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The effectiveness of emotional intelligence training on the components of bullying, social competence and emotional intelligence in male students of fourth grade (second period) in Shadegan city

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Abstract

Introduction: The act of bullying is an abuse in social interaction among peers containing aggressiveness. Low emotional intelligence is associated with the involvement of bullying as a bully/victim of bullying. The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training on the factors of bullying, social competence and emotional intelligence among students.

Materials and Methods: The study (academic year of 2014-2015) conducted using pre-test and post-test with a control group among student population (experimental group: 20 cases, control: 20 cases). In this study, emotional intelligence training was performed in 10 sessions of 45 minutes based on Goldman's model using multi-stage random sampling method. Olweus Bully/Victim questionnaire, social competence scale and Bar-On and Parker's emotional-social intelligence (ESI) were used in order to assess the variables of the study. The statistical method was multivariate covariance (MONCOVA).

Results: The results of the present study indicated that there is a significant difference at the level of 0.001 between the variables of bullying, social competence and emotional intelligence among the experimental and control group, indicating the effectiveness of emotional intelligence training on the components of bullying, social competence and emotional intelligence among the students.

Conclusion: Emotional intelligence training can reduce the components of bullying and increase social competency and emotional intelligence. These results reveals the importance of applying emotional intelligence training on the improvement of social competency, emotional intelligence and students' reduced level of bullying.

Keywords: Bullying, Emotional intelligence, Students

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Introduction

Bullying is the most common behavior of school aggression and has lasting consequences in adulthood. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 40% of elementary school students are directly involved in bullying at least once a week (1,2), raising concerns about bullying. In addition, the school has been mentioned because of the suicide of many childhood victims (3).

Bullying is aggressive and intentional behavior repeatedly applied by a person or a group of people over time and includes an imbalance of power between students (4), which occurs in the form of physical, verbal, and communication behaviors. Bullying can harm the victim's life: child abuse may lead to social and emotional maladjustment and worsening behavior (5). In addition, there is a positive and strong relationship between engaging in bullying behaviors and bullying victim behaviors (6).

According to Goleman (1998), the components of emotional intelligence include self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation, empathy, and social skills. Emotional intelligence is considered an underlying factor for social competence and skills. Bullying harms students' emotional intelligence, causes fear among students, and reduces students' learning ability (7). A child who, for any reason, is subject to verbal and physical bullying in the educational environment, in addition to feeling insecure and hating the school, the consequences of which in his academic life gradually show themselves in the form of academic failure and procrastination, may also cause the student to drop out of school (8). Social competencies are critical processes for healthy development (9). Several types of research have emphasized the relationship between emotional intelligence and social competence, including the significant relationships between emotional intelligence and the structure of social competence (10), the quality of social interactions, and psychological support (11). In a research where the emotional intelligence training of primary school students was studied, the results showed that the emotional intelligence training only increased social skills (emotional intelligence subscale) and decreased the difficulty in describing feelings, the dyslexia subscale (12). In a study investigated the effects

of emotional intelligence intervention on empathy among adolescents from eight schools in Spain, the results showed that students in the experimental group had lower levels of physical/verbal aggression, anger, hostility, and personal distress, compared to students in the experimental group. The control group was reported (13). Also, the effect of this emotional intelligence program has been effective on the empathic ability of boys. In a study titled social competence predicting bullying among children and teenagers, the results showed that teaching social competence skills is important in reducing bullying (14). In a study, which examined the relationship between victimization, bullying, and psychological variables among secondary school students in West Africa (Ghana), the results indicated that victims of bullying reported more negative mental health than those who had not been bullied. In addition, no significant differences were observed between physical and non-physical types of bullying (15). In research, they examined emotional intelligence in teenagers with secure attachment style and social and personal variables, in 60 students, with an attachment style questionnaire and an emotional intelligence questionnaire. The results showed that those teenagers with a secure attachment style in interpersonal relationships, problem-solving skills, and happiness had higher emotional intelligence than other teenagers. Also, this research showed that a favorable home environment with a sense of security would help people's emotional intelligence in the future (16). Researchers showed that emotional intelligence and training affect emotional competence (17). Other researchers showed that applying emotional intelligence training to these people effectively improves their interpersonal communication (18). Others showed that emotional intelligence is the basis for improving communication, empathy skills, respect for others, stress management, increasing creativity, and reducing mistakes (19).

Schools are the first social spaces that can eliminate the gaps and weaknesses of children in the field of growth and excellence of emotions and social interactions. With education and cultivation of emotional and social skills, students should correct and restore their sense of annoying competition, traditional competition,

and sick monitoring of each other's actions. According to this article, learning emotional skills starts at home, and children enter school with a set of primary and different emotional abilities (20). The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) was a program in 1993. After three Norwegian teenage boys committed suicide due to severe bullying by their peers, the Norwegian Ministry of Education requested Prof. Olweus to implement the program. To carry out research and interventions on a large scale in connection with the problems of victimization and bullying, Olweus developed his basic intervention program to target the necessary components in several areas: "Adult awareness and involvement, school-wide assessment (questionnaire-based survey), school assembly day, better supervision during the bell." Having fun, meeting colleagues with parents, assessment at class level, class rules against bullying, assessment at the individual level, serious conversations with bullies and victims and their parents. Olweus presents his program as a whole school approach that responds to bullying (21).

Considering the importance and impact of the mentioned issue, the general purpose of this research is the effect of emotional intelligence education on the components of bullying, social competence, and emotional intelligence of male students in the fourth grade of elementary school (second period) of Shadegan city.

Materials and Methods

The experimental-field research design is of a pre-test-post-test type with a control group. In this plan, there is an experimental group and a control group. After randomly selecting male bully students and placing them in two experimental and control groups, a pre-test was taken from both groups. Then, the steps of the experiment were carried out during ten sessions of 45 minutes based on the Goldman model (22) on the experimental group. After the completion of the intervention process, a post-test was taken from both groups. The multivariate covariance analysis method was used in the data analysis. The statistical population of this research included all the male students of the fourth grade of elementary school (second period) of Shadegan city who were studying in the academic year 2014-2015. For sampling, first, two elementary boys' schools, one in the south and the

other in the north of the city, were randomly selected in a multi-stage manner, and then two classes (4th grade) from each school and ten students from each class were randomly selected, 20 students in the experimental group and 20 students in the control group were selected.

Research instruments

A) Bullying Questionnaire/Victim of Olweus: In this research, the Persian version of the Bullying Questionnaire of Olweus was used to measure bullying in school. This questionnaire contains 40 questions on a Likert scale, which deals with people's bullying experiences in the last two months. The questions of this questionnaire can be divided into two parts: the first part is the questions that provide general information about bullying and includes questions 4, 14 to 24, and 34 to 39. The second part evaluates questions 5 to 13 of the victim's behavior and questions 25 to 33 of the bully's behavior. Question 40 was also removed due to ethnicity. The reliability of each of the two parts is about 0.8 or higher. Questions 4 and 24 also assess the prevalence of bullying, the reliability of each of which is 0.85 and 0.95, respectively (23). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.86 indicates the satisfactory and acceptable reliability of the questionnaire for evaluating bullying in children. In the present study, to obtain the reliability of this questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha and half method were used. According to Cronbach's alpha method, the range of reliability coefficients for different subscales is from 0.65 to 0.68 and for all instrument items is 0.74, and in half for different subscales from 0.55 to 0.58 and for all instrument items. It is 0.63. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to estimate the validity of the test, and the results showed that most of the test items had a high correlation with their components.

B) Social Competence Scale: The social competence scale was created by Cohen and Resman (1972) in two forms, 73 options, and 64 options, and it was standardized by Muraj (1975) for primary school children, and its options were reduced to 44 questions. The social competence scale evaluates the level of the child's social-emotional functions and the two factors of willingness-participation vs. coldness-withdrawal (for example, the student shows enthusiasm for work or play, the student

withdraws in the presence of other students) and cooperation-surrender vs. anger – assesses opposition (e.g., the student accepts other students' opinions, the student makes excuses). In the present study, to obtain the reliability of this questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha and half method were used. The range of reliability coefficients for different subscales, according to Cronbach's alpha method, is from 0.58 to 0.77, and for all the tool items, it is 0.68, and according to the halving method for different subscales, from 0.65 to 0.73 and for all items is 0.75. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to estimate the validity of the social competence questionnaire, and the results showed that most test items had a high correlation with their components.

C) Bar-On and Parker's Emotional Intelligence Inventory for Children and Adolescents: Bar-On and Parker's Emotional Intelligence Inventory for Children and Adolescents evaluates emotional intelligence between the ages of 7 and 18 years and specifically to evaluate and determine coping skills, ability Adaptation, and well-being of children and adolescents is designed. This questionnaire is a self-report tool with 60 items, and five components are examined: 1. Intrapersonal scale, 2. Interpersonal scale, 3. Stress management scale, 4. Adaptability scale, 5. General mood scale. In 2000, Bar-On and Parker's children's and adolescents' emotional interest questionnaire was validated on 1972 children and adolescents. The validity of the construct using factor analysis is proof of the internal structure of this tool. Bar-On and Parker (24) reported the reliability of the emotional interest questionnaire for children and adolescents by Cronbach's alpha method for different subscales between 0.65 and 0.90 and by the retest method between 0.77 and 0.89. In the present study, to obtain the reliability of this questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha and half method were used. The range of reliability coefficients for different subscales, by Cronbach's alpha method, from 0.60 to 0.82, and for all instrument items, from 0.79, and from 0.48 to 0.69, for different subscales, and the whole tool is 0.72. Regarding the validity of the questionnaire, the confirmatory factor analysis method was used, and most items had a high correlation with their components. Intervention: The intervention package of this research is based on the Goleman model (24), which was implemented in the case

of the experimental group. The content of this method is summarized below: The first session, pre-test: familiarization of the group members with each other and with the general structure of the sessions. In the second session, teaching emotional self-awareness: students focus on each emotional state and write it down, do homework, connect emotional states to the color of candies, and have group discussions about completed assignments. The third session teaches emotional self-perception: naming emotions and expressing one's feelings by showing different emotional states.

The fourth session, identifying the emotions of others: identifying emotional images, identifying the emotional states of fictional characters. The fifth session, understanding other people's emotions and creating empathy: written expression of other people's emotions, training to practice reflecting on other people's feelings. The sixth session, managing your emotions: teaching how to stop unpleasant emotional states, teaching ways to deal with situations that cause unpleasant emotions. Session seven, controlling one's and others' emotions: playing the role of a person who controls his/her unpleasant emotional states, teaching problem-solving methods to control emotions.

The eighth session, self-motivation: training to choose distant and essential goals instead of immediate goals, using positive self-talk technique for self-motivation. In the ninth session, boldness is the teacher's implementation of bold behavior and then by the student. 10th session, post-exam: thanks and appreciation to the students, school administrators, and students for their cooperation in this research and implementation of the post-exam.

Results

There were 20 students in each of the experimental and control groups. The results of Levin's test in the univariate analysis showed that the groups do not differ significantly in intragroup variance, and the assumption of the analysis is satisfied. Furthermore, the assumption of a linear relationship between auxiliary random variables and dependent variables and the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slope between auxiliary random variables and dependent variables were also observed.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of dependent variables in two experimental and control groups

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test	
	Experimental M(SD)	Control M(SD)	Experimental M(SD)	Control M(SD)
Bullying	41.30 (10.93)	20.70 (8.95)	15.20 (4.81)	26.40 (8.65)
Bullying behavior	14.30 (3.79)	10.70 (4.47)	11.05 (3.33)	8.45 (4.01)
Victim behavior	8.00 (2.95)	17.25 (4.86)	3.35 (1.63)	15.15 (6.96)
Social competence	49.55 (12.03)	24.50 (6.27)	42.85 (9.71)	26.65 (5.72)
Emotional intelligence	31.05 (9.47)	27.25 (7.36)	42.95 (6.10)	27.35 (9.30)
Intrapersonal intelligence	15.60 (5.88)	23.10 (4.59)	46.70 (9.26)	27.65 (6.06)
Interpersonal intelligence	42.60 (1.60)	39.25 (1.29)	48.10 (3.71)	41.00 (1.97)
Stress management	33.75 (7.39)	43.15 (4.97)	52.55 (5.08)	46.75 (1.24)
Adaptability	35.40 (5.16)	31.80 (3.87)	45.55 (7.49)	34.45 (4.79)
General mood	30.60 (6.75)	25.40 (4.59)	47.25 (6.76)	27.40 (3.70)

Table 2 of the findings related to the effect of emotional intelligence training on the

components of bullying, social competence, and emotional intelligence of male students.

Table 2. Results of multivariate covariance analysis of the effect of emotional intelligence training on dependent variables

Test	Value	F	DF hypothesis	DF error	P
Pillai effect	0.88	24.52	10	29	0.001
Wilkes lambda	0.12	24.52	10	29	0.001
Hotelling's effect	7.92	24.52	10	29	0.001
Roy's biggest root	7.92	24.52	10	29	0.001

The contents of Table 2 show a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of at least one of the dependent variables, so it can be said that emotional

intelligence training reduces bullying components and increases social competence and emotional intelligence components of elementary school boys.

Table 3. Results of one-way covariance analysis in the MANCOVA text on the post-tests of the bullying components, social competence, and emotional intelligence components

Variable	Sum squares	Freedom degree	Mean squares	F	P
Bullying	313.60	1	313.60	4.41	0.04
Bullying behavior	168.10	1	168.10	5.64	0.02
Victim behavior	260.10	1	260.10	27.64	0.001
Social competence	2044.90	1	2044.90	8.66	0.006
Emotional intelligence	765.62	1	765.62	5.32	0.02
Intrapersonal intelligence	3629.02	1	3629.02	59.16	0.001
Interpersonal intelligence	504.10	1	504.10	57.04	0.001
Stress management	205.60	1	205.60	124.36	0.001
Adaptability	1233.10	1	1233.10	31.13	0.001
General mood	3940.22	1	3940.22	132.43	0.001

According to the results presented in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in all three variables of bullying components, social competence, and emotional intelligence components. The results of Table 3 show that there is a significant difference in the variable, bullying components, between the experimental group and the control group at the $P=0.001$ level; Therefore, emotional intelligence training reduces the bullying components (bullying behavior and victim behavior) of male students. In the variable of social competence, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the

control group at the $P=0.001$, and it shows that the increase in emotional intelligence increases the social competence of male students in the fourth grade (second term).

Also, in the variable of emotional intelligence components, there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group at the level of $P=0.001$, which shows that emotional intelligence training increases the components of emotional intelligence (sub-scales of intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management adaptability and general mood) in male students in the fourth grade (second period) of elementary school.

Discussion

The result indicates that the average scores of the experimental group of students in the bullying components show a decrease compared to the control group in the post-test compared to the pre-test, but in the scale of the components of emotional intelligence and social competence compared to the control group in the post-test phase. A significant increase can be seen in the pre-test stage. The results of multivariate and one-way covariance analyzes showed that there is a significant difference between the post-test scores of the bullying components in the experimental group and the control group; Therefore, it can be said that the effect of emotional intelligence training in reducing the components of bullying has been confirmed, which is consistent with the results of research entitled, Investigating the effect of emotional intelligence training on reducing aggression and increasing individual-social adjustment in students (25).

Many theories have been presented to explain the relationship between emotional intelligence and bullying. Bullying in school severely threatens the health of students and everyone involved in this matter. Bullying, as one of the behavioral disorders, has vulnerability consequences. For example, dropping out of school, depression, anger, suicide, and delinquency are among the negative consequences of bullying. Also, bullying has adverse physical, psychological, social, and educational effects. The results of multivariate and one-way covariance analysis show a significant difference between the post-test scores of social competence in the experimental and control groups. The results of the research showed that students with high emotional

intelligence and high emotional and social skills; Emotional problems have fewer bullying behaviors and show more appropriate social behaviors, which is consistent (26).

The results showed a significant difference between the post-test scores of emotional intelligence components in the experimental and the control groups. This result is in line with research entitled the effectiveness of the emotional intelligence enhancement program on the control of adolescent bullying behavior, which showed that training in emotional intelligence skills could help adolescents apply, regulate, and express their emotions and understand others' emotions (27).

These results are consistent with Barr-Ann's theory, which states that emotional intelligence and emotional skills change during development and throughout life and can be improved by training in remedial programs, such as therapy clinics. Therefore, according to the existing studies and the results of this research, it can be said that teaching emotional intelligence skills to students can have a significant impact on the components of bullying, social competence, and components of emotional intelligence, and considering the importance of these items on academic life. Therefore, for students and the public life of people, it seems that the existence of such training can be helpful and practical for students.

Conclusion

Emotional intelligence training reduces bullying components and increases social competence and emotional intelligence components. These results highlight the importance of using emotional intelligence training to improve social skills and and reduce bullying among students.

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