The Effectiveness of Life Skills Training in Male Students’ Anger Control

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the effect of life skills training to primary sixth-grade students of 18 region of Tehran education. This is a semi-experimental research with pretest-posttest design and control group. The statistical population includes the primary sixth-grade students of region 18 of Tehran education who were sampled using multi steps random sampling method. Aggression questionnaire of Nelson et al (2000) is used to collect data. The research hypotheses regarding the effect of life skills training (emotional management) to students on their anger control is examined by univariate analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). Results of the test show that anger life skills training to students is effective in controlling primary sixth-grade male students’ anger and 57.5% of subjects’ anger control variance is explained by the independent variable, i.e., life skills training. Moreover, multivariate unilateral intergroup covariance analysis (MANCOVA) is used to measure the effect of life skills training on anger control components of the participants. The results reveal that the average score of students in failure, physical aggression, relationships with peers and relations with authorities is simultaneously different between the members of the control and life skills training groups.

Keywords: Life skills, Anger, Students.

Introduction

Nowadays, anger and aggression are risk factors that have attracted the attention of researchers. Literature review of anger in the last 60 years show that wrath experience whether in childhood or youth is associated with serious problems. Extreme anger exposes children and teenagers to the risk of rejection by peers that in turn may lead to poor adaptation in school, dropping out of education, difficulty with problem-solving skills and higher rates of references to psychiatric problems.

In the adolescent population, externalizing behavior leads to acceptance of teens in pervert groups. Anger is one of the most important and influential excitements in human life. Excitement frequent arousal may activate aggressive behavior and damage psychological adjustment and the individual’s health [1]. Anger and aggression are symptoms of conduct disorder in which the basic rights of others, main age-appropriate social and moral norms are violated [2].

Anger is a dangerous thrill because seeks to destroy or eliminate the thing or one whose mechanism is recognized as an obstacle. An increase in blood pressure and heart rate and physical irritation caused by anger may be dangerous for the person. If the wrath is not expressed and internalized, the hostility within the individual will increase and harm his performance in interpersonal and social positions, compatibility with others, goals achievement, family life and job opportunities [3].

However, one of the psychology applications in the today world is to use its principals to
find new ways of living and to prevent individual, family, social and occupational problems. Life skills training programs comprise psychology practices in different individuals and social fields which are held with the purpose of promoting physical and mental health and preventing mental, physical and social damage. These skills enhance the ability to deal effectively with living circumstances along with the today's stress and anxiety and to operate as a primary preventive agent.

Life skills are a set of abilities increasing the compatibility power and the positive and efficient behavior. As a result, a person becomes able to accept responsibilities related to his social role without damaging others and effectively face challenges and problems of everyday life [4-5] defines life skills as an approach based on changing or shaping behavior that consider balancing among three areas of knowledge, attitude and skills.

According to the mentioned issues, life skills are abilities that if someone creates them within himself, he can properly play his role in the community and deal adequately with daily demands, expectations and problems especially in relation to his relationships with others without damaging himself and others. In other words, life skills are the major and essential skills and techniques for a healthy and constructive life leading to compatibility with the environment and formation of positive and useful behaviors [6].

**Effective and Comprehensive Training of Life Skills**

Life skills training began by Gilbert Bitumen’s actions in Bitumen’s training program trained teenagers how to resist against temptation or suggestions for drug use. Buttoning aimed to develop a primary prevention program. Following these initial actions, the World Health Organization (WHO) in cooperation with UNICEF introduced the life skills training program as a primary comprehensive prevention plan and promotion of children and adolescents’ mental health [4]. Life skills training program consist of ten main skills: self-awareness, empathy, effective relations, problem solving, decision making, critical thinking, creative thinking and coping with stress.

The main objective of WHO in development of life skills plan in the field of mental health is to make the world different societies to expand and evaluate life skills training programs focused on the mental abilities growth such as problem solving, social adaptation, dealing with emotions, self-consciousness, children and adolescents’ stress control. Learning and practicing life skills reinforces or changes human's attitude, values and behavior and plenty of problems can be prevented through appearing positive and healthy behaviors quoted from, [7].

But, the anger as one of the natural excitements has a specific position among emotion components. Yet, due to the negative and destructive individual and social effects of anger, its control is of great importance. The purpose of anger control treatment and intervention is to reduce the emotional feelings, physiological arousal caused by anger and to increase individuals’ awareness of wrath, training practices and effective strategies in order to control it [8].

Nowadays, despite the profound changes occurred in modern societies’ lifestyle, unfortunately many of us still employ traditional and inefficient educational methods in facing adversity and difficulties of life. If during the education life adults’ anger works as a temporary solution to silence false and inappropriate behaviors, despite full awareness of the falsity of this parenting style, we still shout at children and with an inhumane treatment, mostly derived from instictual nature we are trying to silence so-called false behaviors of our children and even those around us. The reason for adopting such a manner making us more vulnerable is a question that ‘the lack of skills necessary to live” seems to be a relatively good answer to it.

Undoubtedly, the choice of efficient methods, effective social relationships, the ability to express feelings, the ability to control anger, to care others’ pain and suffering, the ability to communicate effectively through active listening, planning to prioritize the important affairs of life, decision making, problem solving and to have a critical and creative thinking towards whatever seen and heard require adoption of the following important steps:
Identification of efficient methods to deal with life crisis
Change behaviors learned before

Comprehensive education as the basic objective of life skills training is based on the below four axes:

Learning and Acquiring Information and Knowledge
This means that we realize education as a lifelong and continues phenomenon and we should always prepare ourselves to learn proper strategies for compatibility with the hardships of life and get ready to change, because otherwise we may stick to our previous false teachings and repeat them successively. In healthy families, the change that parents want to make in their children is created within themselves and this is not resulted unless with education, in its scientific and experimental form.

Learn to Apply
This means until we are unable to apply what we learned, we won't have any difference with the one without this knowledge. In the other words, the purpose of the education is to acquire information that the following relations are found among the three major aspects of the character, i.e., knowledge, attitude and behavior:

Our awareness level is broader than what appears in our behavior. For example, many people who smoke may be aware of smoking harms and injuries than non-smokers, but the fact is that the awareness hasn't changed to the behavior and also we always don't necessarily have positive or negative attitude toward what we know. For example, many of us may know that the Alps in Europe is always snow-covered during the year, but this knowledge does not lead to a positive or even negative attitude in us. Learning to apply what we know as the second objective of education is to convert the knowledge and information to behavior.

Learn to Live Better
This issue involves increased life quality and to exploit the facilities of the skill necessary for a better life, a wide range from eating manner and understanding of healthy and unhealthy food to useful programs for leisure as well as spending enough time with family. Fathers have been seen over and over that despite the hard effort and work for family life, have not a confident place in the hearts and emotions of family members. The reason for such a bitter and unfair truth can be sought in the lack of knowledge and inattention of such a father to have a high quality life as a family. For this purpose, in life skills training, an important headline of the course will be devoted to empathize and communicate effectively.

Learn to Live Together and Better
This concept is a bit broader than the previous one which is associated with the quality of communication in the area of social relationships and compatibility as well as the choice of healthy ways to deal with interpersonal problems and differences. In this area, the audience will be taught that "the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all" and to ensure such a valuable prerequisite "the old social relations" should be avoided and others' vote and choice should be respected to the extent that their selection and freedom not be prevented. Only by understanding the other's presence human rights are determined and criticism will not be considered as insult. [9]

Emotion Management Skill
Life is full of fluctuating and people should learn strategies for dealing with the ups and downs; they should learn how to express their anger or any negative feelings. Human emotions shouldn't be minimized or condemned or abandoned, but they should be respected, accepted and properly revealed.

Emotions are the agent of human adaptation to the environment enriching the life and its lack harms mental and body health. Emotions are a sign of our survival and are involved in all our decisions and behavior and if properly managed, they will link human beings and transform the life [10]

Those who are under the domination of emotions, often make a difficult situation worse than what actually it is. Our emotional experiences are tied with stored information and their retrieval. On the other hand, these emotional experiences simultaneously affect the thinking process (how we deal with information) and its content, judgments, and behaviors (our thinking and acting manner). Modern science has proven that the
emotional intelligence is the basis of the most important decisions, the most active and profitable organizations and the most satisfying and successful lives [11]. Emotional health motivates you to use your talents and more readily accept yours and others' mistakes. Emotional health intensifies enthusiasm, flexibility and endurance to meet challenges and changes and enhances the power to cope with problems and pressures.

What is Anger and How to Overcome It?

Anger is a natural human emotion that everyone experiences it in some way. Every situation defeating us creates a feeling of anger. The failure means not to achieve individual demands. As an agent prevents the individual to attain the goal and wishes, anger emerges. Physical factors (e.g., fatigue), restrictions (e.g., paralysis or disability after an accident), negligence (not being prepared for exam), others' behavior (unnecessarily astringency, humiliating and mocking) and cheated by others may cause anger [12].

If in checking the position, relationship, time and place you conclude that anger expression may not have positive consequences and even would make adverse effects, use the following techniques in order not to be affected by impacts of not expressing anger and to externalize your emotions:

- Express all your anger verbally in loneliness: put it into words whatever is in your heart
- Write down your thoughts and feelings on a paper and read aloud to yourself
- Exercise and walk.
- Drinking a glass of cold water reduces your excitation.
- Breathe deeply inhale and exhale. The body begins to secret adrenaline at the time of anger and anxiety that causes shallow rapid breathing and oxygen and carbon dioxide imbalance in the blood. If this imbalance is not corrected, the release of adrenaline will raise and eventually leads to more anger or stress. By breathing control and making a more regular, deeper and calm pattern, the impact of extra adrenaline in the blood is avoided and consequently we feel calm, control our temper and behave rationally.
- Relax your muscles. Muscle contraction is one of the primary symptoms of anger that stimulate the individual faster if it is high. Muscle tension is the important warning sign of aggression. With the release of individual muscles of the body - such as loosening the hands, feet and toes, etc. and their voluntary relaxation you can reduce your stress level and minimize the risk of aggression.

You shouldn't keep your anger in a long time, though, it is better not to argue at the time of anger. Talk to the other party about the subject of the dispute. Remember that feelings should be expressed. As stronger feelings, more need to express them. [12]

How We Deal with Aggressive People?

- First, make sure that you are not the real problematic agent. Note that don't exculpate yourself without reason. Don't ignore your role in creating the problem.
- Be always ready to cope with a new event or problem. If the aggressive person is your spouse or has a close relationship with you, for example, a close colleague, be careful of his aggression signs and tell him honestly.
- Tell him your true feeling when you face anger: "Do not continue because it makes me very sad."
- Note what times and for what reasons a person gets angry and when his anger will soar or he becomes aggressive?
- If you feel that the aggressive individual can't be modified, accept it. To soothe your feelings, pay more attention to other friends and communicate further with them, spend your time for favorite things or participate in social activities.
- When there is a good relationship between you and the aggressive person, make an appointment with him. Observing first signs of anger, end the argument, leave the situation and get away from each other.
- If the angry person disagreed with the appointment, run it by yourself; namely, observing first signs of anger, end the conversation and get away from him. [12]
Literature Review

Previous studies explain that life skill is an influential variable and has a direct, prominent and mostly significant relationship with various behavioral variables. Some research of the literature can be mentioned as the following:

Pourmohamadrezatajri, Abkenar and Ashoori [13] in a study titled as the effectiveness of life skills training in social self-empowerment of male students with dyscalculia in two experimental and control groups and MANOVA evidences showed a significant effect of the life skills training on social self-empowerment students with mathematics disorder.

Navayi [14] in a study titled as the effectiveness of life skills training in reducing risk factors of male junior high school students of Kaboodarahang city realized that to train life skills diminishes risk factors among the male students exposed to the risk in Kaboodarahang.

Arzandefar [15] in a research titled as the effectiveness of life skills training in increasing self-esteem of students with visual impairments found that students' self-esteem increases with training life skills.

Bateni [16] evaluated the effectiveness of emotion regulation skills training in quality of life and anxiety reduction among high school students in Ardabil. His findings suggest that to train emotion regulation skills is an impressive way to promote students' life quality and health.

In a group study, investigated anger control with the aim of providing guidance for 288 students to acquire aggressive behavior control skills in group activities in two experimental and control groups as pre/post-tests. He realized that experimental group members who were learning to control furiously feelings and behaviors at the end of group activities managed to express their anger rightly and thus the environment would be calmer than before.

Roohani and Noorisham [17] in a descriptive study demonstrated the effectiveness of behavioral impacts and excitation - anger and the way to manage it among teenagers. The research was conducted in all public schools in the state of Selangor in Malaysia and among 1162 (552 males and 610 females) teens of 14 - 16 years old. According to the results, almost all subjects have experienced anger. When angry, 7.1% of people beat each other while the 25.1% hit things and 27.8% resorted to verbal anger or profanity. More than 50% regretted but 44.7% appealed forgiveness. 64.5 % said they would appease themselves.

Moradi, E. et al [18] assessed the effectiveness of training management of anger, social skills and behavior problems in third and fourth grade students in Freya b. Results of multiple covariance pretest control showed that training the anger management was impressive among the subjects and in large amounts have improved behavioral problems, anxiety and fear in order to avoid their disobedience and defiance. In addition, the effectiveness of training social skills and anger management is significant. The results also revealed a significant negative correlation in the experimental group between behavioral problems and social skills, but the control group did not show such a correlation.

Yung and Sung 1[9] studied the difference and correlation of interpersonal relationship and purpose in life with college students' health depending upon their ability to manage anger. According to the results, no significant difference was observed in interpersonal relationship between control and experimental groups. Intimacy (p = 0.008) and understanding (p = 0.017) were much greater and transparency was much lower in the control group (p = 0.024). Purpose in life was much higher in the control group (p <0.001).

Significant correlation was not observed between anger management and interpersonal relationship and purpose in life. However, a significant positive correlation was observed between anger management and goal in life (r = 0.15, p = 0.017) and interpersonal relationship and purpose in life (r = 0.29, p <0.001). Conclusion: a training program for newcomers who can't control their anger can improve interpersonal relationship and purpose in life indicate that there is a direct and significant relation between life skills acquisition and mental health, social acceptability, career success, motivation and
legalism, self-esteem, self-confidence, educational accomplishment, self-confidence and responsibility [20].

Wenzel, investigated the effect of life skills training package in schools. Results indicated that life skills training have a positive impact on increased school bonds and decreased alcohol consumption. The package was assessed as a good and acceptable tool by educators and students.

has revealed that wide variety of emotion regulation strategies is meaningfully associated with reduced negative emotions and emotional events. These findings also show that focus on the subject of emotional regulation strategies raises the staff’s understanding of emotions management.

Lu, Wang, found that training life skills to male and female students leads to the increase of efficacy, decrease of risky behaviors, increase of the perceived pregnancy risk-taking, better perception of the sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS in the experimental groups of the research.

Considering the review of literature and the significant effect of life skills learning (emotion management) on diverse behavioral variables such as anger and regarding the fact that teenage period is the most important and sensitive period of a person, the current research particularly focus on primary sixth grade male students population to answer and test the question: how does life skills training (emotion management) help to control anger in primary sixth grade male students? In this regard, the below hypotheses are designed:

- Life skills training affects primary sixth grade male students' anger control.

- There is a significant difference between the effectiveness of life skills training and anger management components of primary sixth grade male students.

**Methods, Population and Sampling**

This is a quantitative study in terms of data collection nature, a practical research in terms of purpose and a semi experimental study in terms of method. This is also a pre/posttest research with control group in terms of design.

The population includes all primary sixth-grade students of region 18 of Tehran education. A sample of 30 subjects was selected using multi steps random sampling method so that in the first step two schools were randomly selected out of all the schools of region 18 of Tehran education, in the second step 4 classes were selected from the two schools, in the third step 60 students were selected from the four classes and in the fourth step, after implementation of anger questionnaire, 30 subjects with the highest score were selected out of the 60 students and finally in the fifth step, the subjects were divided into experiment and control groups. Then, following the implementation of the independent variable (emotion management training), both groups were retested.

**Instruments**

Standard aggression questionnaire of Nelson et al (2000) which contains 39 expressions and 4subscales (failure, physical aggression, peer relations and relations with the authorities). The questionnaire is scored with 4 options: "I do not pay attention = 1", "It bothers me =2", "I really get sad = 3", " I get angry = 4". 39 and 156 are the least and the highest score, respectively. Test validity was obtained through the assessment of the supervisor's comments and instructions. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire were implemented on 1604 students. Test-retest coefficient was obtained 0.65 to 0.75, internal consistency up to 0.86 and reliability of the four subscales were obtained as 0.93.

After selecting 30 participants whose scores were the highest in the questionnaire, they were randomly placed in two groups (control and test). Then, for ten sessions, the first group participated in training sessions on emotional management skills. Every session took 1 hour, holding 3 times a week. The control group received no intervention. After the end of the experiment, both groups were tested in order that the effectiveness of independent variable in dependent variable and groups’ comparison to be measured. In the following, some trained headlines are introduced. Two sources were utilized:

The book of life skills Hajar Piblification and the book about the management of anxiety,
anger and depression, Lane Clark, translated by Tehran Taylor Publishing

Findings

Table 1: Evaluation of ancova assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation source</th>
<th>Squares sum</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Squares average</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest effect</td>
<td>271.683</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>271.683</td>
<td>456.809</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive effect of pretest and life skills training</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.289</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error rate</td>
<td>15.463</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0.595</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 1 show that the effect of pretest on the post-test is significant because the significance level is less than 0.05. So, it seems reasonable to control its effect by covariance analysis. The interaction between pretest and training is not meaningful. Therefore, the slope of the regression line is the same in both groups. Same slopes suggest that there isn’t any interaction between pretest and intervention (life skills training). Therefore, since assumptions of scores normal distribution, equality of variances were established, ANCOVA can be used to examine the hypothesis. ANCOVA results for the effect of life skills training on anger management of primary sixth grade male students in Tehran are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Ancova results for scores (pre/posttest) in experiment and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation sources</th>
<th>Squares sum</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Squares average</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Eta square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest effect</td>
<td>292.164</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>292.164</td>
<td>50.767</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills effect</td>
<td>110.264</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>110.264</td>
<td>19.192</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error rate</td>
<td>155.753</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5.753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference between the experimental and control group in terms of anger control scores (P <0.05, F=19.192). In fact, after adjustment for test scores, life skills training has significantly changed anger management in the experimental group's subjects. Therefore, the first hypothesis is confirmed.
In other words, life skills training is effective in subjects' anger management. The last column of the table, Eta square, demonstrates the determination coefficient. It is observed that 5.57% (0.575) of anger control variance is explained by the independent variable, i.e., life skills training. Finally, according to the evidence collected in this investigation it can be concluded that life skills training makes a significant effect on anger management of the participants. Due to the life skills training, students managed to control more their anger and get less angry.

The second hypothesis: life skills training affects anger control components in primary sixth grade male students in Tehran. Because of the stratified independent variable at two levels (experiment and control) and several continuous dependent variables (failure score, physical aggression, peer relations and relations with the authorities) MANCOVA was used to evaluate effectiveness of life skills training in anger control.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M box</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.230</td>
<td>1.201</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3748.207</td>
<td>0.285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the obtained F (1.201) and the probability of its significance (0.285), it can be concluded that the data hasn't violated homogeneity assumption of the variance-covariance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effects</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>values</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Degree of freedom for error</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Eta square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>0.891</td>
<td>43.067</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>21.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks Lambda</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>43.067</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>21.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>Hotting effect</td>
<td>8.203</td>
<td>43.067</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>21.000</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The largest root</td>
<td>8/203</td>
<td>43/067</td>
<td>4/000</td>
<td>21/000</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>0/891</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to multivariate tests values, especially the Pillai's trace test value (0.891) and F calculated (43.067) with degrees of freedom 43 and 21, the hypothesis can be confirmed (p <0.05). In other words, the average scores of students in failure, physical aggression, peer relations and relations with the authorities are simultaneously different in the control and life skills training group. According to the Eta square, the size of difference effect is 89.1% and the groups’ members can be separated based on tests results. Thus, there is sufficient evidence for accepting the hypothesis. Life skills training has significantly changed anger management components.
Conclusion

Findings of studying the effect of life skills training (emotion management) to the primary sixth grade male students on their anger control indicate that students’ average scores in all components of anger control is simultaneously different between the members of control and life skills training groups and the size of difference effect is 89.1% according to the Eta square. Therefore, groups’ members can be separated based on the tests results. As a result, there is sufficient evidence for accepting the research hypothesis.

Life skills training has significantly changed anger management components. The findings are consistent with other studies including Pourmohamadrezatajri, Abkenar and Ashoori [13] Navayi [14] and Arzandefar [15] because in the results obtained by them, significant and positive impact of life skills training as the independent variable were reported on creating positive behaviors and reducing negative behaviors in various statistical societies. The findings are also in line with studies conducted abroad, including However, there are findings with more consistency which specifically have addressed emotion management skill impact, including: Bateni [16] emotion regulation skills; Amani. B., Sohrabi [21] stress management; Mahadavi Haji [22] emotion regulation strategies; emotion regulating strategies; Berking [23] emotion regulating skills.

In the following, according to the positive and significant effect of life skills training (emotion management) on anger control among students, the researcher suggests: education authorities should include life skills as one of the curriculum lessons especially in guidance course since students of this course are going through the most important and sensitive period of their life i.e., adolescence and have the highest level of effectiveness and being educated.

Moreover, the followings are suggested: to held extra-curricular life skills training classes for students or as training hours; for teaching staff, teachers, educators and specially schools advisors as in-service training courses; for parents by the school as family training courses and finally assessment and measurement of knowledge and students enjoyment from corrective methods of applying life skills of all ages in courses during the academic year by schools advisors and identification of the strengths and weaknesses of the students and planning to meet or improve each one [24-34].

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