 = R² adj.; P <0.01).

Research question 7: Is there a significant relationship between the problem-solving ability and confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim?

Regression testing results showed that there is a significant relationship between the problem-solving ability and confidence among elementary students of Robat Karim (0.74 = R² adj.; P <0.01).

Research question 8: Is there a significant relationship between the decision-making ability and confidence among elementary students of Robat Karim?

Regression testing results showed that there is a significant relationship between the decision-making ability and confidence of elementary students Robat Karim (0.78 = R² adj.; P <0.01).

Research question 9: Is there a significant relationship between critical thinking and self-confidence among elementary school students of Robat Karim?

Regression testing results showed that there is no significant relationship between the critical thinking and confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim (0.00 = R² adj.; P <0.5)

Research question 10: Is there a significant relationship between the creative thinking and confidence of elementary students of Robat Karim?

Regression testing results showed that there is a significant relationship between creative thinking and confidence of elementary students in Robat Karim (0.01 = R² adj.; P <0.05).

Conclusion

Studies depict that those who have lower self-confidence in comparison to those who have more are more in conformity to social status and easily impressed. on the other hand, lower level of self-confidence is one of the aspects of vulnerability to the known depression (Khajeh Moghari,2006)

According to the confidence in the quality of the actions and behavior of individuals involved in all stages of life and physical and mental health is very effective, it can lower the frequency of symptoms and cause mental disorders such as depression, anxiety, and aggression (Seward, 2006).

One factor that appears to have an impact on the level of confidence especially students, is the life skills. Life skills include set of capabilities that increase the adaptability and positive and effective behavior. As a result, the person is able to take responsibility for their social role and the challenges and problems of daily life faced effectively without any harm to him/herself or others. Studies of Smith et al (2004) suggest that life skills training significantly contribute to reducing the incidence of risky behaviors.

Successful learning life skills, affects the sense of learning about themselves and others, and in addition to obtaining the skills it will change the others attitude towards the person. That's why a person's life skills change and the environment and the person as well. The principle of this two-way procedure doubles its acceleration of promotion of mental health (Haine et al., 2003).
Mallon’s research (1994) shows that teaching interpersonal relationships, making friends, anger management has been effective in improving self-esteem among school children. Menio (1994) social skills like problem-solving, increased expression of personality traits such as self-sufficiency and self-confidence.

High confidence is an important factor in the health and well-being of individuals across the life that can be improved by maintaining or expanding relations with others (Dobois, 2004). The importance of confidence has noted not only in education but also as successful in the role of social factors in mental health and effective role as an important subject in scientific studies by psychologists and researchers (Baramkoohi, 2009). On the other hand, the large number of children and youth in our community have not learned, specific skills in problem solving, decision-making, and express their feelings. As we know many children and adolescents in dealing with environmental problems and threats, use avoidance reaction inhibitors such as disobedience, breaches, fraud and using that aggressive behavior can affect students' confidence. If we consider these inappropriate behavior due to the bad influence of cultural patterns and accept that families are not capable of sharing important skills to their children, the importance and necessity of a comprehensive plan will become clear for us. Life skills training program are Promoting and preventive programs that is based on a skills-based approach and try to have an emphasis on helping students to develop personal and social skills, attitudes and values to promote prevention, with information and awareness.

In order for students to deal with stress, different situations, and life conflicts in a compatible manner, they need to be equipped with these skills. These functions have very fundamental transformation process in forming cognition, emotions, behavior and shape such as self-confidence, self-learning, problem solving and life skills (Lavassani et al., 2010).

The children now need to learn what they want to say, what they want to do and get help when needed from whom or what are the ways to solve their problems. They need to increase their confidence and attitudes, values and discover and use behaviors that will increase accountability and participation in their life (Nick, 2005).

For any kind of planning, understanding the current status is inevitable in order to understand the relationship between life skills and self-confidence and make these two variables clearer in the atmosphere of educational system (P <0.01).

References


