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## COMPARING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL SKILLS TRAINING (APOLOGIZING- ANNOYANCE AND OPPRESSION AVOIDING) ON SELF-ASSERTION AND MENTAL HEALTH IN RETARDED STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study has been already comparing the effect of social skills training (apologizing; annoyance and oppression avoiding) on self-assertion and psycho health in retarded students. The method of this experimental research is to design a pretest and posttest doing with an experimental group and a control one. The statistical population consists of the students studying in atypical schools in east part of GILAN province that they were 140 students studying in two different cities that of course just one of the cities selected, then the students was given 70 questionnaires titling as SHRING self-assertion and GOLDBERGE mental health. Then 60 students were screened who had got the lowest marks and finally 45 people were grouped in 3 classes each holding 15. Two of them received the trainings in apologizing and annoyance and oppression avoiding in 6 sessions each lasted for 45 minutes in workshop procedures then all the three groups were tested. The collected data were analyzed to test the research hypothesis using covariance analysis- statistical test. The results showed that: some social training in apologizing was effective on self-assertion and mental health and it was different from disliking annoyance and oppression.

**Key words:** social skills training (apologizing; away from annoyance and oppression); self-assertion; mental health

### INTRODUCTION

The social skills could be defined as necessary skills to cope with social needs also conserving interpersonal relationships satisfactorily. Whereas the social needs are different and depend on their special social fields, so there should be provided kinds of flexible social responses by social affair people to be able to change themselves according to the conditional needs. WARGER & RATERFORD (1996) described their social skills as acceptable social

behavior pattern that through them the students could strengthen themselves whether to accept or reject the harasser situations, so it could help people to receive positive social feedbacks and inhibit the negative ones to facilitate interpersonal relationships (quoted by ILKNUR & BULBIN,2007).

According to MATSON & BOISJOLI, 2008 lack of social skills could be regarded as a huge obstacle blocking the independent life in retarded guys, so it's necessary to recognize these people. During the three past decades it's been already discussed social practices since several studies showed that social skills inadequacy would negatively affect students'

performances (PARKER & ASHER,1987; JONES,1993;RAY &ELLIOT,2006) so bring some problems in interpersonal relationships and behavioral- emotional districts (MERIL & GIMPEL,1998 quoted through RANDY & MICHELLE,2008) which for sure make worse the learning problems, so they would prohibit child's progress and finally lead to unfavorable results while studying. It could decrease students' orientation (EVA, 2003) and finally they would be faced totally in disabilities to do everything (HYATT & FILLER, 2007).

Moreover the students who aren't able to do their assignments would show kinds of adverse behaviors; lack of adequacy, anxiety also motivation decrease (Levine & Barringer, 2008). During the recent years it's been emphatically tried to train the retarded persons to prepare them for a common social living, learning necessary skills to have an independent lives or in the least dependent.

The social skills consist broadly of some behaviors like the ability in breaking the ice effectively and having good relationships effectively, responding suitably (Bulkeley & Cramer, 1994), intention toward being generous, sympathetic and helpful avoiding mockery, coercing and forcing others.

For students, having effective relationships with their classmates and being accepted by them would be regarded as important social affairs since having successful social relationships would lead to a suitable prediction of the students' futures. On the other hand the primary rejection by coevals would be sings of lack of social compatibilities (Weiss & Duncan, 1992).

The results showed that lots of kids with problems in social relationships that they might be rejected by their coevals, would be subjected to kinds of behavioral-emotional abnormalities (Eron, 1987). For example it's been said that social skills defect during childhood could be related to some abnormalities in the future (Matson et.al,1983) like compartment disorders,

crimes in early teens (Bulkeley & Cramer,1994), school desertion and leaving it earlier than conventional time (Parker & Asher,1987 ; Merril & Gimpe,1998) also manifesting mental health problems while adulthood.

Lots of retarded children don't have necessary social skills to communicate to their coevals or adults, so they could get these kinds of experiences through conscious observations. In reviewing the research literature some authorities went to this conclusion that the retarded children have less communication to their contemporaries, so they would be less accepted (Farmer et.al, 1996).

Noticing this fact that this group of kids mostly receive social problems, so their self-esteem, personal satisfaction and their growth would be certainly affected in such a way their coevals' views could be changed from positive to negative one (Morris,2002). Besides some evidences showed that poverty in necessary social skills to have positive and effective relationships would be led to appear sorts of educational, social and emotional problems which for sure could negatively affect their futures (Caldarella & Merl, 1997).

This research aims at getting social consistency also having kinds of effective and suitable relationships with others, accepting social responsibilities and getting sorts of self-consciousness. Therefore it needs to pay more attention to essential skills for kids.

The main objective of the study is:

Comparing the effect of social skills training (apologizing; avoiding annoying others) on self-assertion and mental health in retarded students. Haghighi et al, 2006 did a research to consider the effects of social experiences trainings over mental health and self-esteem in freshman female students in ILAM. The gained results showed that receiving enough social experiences training could cause the increase of mental health also having self-esteem in experimental group in contrast to the control one.

Nouri & Ghomrani,2005 conducted a study in Shiraz and compared the social experiences and skills in blind student and their healthy coevals. The social skills consist of suitable experiences, nonsocial behaviors, aggression and traumatic behaviors, rivalry and having more than usual self-confidence, their relationships with their coevals which all these were measured according to Matson social skills scale. The analysis of the results showed that there has been seen a significant difference between the blind group and sighted one according to aggression and traumatic behaviors.

Ramesht & Farshad investigated a group consisting of 500 students and showed that the contrastive skills training could affect mental and physical health also decreases the social and behavioral problems. Verdi, 2004 conducted a research and examined the effect of social skills training over self-assertion, self-esteem also being responsible among freshman female student in one of the high schools in AHVAZ. The results showed that social training could significantly affect self-assertion and accountability.

AGHAJANI,2001 did a research titled as investigating the effect of social skills training on mental health and controlling the place of youngsters that showed the social skills trainings could improve the mental health however never affect significantly their control situations.

Erfani Khangahi, 2001 claimed through a research that mental health training could promote the knowledge level also bring the positive viewpoint that causes sort of change in self-esteem, so it would be considered as a suitable strategy in primary prevention in mental problems.

Wood, 2007 believes that social skills training and the methods in decreasing anxiety would effectively result to increase education performance and social compatibility.

Barton-Arwood et.al,2005 conducted a research and found out that the social and emotional

skills trainings in schools are so important that for sure in long or short term could cause personal success to bring the increase in social skills.

During a research the effect of immune of life training on contrastive behaviors also the mental health in teenagers ranged from13-19 were examined. The whole sample consists of 1580 student that 445 were placed in control group and 474 in experimental one (intensive training group) also 661 students were in the second experimental group (not intensive training group), and the results showed that after training the contrastive skills both groups had better contrastive behaviors than the control group. They also showed that both experimental groups receive better mental health.

Gerco & Morris,2005 conducted a research titled as the effective factors in social anxiety and acceptability among coevals, they investigated the communicative and social skills also close relationships during childhood. The results pointed there is a sort of relationship between social anxiety and communicative-social skills. Moreover it is said that the social anxious people don't have the essential communicative and social skills also the results showed that they were lack of these experiences since their childhood.

Through a study Lizarraga, Ugarte & Elawa ,2003 investigated self-control strategies and social skills in 40 students in middle schools who showed kinds of problems in self-reaction, self-studious, self-assertion and in showing sympathy. The brief research plan was to measure through pre- and posttest. The interference consists of performances in the form of self-studious set showed a relationship with standard skills during school periods. Also there was seen a significant difference between experimental and control group according to measurement standard variables. The results investigated noticing this fact that how a teacher could have an essential role in self- adjusting

activities in class assignments to consider the educational needs of students facing social problems.

In an attempt it's been claimed that child rearing methods, social skills and the relationships with their coevals also social compatibility, besides this research emphasizes social skills as an intermediate between parent-kid relationship and not being able to come along with their peers. The data gained through an investigation done on 58 children ranged 12-18. The gained results showed that the social skills cause concord increase in teenagers to have better relationships with their peers.

Albertyn et.al, 2001 examined the effect of life skills training on south African workers and the results claimed kinds of positive change in decision making abilities, having optimistic view to their abilities in personal and job responsibilities also they were completely aware of recognition aspects and communicating to others which would cause the increase in self-esteem, self-confidence, planning for future and being able to have critical thoughts.

Van Dam-Baggen, Kraaimaat,2000 conducted a study to contrast group cognition therapy and social group skills training that cause social anxiety disorders, both approaches were effective in decreasing social panic and public anxiety, making less the impairments also effectively increasing social skills and self-control. The participated patients in social group showed a remarkable decrease in social anxiety and increase in social skills in contrast to cognition therapy group. Meanwhile the social panic and skills scores through considering the social skill training group reached the normal level as in control group. Also there wasn't a significant difference between two groups noticing the amount of commitment and being satisfied of the therapy among the participants.

Perzel & Tringer, 1998 did two individual surveys and reported the significant effect of

social skills and self-assertion training on increasing the mental health.

Madeline, 1989 conducted a survey on some shy high school students that he showed having insufficient communicative and social skills would bring some problems in timid teenagers. He believes that introducing a program consists of communicative skills and self-assertion training would be pretty suitable.

McNamara & Dellamater, 1986 claimed through a research that showing vigorous behaviors is effective in interpersonal relationships in critical situations. Moreover the examinations that test the self-assertion less would be in least contact with anxiety testers.

McNamara et al., 1982 evaluated multilevel interpersonal skill training in U.S.A federal agency. The staffs taking part at this training course showed more positive views than control group according to communicative skills besides they acted better in cognitive evaluations than the control group.

## METHOD

According to the project subject, we described the research plan investigating the impression of social skills (apologizing; avoiding persecution) on retarded students' self-esteem and mental health. The present survey society consists of all exceptional schools for boys in eastern province for the range age between 15 till 17 in educational year 2010-2011 as many as 140 students who are studying now.

The statistical sampling at this study was randomly done that between two cities we just chose one. Then we chose our sample 15-17 in educational year of 2010-2011 in an exceptional boy school in ASTANEH, after that 70 questionnaires of SHERING's self-assertion and some about public health holding each 12 questions as marked Goldberg & Hiller were distributed that among them 60 persons getting the lowest marks in self-assertion and psycho health were screened then 45 guys randomly

picked up which they put into two categories: experimental and control (in each 15 pupils). The experimental groups were trained during 6 sessions each for 45 minutes in learning social skills like apologizing and avoiding annoying others then finally all the groups passed post tests in self-assertion and psycho health.

The measurement instruments consist of:

SHERING's questionnaire in self-assertion and another one in public health (alternative) holding 12 questions- GHQ

Any questionnaire with 12 questions in testing public health was designed to screen the healthy and sick people, so the aim of it wouldn't be diagnosing a sickness situation psychologically. This questionnaire is in access in the form of 12, 28,30 and 60 questions. The form holding only 12 questions is the best one since through allocating the last time you can screen the healthy people out of sick ones.

The short form GHO-12 is valid and used in most countries around the world. Also in Iran kinds of these forms were designed by healthy sciences inquiries of Iran University Jihad through the management of DR. ALI MONTAZERI and his colleagues. The gained results showed that this kind of questionnaire when translating to Persian was evaluated on 748 students in 18-25. The validity of inter-peers of this questionnaire was gained through KRONBAKH ALPHA,  $r=0.87$ .

The validity of the questionnaire was gained through using convergent validity in life quality questionnaire moreover according to factors analysis we identified two factors in the questionnaire which one of them was psychological distress and the other one social distress, so whereas this kind of questionnaire got high validation in Iran, the cases would be quickly recognized.

The performing procedure we can claim that the questionnaire can be used as self-test and at least the students should have been studying in the first year of middle school otherwise it's better to

be done through interview. The maximum time needed would be 5 minutes. It's necessary that the interviewee announces his/her status during the last month. The questions would be scored in decimal it means the scores for the two right answers in each sentence got zero marks and the next two questions got one that the score range would be from 0 till 12 then its criteria deviation could be respectively 3.7 and 3.5. Therefore we can use 3.7 as the slice point in public researches also number 4 is suitable in individual recognition.

SHERING'S test in self-assertion (1980) can be used to measure the amount of self-asserting that this kind of exam is an alternative questionnaire, each consisting of 32 questions which each individually holds 5 choices. Scoring would be according to LIKERT scale.

This kind of test has been already used in Iran by SOBHI GHARAMALEKI (2003) on university and high school students in ARDEBIL province. The stability coefficient in retest is 88%, so the mentioned test is stable favorably that to identify the amount of courage is the suitable test.

In validity investigation we used content validity method. According to some psychologists investigating the objectives of this test, they announced that it's favorably valid, also while it is an external scale which made for testing courage, so its elements are valid too. Therefore the test could be suitable in validity and stability (SOBHI, 2003 quoted from SHOJAEI, 2010).

SHERING, 1980 reported the stability of this test through alpha's coefficient and KOUDER RICHARDSON'S 90% also through retest would be 70%.

This test has been prepared to evaluating the general amount of having audacity. The numbers of prepared questions in each questionnaire are 32 that to answer them you need 15-20 minutes however some maybe need more time (ABOLGHASEMI, NARIMANI,2006).

In order to perform this test we must do a kind of pretest then pick up 45 students with the lowest scores in self-asserting it means lower than 129 also having psycho health scores more than 4, then we put them into 3 groups each consisting 15 dividing into two experimental groups: one under social training of apologizing and the other one got the training in avoiding annoying others.

The social skills training course started from mid October 2010 and went on for 6 continuous weeks that every week holds a session as long as 45 minutes.

After passing this time, both experimental and control groups passed posttests it means again we distributed SHERING's questionnaires and GHQ-12 that through this we could compare the results gained through pretests in both groups: experimental ( who participated in apologizing and avoiding annoying others sessions) and control (without receiving any training).

## RESULTS

To evaluate the project hypothesis that is the effect of social skill training (apologizing) on self-assertion and slow students' psycho health which is different from the effect of social skill training on annoyance avoiding we used multivariable covariance analysis since this statistical method lets the researcher to consider the effect of an independent variable over a dependent one in such a way it can disturb the effect of the other variables.

Evaluating the average distribution and standard deviation of pre- and posttest in the amount of self-assertion and psycho health according to the experimental groups tested for apologizing and annoyance avoiding and the control group while receiving social skill trainings has been reported in table 1.

**Table 1: average distribution and standard deviation in experimental & control groups**

variables	Experimental group receiving apologizing as social skill		Experimental group receiving annoyance avoiding as social skill		Control group	
	Average X	Standard deviation S	Average X	Standard deviation S	Average X	Standard deviation S
Self-assertion pre-test	115.20	5.821	107.60	2.947	110.67	3.716
Self-assertion posttest	140.60	4.983	127	2.803	110.80	3.821
Psycho health pretest	8.87	1.359	8.40	1.639	6.87	1.407
Psycho health posttest	2.67	0.90	4.13	0.99	6	1.254

**Table 2: the results of covariance analysis in self-assertion and psycho health variables according to receive some social skill trainings like apologizing & annoyance avoiding & control group**

Dissemination source	SS total squares	Release degree ms	Ms average squares	F	Significance level P	Eta effect rate	Test exponent
Self-assertion group	4171.647	2	2085.823	155.645	0.0001	0.886	1.000
Mental health group	87.725	2	43.863	52.493	0.0001	0.724	1.000

According to the results in table 2 to analysis dependent variables means self-assertion and mental health in experimental and control group both we used BRNFRONI adjusted alpha (0.005). After adjusting the average of pretest self-assertion as 111.16 noticing the results published in table 2 also considering calculated F ( $F(df=2,40)=155.645$ ,  $P<0.0005$ ,  $\eta^2=0.886$ ) since the significance level is less than BRNFRONI adjusted alpha (0.005), so the calculated F would statistically be significant. Then we can claim that there is significant difference between self-assertion posttest scores in experimental and control groups.

When the average of mental health pretest was adjusted as 8.04 according to the results in table 2 for mental health variable noticing calculated F ( $d.f=2,40$ )= $52.493$ ,  $P<0.0005$ ,  $\eta^2=0.724$ ), since its significance level is less than BRNFRONI adjusted alpha (0.005), then the calculated F would be statistically significant. Therefore we can say that there is a significant difference among mental health posttest scores in both experimental and control groups. While the average difference significance is going to be announced in 0.99 assurance, so the project hypothesis would be confirmed according to the effect of social skill training (apologizing) on retarded students' self-assertion and mental health which is completely different from its effect on annoyance avoiding in children.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

According to the reported results in covariance analysis, the effect of apologizing and annoyance avoiding on complex variable showed that whereas the gained effect rate is (0.707) for complex variable in self-assertion and more than 0.14 in mental health. Then we can go to this conclusion that apologizing and annoyance avoiding training have affected a lot the complex variable. Besides the calculated F for self-assertion variable ( $F(df=2,40) =155.645$

in level  $P<0.0005$ ) is significant which showed a difference among self-asserting scores in both experimental and control groups also according to the results, the calculated F would be significant in mental health variable ( $F(df=2,40) =52.493$  in level  $P<0.0005$ ) then there can be seen a difference in mental health scores in both experimental and control groups.

Noticing the meaningful average differences with 0.99 assurances we can claim that the project hypothesis in apologizing training's effect on self-asserting and psycho health in retarded or slow students is completely different from annoyance avoidance training. Whereas the main hypothesis was confirmed and the effect of both training methods in this research we conclude that skill training could cause the retarded students receive positive reactions while being socially in contact, so the negative ones would be prevented then communicating to others would be facilitated.

The results show that today it's been tried a lot in reforming behavioral disorders as the most important step in personal and public social skills trainings in kids and teenagers. In order to prepare individuals to use their maximum and potential mental capacities, they should receive positive views about themselves, their environments, so they must do their best to do it. Apologizing training can teach kids to be responsible facing to their mistakes, so to use the suitable moral rules they would be able to show their real sensations. If the children are advised to compensate their wrong behaviors and receive enough performing techniques like expressing positive senses, knowing about apologizing obstacles, using sensation to apologize, using verbal and nonverbal communications and practicing correctly to apologize, they will show themselves better, so their self-assertions and mental health would be improved. Doing this study all the above mentioned cases were practiced and the students were given homework

to be investigated the effect of this method at the end of any session.

The findings of this project are in accordance with the results of the previous researches as follows:

Ramesht & Farshad(2004); Haghigati et.al(2006); Verdi(2004); Erfani Khanghahi(2001); Aghajani(2001); Shahim(2002); Nouri & Tehrani(2005); Bayanzadeh & Arjmandi(2004); ALBERTIN et.al(2001); Medlyn(1989); Delamatromek Namara(1984); Perzel & Tringer(1998); Vendem Begen & Krimat(2000); FOFABOUL et.al(2005), Gerkou & Mouris(2005); Lizaraja, Yougart, Ilvar(2003); Angliz, Decoviz & Mios(2002); Barton-Aroud et.al(2005).

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