

The Effectiveness of School-Oriented Behavioral Intervention Programs (Psychosocial Training) on Students' Behavioral Problems

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Behavioral problems lead to various personal and social problems. Children diagnosed with these problems cause various issues for their families, schools and societies. This research was carried out to study the effectiveness of school-oriented behavioral programs (psychosocial training) on students' behavioral problems. **Methodology:** This research is a field study. The statistical population for this research included all 800 students of non-government elementary schools in Ardabil County during 2012-2013 school year. Convenience sampling was used as sampling method. The sample size was 60 and they were divided into 2 groups (training 30 individuals and control 30 individuals). **Results:** The sample size was 60 and they were divided into 2 groups (training 30 individuals and control 30 individuals). The students were asked to fill out children behavioral problems questionnaire, pretest-posttest Coppersmith self-esteem questionnaire. The data was analyzed via SPSS software and MANOVA. Research findings suggest that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychological training) had a significant effect on increasing students' self-esteem and decreasing behavioral problems. **Conclusion:** ($p < 0.01$) Hence, it could be claimed that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychological training) has a significant role in increasing students' self-esteem and decreasing their behavioral problems and this intervention should be included in schools' extra-curricular classes.

1. Introduction

Socialization is a process in which norms, skills, motivations, attitudes and behaviors of an individual are formed so that their current or future role in the society is considered proper and desirable.

In this process, acquisition and application of social skills and method of communication and interaction with others are among the main components if social growth, especially in children and adolescents. According to the definition, social skills refer to the taught skills accepted by the society, the behaviors with which the individual could establish interactions with others that lead to positive responses and avoid negative responses (Kartlej & Milbern, 1993).

Accordingly, social behavior impacts all aspects of children and adolescents' lives and affect their further psychological health, adaptation and happiness. The capabilities of the individual based on coping with others and preforming desirable social behaviors indicate their popularity rate among their peers and also, among teachers, parents and other adults. The individual capability in social skills is directly related to the social growth of the individual, and the quality and quantity of the desirable social behaviors they display.

Behavioral-emotional problems refer to the conditions in which the emotional and behavioral responses of the individual is different from cultural, age and ethnical norms, so that they have negative impact on the individual performance, self-care, social relations, personal adaptability, and adaptability in workplace. There are various factors impacting behavioral problems in children and adolescents, such as nature, genes, family environment and society, etc. Some researchers have divided behavioral disorders into two large categories. Internalizing behavior disorders which include depression and anxiety

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that deal with the internal world of the individual and accompany psychological and emotional conflicts and externalizing behavior disorders which include case that are related to the individual problems with others.

On the one hand, the majority of children and adolescents diagnosed with behavioral problems have negative feelings and have bad behaviors with others. In most cases, teachers and classmates reject them. This leads to a decrease in their self-esteem. On the other hand, lack of social skills in these children increase their problems. As believed, social skills are capabilities which enable the individual to perform skillfully in social situations. Social skills are generally taught at home. However, not all children learn them, especially children who are diagnosed with behavioral problems. Children who do not learn social skills face problems in preserving their relationships with adults and they are unceasingly rejected by their friends and this issue endangers their psychological health. Additionally, these children confront issues at school. During a research, it showed that children with behavioral and emotional problems (with low social skills) had problems with both teachers and students at school. The majority of the students' behavioral problems are not created simply and they are not simply solvable, either. Solving students' behavioral problems is possible in school, if the school is determined to solve the problems and develop psychological health. Hence, in addition to benefiting from specific cultural policies, identification and collection of facilities and tools could be carried out.

In fact, these skills include the process of transforming messages, beliefs, opinions, feelings, deeds and reactions between the source individual (sender of the message, for instance school) and the receiving individual (receiver of the message, for instance student). This process is face-to-face, dynamic, targeted and collaborative, and it is carried out in order to reach an exchange of experiences which is mutually understandable.

Proper use of the school performance power, attracting the potentials of the parents, using references and preparing tools could be somehow useful.

While planning school for solving students' behavioral problems, the followings should be followed:

- Guidance program
- Prevention program
- Improvement program

In a research entitled "School-Oriented Behavioral Intervention Programs (Psychological Training) on Students with Communicative and Social Skills", it showed that this interventional program has a great impact on decreasing the behavioral problems, increasing self-esteem and self-perception in students.

Also, in a research entitled "A Study on the Impact of School-Oriented Intervention on Behavioral Problems (Aggression and Threatening)" which was carried out on 462, Jenson & Dieterich (2007) showed that this intervention had a considerable impact on decreasing the behavioral problems (aggression and threatening). Considering the aforementioned, this research was carried out in accordance with the abovementioned studies. Therefore, the main research question in this study is: Does school-oriented intervention program (psychosocial training) impact on students' behavioral problems.

In a research entitled "A Study on the Parents' Teachings on Decreasing the Children's Behavioral Problems", it showed that parents' teachings have a positive significant impact on decreasing the children's behavioral problems.

In a study entitled "The Effectiveness of Problem-Solving Skills Training (from School-Oriented Intervention Training Programs) on the Decrease of Children's Behavioral Problems in Isfahan County", Karimi (2007) showed that problem-solving skills training had a considerable impact in increasing children's behavioral problems.

In a research, Naderi et al. (2007) studied the impact of social skills group training on personal-social adaptation, aggression and self-esteem among female students at risk. Results suggested that social skills training leads to an increase in personal-social adaptation, decrease in aggression and increase in assertiveness among students.

In a study entitled "The Relation between Social Skills and Self-Efficacy and Tendency towards Drug Abuse among Adolescents", Abolqasemi et al. (2009) showed that there is a relationship between social skills and self-efficacy and tendency towards drug abuse among adolescents. The scores mean of social skills is 132.15, while the average mean of self-efficacy is 81.85 and tendency towards drug abuse is 21.30. Social skills 0.57 and self-efficacy have a correlation with the tendency towards drug abuse.

In a study entitled "The Effect of School-Oriented Intervention based on Social-Cognitive Theory on Fruits and Vegetables Consumption among Junior High School Students in Tehran County", Abbasian (2011) showed that school-oriented intervention had a considerable impact on increase of fruits and vegetables consumption among students.

In a study, the impact of social skills on decreasing behavioral disorders in students is studied. Research results showed that social skills trainings had impacted on decreasing behavioral problems and also, in a 2-month follow-up in which teachers were asked about the change in trained children behaviors, the results showed that this method was effective and the problems were decreased in the follow-up.

In a study, Gresham et al. (2006), recommended social skills (anger, assertiveness, self-esteem, making friends, and effective communication) as the substitute behaviors for students at risk. They taught these skills to the aggressive children and adolescents who had emotional behavior disorders in 12 weeks. These skills included anger, friend making, assertiveness, self-esteem, and effective communication. And they finally came to this conclusion that social skills training had positive impact on the aforementioned variables.

In their study, Dodge and Bicart taught three social skills; self-esteem, self-control methods and making friends in pre-school children. They believe that children who are taught self-esteem have a tendency towards knowledge and asking questions and they know how to control their emotions. Participants had a desirable set of skills in interacting with others after the trainings finished.

Also, the impact of school-oriented intervention on students' behavioral problems (aggressive behavior in class) in a controlled situation was studied. This intervention included puppets. The derived results suggested that this intervention had generally decreased aggression. However, this intervention was not different in logical and physical aggression.

In their study entitled "A Comparison between Genders in Behavioral Problems (Aggression and Crime) in Junior High School", Lynne et al. (2007) showed that aggressive and criminal acts was significantly lower in females, comparing to males.

In a research, they studied the impact of school-oriented intervention on behavioral problems (threatening and sacrificing other students) in 462 students. Results suggested that this interventional program had a significant impact on decreasing these behavioral problems. Also, the impact of this intervention was higher on the behavior of sacrificing other students, comparing to the threatening.

In a study entitled “A Study on the Impacts of School-Oriented Intervention in Prevention of Behavioral Problems (Smoking) among the Adolescents in North Korea”, it showed that school-oriented intervention had a significant impact on the decrease of smoking among students.

In a research, Muskett (2008) studied the effect of intervention of social skills training in a group of students with behavioral and emotional issues. In this research, the intervention of social skills training included discussion, games, direct directions, role play and homework. Results showed that the students understood that the intervention had increased their social skills.

In a research on a sample of 12 elementary school students divided into two groups of emotional problems and behavioral problems, Muskett (2008) studied the impact of social skills training (from the training school-oriented intervention programs) intervention and showed that social skills training was effective in decreasing behavioral and emotional problems in students.

In a research, Botvin et al. (2003) studied the impact of school-oriented intervention and social skills trainings in school-oriented method on primary prevention of alcohol abuse (from behavioral problems complications) in students, and showed that school-oriented intervention had led to a decrease in alcohol abuse among students.

2. Materials and methods

The research method in this study is experimental which is carried out in the form of pretest-posttest with a control group. In this research, school-oriented behavioral intervention program (psychosocial training) was the independent variable and behavioral problems was the dependent variable.

2.1 Statistical Population

The statistical population in this research included all 800 students of non-government elementary schools in Ardabil County.

2.2 Sampling Method

Convenience sampling was used as the sampling method in this research, so that in the first stage, students having behavioral problems with low social skills were identified through questionnaire, teachers' and parents' opinions and in the second stage, 60 students were chosen and categorized in two groups (training 30 individuals and control 30 individuals). A research method is used and for causal-comparative studies, 15 individuals in each group is enough, but in order to increase the external validity of the study, 30 individuals were chosen.

2.3 Data Collection

Questionnaire was used to collect data in this research, so that initially, by obtaining necessary permits, the researchers visited non-government elementary schools (five schools) in Ardabil County and through teachers' opinions, students with low social skills were identified. Subsequently, the required interviews were carried out and the statistical sample was chosen and categorized into two groups (one training group with intervention and one control group), randomly. Both groups went through pretest and the training group went through intervention and the control group did not get any training. Ultimately, after the end of training sessions, both groups went through posttest and the collected data was analyzed by SPSS.

2.4 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instruments in this research is a questionnaire which includes:

-Child Behavior Checklist

This checklist was invented by Achenbach for age group of 6-18 years. This scale is filled out by the parents, or guardians, or caregivers of anyone who knows them completely. Also, this scale assesses eight categories of behavioral disorders. Behavioral disorders including: withdraw/depressed, anxious/depressed, somatic complaints, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, aggressive behavior, and rule-breaking behaviors are studied. This questionnaire includes 112 items which are scored in three options (0, 1, 2). Cronbach's alpha for this list is reported to be 0.88. (Abolqasemi et al., 2009)

-Coopersmith Self-Esteem Questionnaire

Coopersmith prepared his self-esteem questionnaire based on a revision on Rogers and Dimond's scale. This scale includes 58 items among which 8 items are lie-detectors. In total, 50 items of the questionnaire are divided into 4 subscales of general self-esteem, social self-esteem (peers), family self-esteem (parents) and educational self-esteem (school). The scoring method in this test is binary and it is answered by yes or no by the students and it is implemented either individually or in groups. This test was carried out in group. 18 items of the test are scored reversely. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire including the scores of the lie detector subscale was 0.8581, and it was 0.8562 when lie detector scores are considered. This was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. Coopersmith reported retest coefficients as 0.88 after 5 weeks and 0.70 after three years.

In his studies, Adib (1998) calculated the reliability coefficient as 0.78 for this test. Also, the validity coefficient of the text was calculated as 0.86.

-Behavioral Intervention Program (Psychosocial Training)

School-oriented includes training students in schools so that they can use them in increasing their social skills and these skills were carried out in 6 topics and in 8 75-minute sessions based on the following topics in three levels:

2.5 Curriculum

- 1.Improving social skills
- 2.Building and increasing self-esteem
- 3.Developing problem-solving skills
- 4.Assertiveness training
- 5.Enhancing stress/coping skills
- 6.Prevention of mental health problems/problem behaviors.

Three levels (interventions at school level, interventions at class level and interventions at personal level)

a.Interventions at school level

1. Distributing questionnaire 2. Training personnel 3. Establishing a harmonized system during students' break

b.Intervention at class level

1. Holding regular classes to increase social skills 2. Holding regular classes to increase self-esteem

c.Intervention at personal level

1. Holding individual sessions with students who have low social skills 2. Holding individual sessions with students who have low self-esteem 3. Holding sessions with parents of the students who had problems

3. Discussion and results

3.1 Statistical Analysis

The data is initially analyzed descriptively which includes mean, standard deviation, etc. and in the second part, to test the research hypotheses, MANOVA and SPSS software were used.

3.2 Descriptive Findings

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Children's Self-Esteem among Studied Groups

Group	Stage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control	Pretest	21.40	2.34
	Posttest	25.05	4.21
	Total	23.2	3.83
Experiment	Pretest	18.60	2.54
	Posttest	35.40	4.80
	Total	27.00	9.31

According to Table 1, the mean of self-esteem in pretest of the control group is 21.40 and it has increased to 25.05 in posttest. The mean of the experiment group pretest is 18.60 which has increased to 35.40 after the school-oriented behavioral intervention program.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Behavioral Problems among Studied Groups

Group	Stage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Control	Pretest	149.30	7.95
	Posttest	132.10	3.86
	Total	140.71	10.8
Experiment	Pretest	163.85	11.6
	Posttest	12.85	4.22
	Total	142.35	23.4

According to Table 2, the mean of behavioral problems in pretest of the control group is 149.30 and it has increased to 132.10 in posttest. The mean of the experiment group pretest is 163.85 which has increased to 120.85 after the school-oriented behavioral intervention program.

3.3 Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis: School-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had impacts on increasing students' self-esteem.

Table 3. Levene's Test Results

F	Degree of Freedom 1	Degree of Freedom 2	Sig. Level
0.154	3	76	0.927

According to the results in Table 3, Levene's test shows that the variances are equal.

Table 4. MANOVA Results for Comparing the Effectiveness of Behavioral Intervention (Psychosocial Training) on Increasing Self-Esteem

Changes Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level	Eta-Squared
Model	50451.012	1	50451.012	3821.47	0.000	0.981
Group	285.013	1	285.013	21.58	0.000	0.221
Pretest-Posttest	2091.013	1	2091.013	158.38	0.000	0.676
Error	1003.350	76	13.202			
	4569.000	80				

According to Table 4 and considering $F = 65.49$ and also, considering the fact that the significance level of the test error for confidence level of 0.99 is lesser than 0.01, it could be claimed that the hypothesis is approved and the school-oriented behavioral intervention (psychosocial training) impacts the increase in students' self-esteem.

Hypothesis: School-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had impacts on decreasing students' behavioral problems.

Table 5. Levene's Test Results

F	Degree of Freedom 1	Degree of Freedom 2	Sig. Level
0.263	3	76	0.852

According to the results in Table 5, Levene's test shows that the variances are equal.

Table 6. MANOVA Results for Comparing the Effectiveness of Behavioral Intervention (Psychosocial Training) on Decreasing Behavioral Problems

Changes Source	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level	Eta-Squared
Model	160.2346.05	1	1602346.05	2774.620	0.000	0.997
Group	54.450	1	54.450	0.934	0.005	0.012
Pretest-Posttest	18120.200	1	18120.200	313.76	0.000	0.805
Group* Pretest-Posttest	3328.200	1	3328.200	57.630	0.000	0.431
Error	4389.100	67	57.715			
	162833.000	80				

According to Table 6 and considering $F = 57.63$ and also, considering the fact that the significance level of the test error for confidence level of 0.99 is lesser than 0.01, it could be claimed that the hypothesis is approved and the school-oriented behavioral intervention (psychosocial training) impacts the decrease in students' behavioral problems.

4. Conclusion

This research was carried out to study the effectiveness of school-oriented behavioral intervention program (psychosocial training) on students' behavioral problems. Findings suggest a significant impact of school-oriented behavioral intervention program (psychosocial training) on students' behavioral problems. Results from hypotheses analysis are as following:

The research hypothesis was that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had impacts on increasing students' self-esteem. Results suggest that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had significant impacts on students' self-esteem and had increased it; and this hypothesis was approved. ($p < 0.01$) Results from this research are in accordance with the findings of Naderi & Makvandi (2007). In a research, Naderi & Makvandi (2007) studied the effect of social skills group training on personal-social adaptation, aggression and self-esteem of female students at risk. Results showed that social skills training leads to an increase in personal-social adaptation, a decrease in aggression and increase in assertiveness in students.

In a study, Gresham et al. (2006), recommended social skills (anger, assertiveness, self-esteem, making friends, and effective communication) as the substitute behaviors for students at risk. They taught these skills to the aggressive children and adolescents who had emotional behavior disorders in 12 weeks. These skills included anger, friend making, assertiveness, self-esteem, and effective communication. And they finally came to this conclusion that social skills training had positive impact on the aforementioned variables. In their study, it taught three social skills; self-esteem, self-control methods and making friends in pre-school children. They believe that children who are taught self-esteem have a tendency towards knowledge and asking questions and they know how to control their emotions. Participants had a desirable set of skills in interacting with others after the trainings finished.

In order to explain this, it could be claimed that one of the school-oriented intervention programs (psychosocial training) is to create and increase self-esteem and also, one of the school-oriented intervention programs (psychosocial training) is to teach social skills. Many children with behavioral problems have a low social skills performance (Ebrahim-Zarandi, 2005) and social skills training could increase their interpersonal relationships and as a result, this led to increase in self-esteem in students, so that the researches show that children and adolescents who have a sense of competence have a higher self-esteem comparing to the children and adolescents who do not have this sense. They also have a better educational performance and they are more advanced in social skills and have a higher adaptability with their peers. Moreover, students' inappropriate behaviors take place in certain situations in classrooms and school interventional program lead to increase in their self-esteem through participation of students in regulating classes and improving communication skills.

The research hypothesis was that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had impacts on decreasing students' behavioral problems. Results suggest that school-oriented behavioral intervention programs (psychosocial training) had significant impacts on students' behavioral problems and had decreased it. ($p < 0.01$) And this hypothesis was approved. Results from this research are in accordance with the findings of Karimi (2007), Jenson & Dieterich (2007) and Muskett (2008).

Also, the impact of school-oriented intervention on students' behavioral problems (aggressive behavior in class) in a controlled situation is studied. This intervention included puppets. The derived results suggested that this intervention had generally decreased aggression. However, this intervention was not different in logical and physical aggression.

In a research on a sample of 12 elementary school students divided into two groups of emotional problems and behavioral problems, Muskett (2008) studied the impact of social skills training (from the training school-oriented intervention programs) intervention and showed that social skills training was effective in decreasing behavioral and emotional problems in students.

Rebecca carried out a research entitled "A Study on School-Oriented Behavioral Intervention Programs (Psychological Training) Effects on Behavioral Problems, Threatening and Low Social Skills". In this research, the interventional program included 6 components of: 1. improving social skills 2. building and increasing self-esteem 3. developing problem-solving skills 4. assertiveness training 5. enhancing stress/coping skills 6. prevention of mental health problems/problem behaviors and results showed that this behavioral intervention had a positive significant impact on all three research variables.

In order to explain this, it should be expressed that behavioral problems refer to the conditions in which the emotional and behavioral responses of the individual is different from cultural, age and ethnical norms, so that they have negative impact on the individual performance, social relations, personal adaptability, and based on their behavioral nature, these children have different psychological and educational needs. Therefore, since school-oriented training adjusts skills and capabilities of the individual with the various situations and conditions, and also the fact that students spend the majority of their time with family or at school, school-oriented interventions could decrease behavioral problems through involving students in structural change of homework and education through peers, etc. Results suggest that behavioral intervention (psychosocial training) has a significant impact on increasing self-esteem among students. Also, this intervention has a significant impact on decreasing behavioral problems.

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