



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Received 26 Dec. 2014

Accepted 27 Jan. 2015

Investigation of the Relationship between the level of Life Skill and Self-esteem, and Test Anxiety among the Students

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ABSTRACT: This research aims to investigate the relationship between the level of life skills and self-esteem, and test anxiety among students. Statistical population includes second grade students of high school in the region one of Bandar Abbas (9461 individuals including 4447 boys and 5014 girls) in year 2013-2014. The sample size includes 369 students (173 boys and 196 girls) who were selected applying stratified random sampling based on Cochran's formula. This is a descriptive study of correlation and life skill, self-esteem and test anxiety questionnaire were applied in order to collect data. Pearson's correlation coefficient and multivariate regression coefficient were applied to analyze the collected data. Results indicated that there is an inverse significant relationship between the level of life skills and test anxiety among the students. An inverse significant relationship was also found between their self-esteem and test anxiety. Compared to life skills, self-esteem is a stronger predictor of test anxiety.

Keywords: Life skills, Self-esteem, Test anxiety, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Test anxiety is an undesirable emotional reaction to evaluation situation. This emotion is diagnosed by a sort of tension, phobia, and excitement of automatic nervous system¹. Test anxiety threatens the mental health of students and it has a negative effect on their self-efficacy, talent actualization, and social identity formation². From time to time, we all encounter some challenges and troubles in our lives. Facing such difficulties, it is comforting to have resources and skills that help us overcome such problems in the best way³. Life skills refers to a wide range of mental, social and interpersonal abilities which help individuals to make deliberate decisions, establish effective relationships, develop their identity management skills and have a healthy and fecund life. Life skills can manage personal activities and those to do with others and environment in order to increase a higher level of health, which leads in more physical, mental and social comfort⁴.

Social psychologists believe that as a destructive factor, anxiety is thought through learning and modeling. Therefore, it can be controlled or reduced through such methods. Life skill training is among these learning methods. Thus, anxiety

Investigation of the Relationship between the level ...

and its components can be significantly controlled or reduced through life skills training, particularly among students and teenagers⁵. Reduction of anxiety among students can increase their self confidence and self-esteem.

Self-esteem is the level of one's acceptance and value he feels about his self or, his judgment about his own values Apart from being considered as a part of mental health, having self-esteem depends on educational progress. Many scholars have found that self-esteem is related to getting high scores in the school. Therefore, considering the significant role of the mentioned variables (life skills, self-esteem, and test anxiety) in growth and eminence of students, this research aims to investigate the relationship between them⁶. Based on what has been mentioned before, the question is if there is a relationship between having life skills and self-esteem, and test exam among the male and female students of the second grade of region one high schools in Bandar Abbas.

The findings by Karimi, et al. showed a significant difference in the level of creative thinking skills and stress opposition between male and female students. The level of life skills in different grades significantly differed in all abilities, except for creative thinking⁷. According to Rajabi et al., there is a significant relationship between self-esteem, test anxiety and life satisfaction among the students suffering from dyscalculia. Test anxiety and self-esteem can also significantly predict life satisfaction among such students⁸. Taramian believes that life skills training can positively effect on mental and physical health, and encountering environmental pressures such as anxiety, depression, aggression, suicidal ideation, academic failure, interpersonal relationships, and drug abuse⁹. In a research by Smite it was indicated that life skills training can considerably decrease anxiety and depression among young individuals¹⁰.

Hypotheses

- There is a significant relationship between having life skills and test anxiety among the students.
- There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and test anxiety of students.
- Test anxiety among students can be predicted by having life skills and self-esteem.

Material and Methods

In terms of objectives, this is an applied research and as to the nature and method, this is a study of correlation. Statistical population includes second grade students of high school in the region one of Bandar Abbas (9461 individuals including 4447 boys and 5014 girls) in year 2013-2014, among whom a sample of 369 students (173 boys and 196 girls) was selected through stratified random sampling and based on Cochran's formula. Following instruments were applied in order to evaluate the variables:

Life skills questionnaire: The standard questionnaire y Saatchi et al (2010) was applied to measure and evaluate the life skills among students. The original firm includes 144 items designed based on five point Likert scale. As to this research,

the short form of this questionnaire was applied which includes 24 items for seven component (self-consciousness, having goals, interpersonal relationships, decision making, problem solving, participation and collaboration, and creative ideation). This short form has been applied in many previous studies.

Self-esteem questionnaire:

Coppersmith questionnaire: This instrument includes 58 items. Students were asked to read each item accurately and select “yes” for those in accordance with their own situation, and “no” for those that are not.

Test anxiety questionnaire: This instrument consists of 24 yes/ no items and students are asked to choose one of the two. In this questionnaire, each correct answered has one score. Scores range from 0 to 25. A score lower than 8, indicates a low level of anxiety. Scores between 8 and 12, show an average anxiety and those higher signify a high level of anxiety. Pearson’s correlation coefficient and multiple regressions were applied as the statistical methods of data analysis.

RESULTS

First hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between having life skills and test anxiety among the students. Pearson’s regression statistical method was applied in order to test the results of this hypothesis.

Table 1. Correlation coefficient between having life skills and test anxiety among students

	Correlation coefficient	P<
Having life skills	-0.303	0.0001
Test anxiety		

Pearson’s correlation coefficient is significant in an error level of 0.01.

Considering the table above, the obtained correlation coefficient is equal to -0.303 in a level of 0.0001, which is lower than the acceptable level (0.05); therefore this coefficient is significant (P< 0.01). Thus there is an inverse significant relationship between having life skills and test anxiety among the students.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between self-esteem and test anxiety among the students. Pearson’s regression statistical method was applied in order to test the results of this hypothesis.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient between self-esteem and test anxiety among students

	Correlation coefficient	P<
Having life skills	-0.505	0.0001
Test anxiety		

Pearson’s correlation coefficient is significant in an error level of 0.01.

Considering the table above, the obtained correlation coefficient is equal to -0.505 in a level of 0.0001, which is lower than the acceptable level (0.05); therefore this coefficient is significant (P< 0.01). Thus there is an inverse significant relationship between self-esteem and test anxiety among the students.

Investigation of the Relationship between the level ...

Third hypothesis: Test anxiety among students can be predicted by having life skills and self-esteem.

Step-by-step multiple regressions was applied in order to test this hypothesis.

Table 3. ANOVA and statistical regression between test anxiety and having life skills and self-esteem through step-by-step method

Steps	variables	R	R	R	P<	β	T	P<
First	Self-Esteem	0.50	0.2	116.6	0.0001	-0.50	-10	0.0001
Second	Self-esteem	0.58	0.3	87.6	0.0001	-0.49	-11	0.0001
	Life skills					-0.29	-6.6	0.0001

Considering the table above, the regression between having life skills and self-esteem, and test anxiety has progresses in two steps. According to the data illustrated in this table the F/P ratio in the first step shows the significant effect of self-esteem in regression equation. In this step, the obtained regression effect (F=87.6) is significant in level of 0.0001, and the calculated coefficient of determination based on this variable is 0.34, i.e. these variables can predict 34% of the tests anxiety variations. According to the results, compared to life skills, self-esteem is a stronger predictor of test anxiety. The regression equation is:

$$Y = 88.11 + (-0.099) (\text{scores of life skills}) + (-0.447) (\text{score of self-esteem})$$

CONCLUSION

This research aims to research aims to investigate the relationship between the level of life skills and self-esteem, and test anxiety among the second grade students of high school in the region one of Bandar Abbas. Results indicate that there inverse significant relationship between the level of life skills and self-Esteem among the students and their test anxiety. Life skills and self-esteem variables can also predict the test anxiety among students. Therefore, the results are in accordance with most of the previous studies.

As the most important parameter of socialization and social adaptation, life skills can never been neglected and doubtlessly, besides the other aspects of growth and educational and pedagogical topics, emotional intelligence, social growth and social pedagogy have their own significance. From this point of view, much has happened in life skills training arena, many studies have been performed, new training and therapeutic methods have been issued and lighter vision have been emerged. All of these ongoing movements and recognitions help human enriches the quality and quantity of its own life, and other's. Results indicated that test anxiety is related to life skills. Explaining this finding, it can be mentioned that promotion of life skills is considered as a significant principle of pedagogy and it has been accomplished to keep pace with academic developments. In other words, education has been successful in promotion of life skills among the students.

The successful learning of life skills changes the person's feelings toward himself and others and it promotes mental or social abilities such as self-esteem, self-expression, responsibility, and desirable interpersonal relationship. These abilities help the individual faces the conflicts effectively and pave the way for his mental

health. Also believe that learning and practicing life skills promotes the change in one's attitudes, values and behavior and many problems can be prevented through these positive behaviors. According to WHO, life skill plans in line with mental health aim to help different societies throughout the world proceed to develop the application and evaluation of life skills training programs that concentrate on promotion of mental abilities such as problem solving, confronting emotions, self-consciousness, social adaptation, and stress control among children and teenagers. According to social psychologists believe that as a destructive factor, anxiety is thought through learning and modeling. Therefore, it can be controlled or reduced through such methods. Life skill training is among these learning methods. Thus, anxiety and its components can be significantly controlled or reduced through life skills training, particularly among students and teenagers. Based on life skills training methods, as apposite behavior, self-expression should be developed and increased among students. High level of self-esteem can affect academic performance and test anxiety of students. By and large, self-esteem increases the accessible life skills for students and decreases their anxiety. Self-esteem forms the optimism inside the individual. Optimism can effectively predict the various aspects of mental health and finally, it results in life satisfaction of students. Self-esteem also decrease passivity and make the person adapt the problems. It motivates individual to confront the problems and manage interpersonal relationships in a better way. Life satisfaction can be predicted in this way.

In other words, self-esteem is along with higher efficiency, hope and happiness, and life satisfaction among the students. These will promote and increase academic performance and decrease test anxiety among the students. The lower level of self-esteem among students, the more test anxiety they have, because self-concentration has been increased in them and they compare themselves with others. Therefore, they pay more attention to their negative aspects and as a result, they feel more anxious. It can be explained that students with high level of self-esteem confront problems and in particular, exams in a suitable and efficient way and avoid any negative evaluation of exam situation due to their self-confidence. On the contrary, since students with a low level of self-esteem are not sure about their abilities, they will be affected by exam situation and evaluate it in a negative way. As a result, they show weaker performance.

Practical suggestions

- Those in charge of educational affairs should try to pave the way for increasing the test anxiety of students through paying more attention to emotional control and mental health among them.
- Teachers are recommended to use programs and methods, that increase the academic performance of students and decreases their test anxiety. They are

Investigation of the Relationship between the level ...

also recommended to provide various mental and educational helps for the students that need it.

- Life skill trainings can be performed about all abilities such as effective communication, self-awareness, decision making, etc. therefore, since effective communication, self-awareness and assertiveness are among the important skills during adolescence and improving the personality of young individuals, they should be trained necessarily.

- Family and school should provide opportunities for students, pave the way for their progress and success in different aspects, prepare them to take responsibility, and make them feel their competence and value through proper and in-time support.

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