The effect of assertiveness training on self-efficacy among Iranian high school female students

Mitra Sadat Noghabaee[1], Mansooreh Nikoogoftar[2]

[1] Department of Educational Psychology, Saveh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Saveh, Iran; [2] Department of Psychology, Payame Nour University, Iran

Abstract

The current study considers the effect of assertiveness on the first-grade high school female students'self-efficacy. The research method is quasi-experimental and the design is pretest posttest with control group. The participants included all high school students of the second region in Tehran, including 22 schools. The selected sample is in concordance with the research method of the 3 individualsthat were selected with cluster sampling in several stages and among female high schools in the second region of Tehran. The instruments used in this study were Hezbergru's assertiveness questionnaire and The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES). Data analysis was done by using SPSS 21 software. In order to describe the data, descriptive statistics including mean, frequency, and standard deviation and independent sample t-test was usedfor testing research hypotheses.The results revealed the effect of assertiveness skills training on enhancing self-efficacy and its application in education and training. Students need to be supplied with certain skills and abilities, especially self-efficacy for better operation.

Keywords: Assertiveness training, academic self-efficacy, high school students

Introduction

All people take the bull by the horns during life and face challenges.In holy Koran, it has been mentioned that we created human being in agony and pain', some 'people are not able to face problems and they seize. But others, not only cannot seize the problems, but also they try to gain experiences as well. It seems that the first group do not have the pleasant required skills and this leads to their vulnerability and uselessness even in usual situations (Dustdar et al, 2006) but those who are socially matured, can overcome the problems.

Social maturity allows people to understand the social environment's details and to impress them (Atanimath and Yenagi, 2011). According to Parizadeh and Khadivar (2007), social maturity is feeling responsibility for others, overcoming various feelings, concerning marriage and having permanent and deep relations. As Afrooz (2006) states, social maturity forms the base of each person's life and causes mental development and other aspects of individual developments on its own, and without doubt, socially speaking, (the most vital dimension of people's characteristics is the social dimension. Social maturity is a need for the dual set of aims whether emotional or instrumental. Emotional aims span making friends, and getting on well with family and friends, instrumental aims include living skills and successful work in society. By social maturity, we mean mutual impact of a person on others and social roles reception(Nelson,2005). It spans skills and various aspects such as social responsible behavior, quality of peer relationship, self-regulatory (goal-setting, interpersonal trust, problem solving styles), self-consciousness, empathy, confronting excitement and decision-making (Lorz, 2006). High social maturity helps teens to overcome the symptoms of feeling down in the

Corresponding author: Mitra Sadat Noghabaee, Department of Educational Psychology, Saveh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Saveh, Iran. E-mail: mnoghabayi@yahoo.com

dumps and have better mental health(Atanimath and Yenagi, 2011).

On the other hand, Alberti and Emonse(2011,as cited in Saheb Al Zamani et al., 2009) state that the strict behavior improves the balance within human relations; it makes us able to behave according to our likes, and to resist them without anxiety. To reveal our feelings frankly, and to use our own rights without neglecting other peoples' rights, self- revelation is an impressing variable in peoples' success (Ibrahim, 2011) and the core of interpersonal relationships, and the key of human relations(Lin et al, 2004). According to Alberti and Emonse's (1997) viewpoint, self –revelation is regarded as an skill and adequacy in interpersonal relationships (Veston, and Wont, 1991; Alberti and Emonse, 2001; Lanazabal, 2001). Self -revelation education is one of methods that can aid people to learn needed skills in social communications and to state their feelings and wants regarding other people's feelings and wants (Abedi, 1998). In the self- revelation interventions, with the effort to discover and define problems, following the regarded aims, role- taking repetition, changing roles and gradual and successive presentation of pleasant behaviors, it tests the appropriate methods of stating the needs. In fact, students would be able to share their feelings and thoughts easily with others via leaning assertiveness methods. Assertiveness is the ability to reveal yourself overtly, straightforwardly and appropriately, to honor your own feeling and thought as well as yourself and to discover your own abilities and limits. Assertiveness is a behavior that in addition to person's health will increase the possibility of gaining pleasant results. (Reisse and Graham,1991, as cited inShahniYeylagh et al, 2010)

Self –revelation is a variable that is essential to be included in peoples' social and behavioral health and as a whole in successful life proceeds. (Karagozoglu et al., 2008; Gavn, 2010)

The conducted studies in applicability of assertiveness education reveal its usefulness in the students' social maturity improvement. Rashidzadeh, Fathi Azar, and Hashemi (2011) revealed that training assertiveness skill has meaningful effect on social skills parameters of pre-university female students. Ghorban Shirodi, Khalabari, Todar, Mablaghi, and Salehi (2011) also found that the effectiveness of assertiveness education and problem-solving have impacted the students' compat-

ibility or aggression. According to Ranjbar Kohan and Sajadinejad (2010), assertiveness education in sample group would increase self-confidence and decrease depression amount to a great deal. Amidnia, Nisi, and Sodani (2010) also found that there is a positive relationship between assertiveness and students' individual and social compatibility. In the same way, Tavakoli et al (2009) revealed that people's self-confidence and mental health would increase under assertiveness intervention. Altogether, it seems that the society in which the people have pleasant social skills can reveal their true feelings frankly and to the point through assertiveness skill and via paying attention to other people's rights can return back their own lives; they also can resist well against various life problems (Nisi and Shahni Yeylaghi,2001). As it was already mentioned, researchers are trying to find the answer to the question that to what extent the sample group spans social maturity and how assertiveness can lead to social maturity. Thus, this will lead to the question that the assertiveness program can increase the female students' social maturity or not.

Methodology

The current study is experimental regarding its aim and using the results in order to solve social problems. Regarding the method, this research is quasi-experimental because at first a subject will be taught or manipulated till the results will be measured on the variable or dependent variables. Such designs include one or more control group but there is no random sampling. The aim here is to approach the true experimental research but since the research and experiences condition is in a way that controlling or manipulating all impressive variables is impossible here, it is called quasi-experimental. Most studies that aim to find causes and conditions in real life, and controlling only some of variables are possible are classified as quasi-experimental. Most studies and surveys in social problems such as crime, chaos, and addictions and those controlling or manipulating them is impossible to locate in these studies.

One difference between the true and quasi experimental design is that, in true experimental design, there is a maximum control over variables. The design here is quasi-experimental that uses pre-test post-test with a control group. The design is shown as follows:

Participants

The participants of this study included all male and female high school students of Tehran in the 2nd region. The total number of students were 7800, among which 4200 were female high school students distributed among 21 schools.

Sampling

Sampling is in accordance with the quasi experimental method. 30 students were chosen among female high school students' in the 2nd region of Tehran through cluster sampling in several steps. And the samples included 2 schools studying in the first grade. One school was randomly selected as control and the other as experiment group.

Instrumentation

The three following questionnaires were taken into account in the present study:

The Assertiveness Self-Report Inventory (ASRI)

This questionnaire was used to measure the behavioral and affective dimensions of assertiveness (Herzberger, Chan, & Katz, 1984). The ASRI is a scale that consists of 25 true/false questions that is scored by the total of "true" responses for specific questions in comparison to "false" responses for the remaining questions. The ASRI has a reliability of .81 and a validity that is correlated significantly with the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Herzberger, et al., 1984). As far as the reliability of this questionnaire is concerned, the current scale for the female, male and the whole samples was 0.35, 0.50, and 0.43, respectively.

Rau's Social Maturity Scale

For this purpose, 90 questions were used. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was nearly 0.79. This scale was created by Nalini (19730 and translated by Karimi (2003). The validity of this questionnaire was reported in Naderi and Shojohi's studies through correlation. It is also necessary to mention that the dependent variable has been trained for 8 sessions.

Results and Discussion

The following tables show the results of inferential data analysis in relation to research hypotheses. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOA) wasused for data analysis. If the significance levelis more than 0.05, the result is statistically significant. Since this was not observed in this study, paired sample t-test was used.

Table 1. Levene test for equality of error variance in social maturity and efficacy

Variable	dF2	df1	f	P
Social maturity	1	42/007	86/4	0/03
Efficacy	1	42/007	9/20	0/005

Hypothesis 1: Assertiveness training can lead to social maturity improvement.

As observed in table 2, the Levene's test is meaningful and the hypothesis of variance equalities is under question, but regarding t observed, and considering inequality of variances, there is a significant difference between social maturity of the control and experiment groups. Also, the observed t is 3.42 with 28 degree of difference more than critical amount of 2.46. Thus, we can conclude that the intervention plays a significant role on increasing efficacy (p<0.01).

Hypothesis 2: Assertiveness training can lead to an increase in efficacyamong sample group.

As it is clear from table 2, the Levene's test is meaningful and the hypothesis of variance equalities is under question but regarding t observed, and considering inequality of variances, there is a significant difference betweenefficacy of the control and experiment groups as the t observed is 3.96 with 28 degree of difference more than critical amount of 2.46. Thus, we can come to the result of the effect of the intervention on enhancingefficacyamong Iranian high school students (p<0.01).

Further, regarding the minor findings of the present study, as it is observed from table 3, the mean of efficacy in sample group was 90 and by regarding the fact that the maximum score was 120, we can infer that the efficacy score is above the mean and appropriate. Also, the Cut point in social maturity is 60, among which 83 of the subjects fell below the mean. Therefore, we can state that 83 of subjects have low efficacy and 128 have appropriate efficacy.

Finally, regarding the extent of assertiveness in sample group, as it is observed in table 3, the mean of assertiveness in sample group was 79.69 and by regarding that the maximum score in questionnaire was 99, we can infer that students' self -efficacy is above the mean and appropriate. It is worthy to mention that the cut point in assertiveness was 45, among which 74 of the subjects fell below the mean. Thus, we can conclude that 74 of subjects have low assertiveness and 137 have appropriate assertiveness.

Table 2. Paired sample t-test on the mean difference of assertiveness and self-efficacy test scores in both control and experiment groups

Hypothesis	Levene's test / F	Mean difference	t-observed	df	P
H1	0.027/5.43	6.02	3.53	28	0.001
		6.02	3.42	20.61	0.003
H2	0.004/9.78	7/61	4/14	28	0/00
		7/61	3/96	17/78	0/001

Table 3. Descriptive statistics forself-efficacy and assertiveness among high school sample

Max	Min	SD	Mean	N	Test
119	44	27.75	90.30	211	Self-efficacy
99	38	22.45	76.69	211	Assertiveness

Conclusions

The observations collected in this study revealed the importance of trainingassertiveness skills and its application in education and training. Students need to be supplied with certain skills and abilities, especially assertiveness and efficacy for better operation. Assertivenessandefficacy have special importance to students. In addition, the results clarified the importance of assertiveness and thus social maturity and efficacy in students. Correct curriculum planning based on skills, correct subject choice, permanent educational plans incorporated with the needed skills will lead to practical human sources for society. Regarding what was said about assertiveness technique and its impressiveness, we can say that performing this method aided the subjects in experiment group to improve their efficacy and to some extent their social maturity in the same orientation of gaining these abilities since social maturity enables people to understand the details of social environment, and impacts them (Atanimath and Yenagi,2011) and since it is efficacy that plays an important role in studies success(Eliss and Lumis,2002; Wood and Luck,1987; as cited in Odasi,2011).Therefore, we must try to use and apply the simple and impressive techniques such as assertiveness so that it will increase social and practical skills as well as self -practicality as much as possible. Accordingly, we flatten the way for growing potential abilities. On the other hand, for having capable students in learning and education era, holding courses and workshops seems crucial to improve such skills. The researcher wanted to signify the point that holding useful educational courses for gaining such skills is important. Also, specialists in education can make having appropriate level of such skills as a pre -condition in educational system to develop capable human sources in society.

Suggestions for further research

The following issues can be taken into account for further research:
- The effect of assertiveness method on other grades
- The effect of other methods on social maturity and efficacy
- The effect of assertiveness method on other students' problems
- Using assertiveness method for male students
- Using other instruments like interviews
- Informing parents as key roles in students' lives of social maturity and assertiveness

References

Albert, R. &Emmons, M. (1982).*Your perfect right: A guide for assertive living.Impac*t, Sun Luis Obispo, California.

Ames, D. (2009). Pushing up to a point: Assertiveness and effectiveness in leadership and interpersonal dynamics.*Research in Organization-*

al Behavior, 29, 111-330

Atanimath, J. S. &Yenagi.G. (2011).Social maturity and depression levels among II PUC science students. Karnataka, *J. Agric. Sci., 24* (4), 510-512.

Gьven., M. (2010). An analysis of the vocational education undergraduate students' levels of assertiveness and problem-solving skills. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*(2), 2064-2070.

Ibrahim., A. S. (2011). Factors affecting assertiveness among student nurses.Nurse *Education Today, 31* (4), 356-360.

Ievers-Landis, C.E., Greenley, R.N., &Burant C. (2006). Cognitive Social Maturity, Life Change Events, and Health Risk Behaviors among Adolescents: Development of a Structural Equation Model. *J ClinPsychol Med Settings,13*(2), 107-16.

Karagцzoğlu, L., Kahve, E., &Adamişoğlu, D. (2008).Self-esteem and assertiveness of final year Turkish university students.*Nurse Education Today, 28* (5), 641-649.

Tavakoli, S., Lumley, M., &Hijazi, A. (2009). Effects of assertiveness training and expressive writing on acculturative stress in international students: A randomized trial. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 56* (4), 590-596