



The impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to study the impact of training programs on students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City. **Methodology:** It is a descriptive study and its methodology is pre-test and post-test quasi-experiment. Its population includes 7000 persons who are all elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City. **Results:** Its sample was 365 person which was estimated by random stratified sampling. Saatchi's Life Skill Inventory was used for the variable of life skills that its reliability was estimated as equal as 0.84 by Cronbach's alpha. The T-test was used to evaluate the components of life skills among the students. **Conclusion:** The results showed that the training programs have impact on decision-making, empathy, problem solving and self-esteem skills of the students in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City.

1. Introduction

Given that the human life has changed by the broad industrial, social and cultural changes, a large number of people are not able to balance between various external stimuli and their inner opposing forces and they have been troubled in the process of harmonious and comprehensive development, which is the main goal of human excellence (Rones and Hoagwood, 2000). Obviously, children are more exposed to the main inner and social damages due to inexperience and lack of the knowledge of obstructive, facilitating and reforming skills. The learners, who do not have the skills to cope with stressful situations, will be somewhat subdued by them and thus, prone to neurosis, emotional disorder, depression, anxiety and probably, drug use and anti-social behaviors (Kordnoghi and Pashaasharifi, 2005). Educational sciences experts, in their studies on behavioral disorders and deformities, have concluded that many disorders and damages are grounded in the disabilities of the individuals in analyzing themselves and their situation correctly, lack of control and personal capability in dealing with difficult situations and lack of readiness in solving the problems of life in the right way, so, due to the increasing changes and complexities of the society and the development of social relations, it seems necessary to prepare people, especially the young generation, to handle the difficult situation. Educational sciences psychologist and experts have begun to educate the life skills in schools throughout the world to prevent mental disorders and social ills (Tareman, 2008). With the development of humanities and behavioral sciences, training programs were considered as a branch of behavioral science in education programs. Nowadays, training programs of schools has been known as a helping profession to help students that learning should be addressed in addition to (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). Given the important role of training programs and curriculum in providing the life skills, teaching life skills in an effective way to develop a healthy personality of learners, it indicates the close relationship between the training programs and the promotion of the students' life skills. Teaching life skills is an attempt which individuals are encouraged to apply their creativity and find effective ways to resolve the conflicts and problems of life spontaneously (Kordnoghi and Pashaasharifi, 2005). Of course, training activities are beyond the holding a series of competitions and setting up the choir and theater or even holding congregational prayers and morning ceremonies. Considering training programs just as above affairs is a minimal look to them (Webster-Stratton et al., 2008). Training programs and activities should be in all curriculum and are not limited to one or more specific issues. Improving training programs and planning correctly, principally

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and purposefully to boost students' talents and abilities during leisure time is the most important pillar of the education system (Greenberg et al., 2003). Improving the training programs of students at this age by looking at their behavioral problems is necessary. Neglecting any kind of training programs of students will lead to irreparable damage to the future of the society (Good, 1979). Necessity of training programs in teaching life skills would be known when we know that it promotes the socio-psychic abilities and helps an individual to deal with the conflicts of life effectively and also helps him/her to relate to society, culture and his/her environment positively and adaptively, so, practicing life skills leads to strengthening or changing the attitudes, values and behavior and as its result, with the emergence of positive and healthy behaviors, many problems will be preventable. Therefore, it seems necessary to help children by developing required skills for good life, creating or increasing their confidence in dealing with problems and also helping them in growing and developing emotions and required life skills for successful adaptation to social environment and having good life (Napoli et al., 2005). So far, no studies have been conducted on the impact of training programs on students' life skills but some studies have investigated the impact of life skills. Sallis et al. (1997), in their study entitled "the effectiveness of teaching life skills on the increase of the self-esteem of students with visual impairment, in Sabzevar City", which conducted by quasi-experiment and pre-test and post-test methods, concluded that one of the factor of promoting the self-esteem of the students with visual impairment is training life skills and also showed that the self-esteem of the students with visual impairment improve with training life skills. Meiklejohn et al. (2012), in the study entitled "the impact of training programs on personal and social behaviors of the students in fifth grade of elementary schools in Bojnord City" which was done by quasi-experiment method with experiment and control groups, concluded that training programs impact on the personal and social behavior of the student significantly and also improve the personal and social behaviors. (Olweus and Limber, 2010), in the study entitled "the impact of training life skills on self-esteem and problem solving of the students in fifth grade of elementary school", concluded that there is a significant relationship between the life skills and students' self-esteem and problem solving and also the life skills improve the self-esteem of the students. (Napoli et al., 2005), in the study entitled "the impact of training the skill of problem solving on the self-efficacy of the students", concluded that the self-efficacy of the students who got the training of the skill of problem solving is more than the self-efficacy of the students who did not get and also, the self-efficacy of the students have an appropriate stability overtime. Since, no studies have been done on the impact of training programs on the elementary school students' life skills in Iran and also in the province of North Khorasan and given that a significant part of the formal programs of education system in the world is dedicated to the training life skills and the studies have shown that every year, academic failure has increased and also the quality of education has been threatened and many of the students are exposed to anxiety and also some of them suffer from mental ills and consequently inability of solving problems and trapping in drug abuse, committing suicide sentiment, social abnormalities, inability of doing basic life skills, increasing social damages and given that the ministry of education has been not partially successful in preparing the elementary school students to have a healthy and conformist life due to the reasons such as external factors, the importance and necessity of training programs and its impact on life skills is obvious, so, the impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City is studied in this research. The goal of this research is to study the impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools in academic year of 2014-2015 in Raz and Jargalan City. According to Saatchi's Life Skill Inventory, life skills includes 5 skills, so, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Studying the impact of training programs on the skill of decision-making of elementary school students
2. Studying the impact of training programs on the skill of empathy of elementary school students
3. Studying the impact of training programs on the skill of creative thinking of elementary school students
4. Studying the impact of training programs on the skill of problem solving of elementary school students
5. Studying the impact of training programs on the skill of self-esteem of elementary school students.

2. Materials and methods

Since Raz and Jargalan education department can use the results of this study, this study is applied research. It is also descriptive research because it describes the relationships among the variables of current situation. The quasi-experiment, pre-test and post-test methods were used to do it. Its population is all the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City which includes 7000 students. The sampling method is random stratified sampling. According to Cochran, the sample size is 360 students that the questionnaires were distributed among them. Sampling was done without the knowledge of the history of the students, 180 students as an experimental group and 180 students as a control group were studied. The data was gathered by Saatchi's Life Skill Inventory which designed based on Likert scale. In this research, 5 life skills of decision-making, empathy, creative thinking, problem solving and self-esteem were studied and 6 questions were asked for each skill and totally, 30 questions were asked. The reliability of the questionnaire was estimated by Cronbach's alpha that its results are as follows:

Table 1. The Cronbach's alpha of the subscales or hypotheses

No.	Subscale or hypothesis	Cronbach's alpha
1	Decision-making skills	84%
2	Empathy skills	79%
3	Creative thinking skills	78%
4	Problem solving skills	81%
5	Self-esteem skills	83%
6	Life skill inventory	84%

3. Discussion and results

In this research, the impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools was studied, so, our sample (360 students) was divided to two groups of experimental group (180 students) and control group (180 students). First, both groups did pre-test and the mean and standard deviation was estimated for both groups, then, the training programs were held for the experimental group during the 4 weeks (according to table 2), finally, both groups did the post-test. These programs were held for experimental group 3 times per week during 4 weeks.

Table 2. Training programs

	The workshops of Quran, family and prayer
1 st week	The workshops of living with Quran and family, Quranic school, education of prayer, imitation and authority of marāji, religious discourses, occasions, messianism, admirers and negotiations, Nahjolbalaghe contests, linking mosque, school and home were held with the aims of enhance the cognitive capabilities of the teachings of the Quran and Ahl al-Bayt (AS), promote the educative and religious level of the audiences to carry out their duties ideally, strengthen the familiarity with Quran and family, develop the Quranic culture and literacy, memorize the important and applied verses of Quran and hadith gradually. Promoting the good tradition of mourning on Ahl al-Bayt (AS)- reinforcing the believe and behavioral vigor of the students- encouraging the talented students to learn the teachings of Quran and use them in their personal and social life- institutionalizing the verses of Quran among the students and making them applied in personal and social daily life, teaching the basics of prayer, including Wudu, Tayammum, the location and clothes of worshiper
	The workshops of educative affairs and consultation
2 nd week	The workshops of in line with the stable family- Consulting services- Mental health- week of Islamic training - Improving professional skills- Pure life- Top educational experiences- Career guide of the students- offering consulting cores liaisons in elementary schools and educational catalogues were held with the aims of producing upper works on education and publishing the research, increasing the efficiency of educational and cultural forces of the schools, eliminating the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of schools in soft war, integrating the education and training in programs and activities, developing, deepening and learning the upbringing affair in schools, guiding the effectiveness of lectures and shaping cultural currents, answering to the request of meeting organizers in education department, introducing the position of educational services to the community, describing all-round development of the students, informing the parents about their children's behavior and educational activities quantitatively and qualitatively, develop the public awareness of how to live sustainably, providing consulting services to all teachers, identifying the students in need of consulting timely, creating positive changes in knowledge, attitude and behavior of the students
	Cultural and artistic workshops
3 rd week	The workshops of religious and tourism caravans, life style, promotion of the culture of hijab and chastity, students councils, artistic and cultural contests, communal anthem, reading, happy school, beginning ceremony, productivity of cultural and educational centers and educational experiences of the students were held with the below aims: strengthening the spirit of jihad, forgiveness and altruism among the students, improving the leisure time of the students in summer, strengthening the accountability and protection of educational facilities among the students, expressing the culture and values of the Holy Defense, understanding the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom, verifying intellectual impairment, behavioral and moral damage on the targeted community by enemies, familiarizing the students with personal and social life skills, institutionalizing the debate of hijab and chastity in people internally, Clarifying the role of hijab and chastity in protecting the health and safety of social communication, responding to the students' cultural, ideological, political, social , ... questions, benefitting from the enormous potential of student forces and their voluntary participation in the optimal implementation of educational activities of the schools, training the responsibility in the various scientific, cultural and educational areas, creating active and healthy educational competition among the students, enrich the students' leisure time for their all-round personality development, promoting the students' religious, scientific, social knowledge and insight of vocational and artistic skills, development and deepening of the culture of thinking and research in student community, exchanging ideas and promoting students' visual and artistic literacy, strengthening the students' spirits of joy and happiness and mobility in accordance with Islamic values, learning the students to work together, the active participation of students in social fields, using art language, providing required conditions to increase the per capita of useful studying in educational settings, growing the needed capabilities to study the books of child and teenage writers, building student subjective libraries in schools, developing basic skills of the students in specialized fields through complementary educational activities, foster and strengthen the spirit of cooperation, self-esteem and solidarity among the students to achieve common goals, standardizing the training settings with the needs of students, strengthening the hope, initiative and creativity in the students, promoting and institutionalizing program-orientation in extracurricular activities.
	The workshop of student organization
4 th week	The workshops of pioneers and talented students, student journal, commemoration of 13 th Oct, charity celebration, student I'tikaf, student parliament were held with the below aims : organizing the cultural affairs of the school with the capacity of student organizations, providing the conditions for cultural- social cooperation of the students, creating easy network between the students and parents, developing the culture of studying, appreciating the students and explaining their real positions, explaining the positions of the science and science learning among the students, providing the conditions for epic training of adolescents and young adults, practical struggle with global arrogance and renewing the allegiance to the Imam and the great martyrs of the Islamic Iran, promoting and operating the charity culture among the students, reviving the Islamic tradition to help the needy, proving the conditions for refinement, vaccinating the teens against the cultural attacks of the enemies, providing the conditions for social, political and management training of the students based on the philosophy of Islamic education, using the students' view in reforming the laws and regulations and plans and programs related to them, familiarizing the students with domestic and foreign social, political and economic issues, promoting the culture of dialogue and consultation among the students

To examine the questions and report the results obtained from the answers, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used to make decision according to the test's results and normal or non-normal distribution of data.

Table 3. Examining the normality of the data by using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test

Variable	Indicators	Kolmogorov–Smirnov statistics Z	P
Decision-making skills		3.657	0.001
Empathy skills		3.056	0.001
Creative thinking skills		2.991	0.001
Problem solving skills		2.588	0.001
Self-esteem skills		2.672	0.001

According to table3, the significance level of all variables are less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) and it shows the normal distribution of the data. So, according to the results of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, non-normality of the data is rejected and non-parametric tests such as T-test can be used to analyze the data.

Table4 shows the mean and standard deviation of the variables of life skills.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the studied group in pre-test and post-test

Variable	Group	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Life skills	Experiment	35.60	4.07	47.80	3.77
	Control	36.35	4.70	36.60	5.13
Decision-making skills	Experiment	17.65	2.43	19.85	1.66
	Control	16.75	2.86	16.40	2.28
Empathy skills	Experiment	11.45	4.04	14.40	2.70
	Control	11.25	3.56	11.35	3.37
Creative thinking skills	Experiment	6.15	1.26	14.40	1.59
	Control	7.30	1.52	6.40	2.23
Problem solving skills	Experiment	10.12	3.33	14.23	3.42
	Control	10.01	3.78	13.89	4.31
Self-esteem skills	Experiment	13.82	4.29	14.23	3.42
	Control	13.34	4.91	13.89	4.31

Table 4 shows the mean of the total scores of life skills and its subscales in pre-test and post-test for both experimental and control groups. The results show that in experimental group, the mean of total scores of life skills and the skills of decision-making, empathy, creative thinking, problem solving and self-esteem have improved after holding training programs.

The results of covariance analysis to compare the statistics of the experimental group in pre-test with the statistics of it in post-test, are shown in table 5.

Table 5. The results of covariance analysis

Variable	Sources of influence	df	SS	MS	F	Significance level
Life skills	Pre-test	1	614.108	614.108	144.273	0.001
	Experimental group	1	560.407	560.407	1341.658	
Decision-making skills	Pre-test	1	65.880	65.880	28.520	0.001
	Experimental group	1	154.999	154.999	67.099	
Empathy skills	Pre-test	1	322.349	322.349	361.405	0.001
	Experimental group	1	110.674	110.674	124.084	
Creative thinking skills	Pre-test	1	5.035	5.035	6.095	0.001
	Experimental group	1	4.182	4.182	5.062	
Problem solving skills	Pre-test	1	5.035	5.035	6.095	0.001
	Experimental group	1	4.182	4.182	5.062	
Self-esteem skills	Pre-test	1	5.035	5.035	6.095	0.001
	Experimental group	1	4.182	4.182	5.062	

the increase of students' life skills, it can be concluded that training programs effect on the overall increase of students' life skills ($p < 0.001$) and in the subscales of decision-making, empathy, creative thinking, problem solving and self-esteem skills lead to the improvement of life skills in experimental group ($p < 0.001$, $p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.030$, respectively).

3.1 Hypothesis testing

3.1.1 Main hypothesis testing

H_0 : Teaching training programs has no impact on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City.

H_1 : Teaching training programs has an impact on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City.

The questions 1 to 30 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test. The results of it are shown in table 6.

Table 6. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of life skills

Statistical indicators	mean	Standard	T-test	df	Significance level
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Variable		deviation			
Control group	74.87	19.91	3.901	319	0.004
Experimental group	84.43	21.7			

As can be seen in table6, t is equal to 3.901 and its significance level is 0.004. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, teaching training programs has an impact on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City.

3.1.2 First subsidiary hypothesis testing

H₀: Teaching training programs has no impact on the decision-making skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

H₁: Teaching training programs has an impact on the decision-making skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

The questions 1 to 6 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test.

Table 7. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of decision-making skill

Statistical indicators Variable	mean	Standard deviation	T-test	df	Significance level
Control group	26.5	28.83	2.102	319	0.003
Experimental group	26.2	28.99			

As can be seen in table7, t is equal to 2.102 and its significance level is 0.003. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, teaching training programs has an impact on the decision-making skill of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

3.1.3 Second subsidiary hypothesis testing

H₀: Teaching training programs has no impact on the empathy skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

H₁: Teaching training programs has an impact on the empathy skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

The questions 7 to 12 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test.

Table 8. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of empathy skill

Statistical indicators Variable	mean	Standard deviation	T-test	df	Significance level
Control group	31.82	34.03	3.132	319	0.004
Experimental group	32.13	32.43			

As can be seen in table8, t is equal to 3.132 and its significance level is 0.004. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, teaching training programs has an impact on the empathy skill of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

3.1.4 Third subsidiary hypothesis testing

H₀: Teaching training programs has no impact on the creative thinking skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

H₁: Teaching training programs has an impact on the creative thinking skill of elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

The questions 13 to 18 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test.

Table 9. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of creative thinking skill

Statistical indicators Variable	mean	Standard deviation	T-test	df	Significance level
Control group	25.5	26.46	2.208	319	0.003
Experimental group	25.2	26.77			

As can be seen in table9, t is equal to 2.208 and its significance level is 0.003. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, teaching training programs has an impact on the creative thinking skill of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

3.1.5 Forth subsidiary hypothesis testing

There is a relationship between the training programs and the creativity skills of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

The questions 19 to 24 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test.

Table 10. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of problem solving skill

Statistical indicators Variable	mean	Standard deviation	T-test	df	Significance level
Control group	24.37	27.82	2.679	319	0.002

Experimental group	24.84	27.94			
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As can be seen in table 10, t is equal to 2.769 and its significance level is 0.002. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, there is a relationship between the training programs and the creativity skills of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

3.1.6 Fifth subsidiary hypothesis testing

The fifth hypothesis is investigated the relationship between the training programs and self-esteem skill of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City. This hypothesis is converted to the statistical hypothesis of H_1 (represents the claim) and H_0 (represents the opposite claim).

The questions 25 to 30 were used to test this hypothesis, this hypothesis was tested by T-test.

Table 11. The means of experimental and control groups in terms of self-esteem skill

Statistical indicators Variable	mean	Standard deviation	T-test	df	Significance level
Control group	31.89	35.92	3.009	319	0.001
Experimental group	34.63	36.06			

As can be seen in table 11, t is equal to 3.009 and its significance level is 0.001. Therefore, based on the results, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and control group and the hypothesis is accepted. In the other words, there is a relationship between the training programs and the self-esteem skill of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City.

4. Conclusion

According to the findings and research, it can be concluded that mastery of each skill depends on learning other skills and every skill is the supplement of another skill, so, the training programs of life skills is a transnational and global necessity that at the national and international levels, the necessity of paying special attention to it has a strong logic. Obviously, to achieve a healthy, efficient and effective generation, the students should have an adequate social growth, mental health and influence in addition to academic skills after graduation. Thus, due to the importance of life skills in all aspects of human life, it is obvious that it is necessary for all people in all situations to know them and apply their basic principles to create healthy, useful and evolving life. The aim of this research was to study the impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools of Raz and Jargalan City. The results showed that the training programs have an impact on improving the life skills of the elementary school students of Raz and Jargalan City. The results of this study was consistent with previous studies. Researches showed that teaching the life skills, including the skill of problem solving and effective communication increases the adolescent's ability of problem solving and the effective use of social support. An intervention program was used, including teaching anger management, empathy and social skills, to reduce the violence in boy teens who had a history of violence in the schools and showed that such intervention can reduce the behavioral problems. Zahrabi Asl (2006) studied the impact of teaching life skills on the conflict between male students and concluded that teaching life skills has an impact on reducing the conflict between the students and their parents and also, leads to the increase of the amount of reasoning and decrease of the verbal and physical aggression. With regard to the above, it can be concluded that education ministry is an institution which provides the conditions and elements to actualize and unlock all of the human potential and push him towards the desired goals by thought-out programs. In last three decades, implementing the training programs in education, whether as a mission or as an organizational structure, has been discussed and criticized and these questions have been always asked that what are the proper strategies and solutions to fulfill the training mission of education? And what changes can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of it? And what are the appropriate action patterns for managing and planning this issue? In the present era, enriching training programs for teenager and youth students seem necessary. Neglecting training programs will lead to irreparable damage to the future of the community and with respect to this issue that today, the rapid socio-cultural changes, family structure change, extensive and complex network of human relations and diversity, expansion and flux of information resources cause the humans to face with many challenges, stresses and pressures that they need psycho-social skills to deal with them effectively and since the formal and informal training programs and curricula of the students, especially the training programs of the schools, provide appropriate opportunity to teach different life skills to the students due to their special features and also with regard to the results of different research that showed the positive effects of life skills on personal and social characteristics and that the life skills can be learned and putting these life skills in standard educational programs of the school and teaching them seems necessary such as other educational skills, this research studied the impact of training programs on the students' life skills in elementary schools in academic year of 2014-2015 of Raz and Jargalan City and based on its result, following suggestions are offered:

- Given that many elementary students lean on their emotional and immediate decisions in their educational and social activities, it is suggested that training programs are considered important to promote rational decision-making.
- Develop cultural centers with new scientific, literary, religious, ... programs as the places for finding the talents and emerging the creativity of the elementary school students and preventing repetitive and boring programs that just fill their leisure times.
- One of the most important factors in the elementary school students; life skills is the prevailing emotional atmosphere in the family and school. It is better that emotional atmosphere, that is a major component of the individual psychology theory of Adler, will be evaluated in future research.

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