

Extended Abstract

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Research paper

The Effectiveness of Cognitive-Behavioral Group Training on Psychological Well-Being and Social Functioning and Adoption of Child Labor

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Introduction

child labor is in the category of "children in a difficult situation" or "vulnerable urban children" whose natural development and socialization are at risk due to the pressures and challenges of living in large cities in contemporary societies. (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Street children are victims of complex and premature injuries and are sometimes often face these challenges due to having uninvolved or incapable parents and a lack of education and training (Pur, 2014). Working and being deprived of education can negatively affect the psychological well-being of these children. Children living on the streets often face severe psychological challenges, and the prevalence of emotional and behavioral problems is significantly higher due to their difficult living conditions (Roze et al., 2016). Another challenge these children face is adaptive behavior difficulties. Roze et al. (2016) found that street children often face psychological issues, leading to poorer mental health and academic difficulties. In general, there are various treatments to improve the life and adaptation of children, one of the most effective of which is cognitive-behavioral therapy (Kreuze et al., 2018). The goal of cognitive-behavioral therapy is to change irrational thoughts, attitudes, and expectations. Research evidence shows that cognitive behavioral training can improve children's performance (Haugland et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2019). Because few types of research have been done in the discussion of psychological well-being and social adaptation of children; The present study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral group training on psychological well-being and social functioning and adoption of child labor.

Method

This semi-experimental study used a pre-test-post-test design with a control group. The statistical population consisted of all male child laborers referred to the welfare department of Rasht City. The statistical sample included 50 working children who were selected as available, and among them, 30 children with lower scores in psychological well-being and social/adaptive performance were selected and placed in two experimental and control groups. Inclusion criteria were gender (male) and age (12 to 18 years), while exclusion criteria included physical and mental illnesses, absence from more than two sessions, and concurrent treatment or interventions. Data were collected using the Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire (PABQ, Ryff, 2014) and the Social/Adaptive Functioning Questionnaire (SAFQ, Price et al., 2002) before and after the intervention.

Results

The results of the analysis of variance on the pre-test-post-test difference of adaptive social performance components show that there is a difference between the two experimental and control groups in academic performance, communication with peers, family relationships, and self-care ($P < 0.001$). Eta-squared values

indicate that 21.1%, 21.3%, 26.1%, and 48% of the variance in these components is attributable to the experimental effects, respectively.

Table 1: The results of analysis of variance on the pre-test-post-test difference of social/adaptive performance components

Sources	SS	df	MS	F	P	η^2	OP
Academic Performance	10.81	1	10.81	7.47	0.01	0.211	0.91
Communication With Peers	19.77	1	19.77	7.58	0.01	0.213	0.92
Family Relationships	42.28	1	42.28	9.91	0.004	0.261	0.94
Self-Care	58.15	1	58.15	25.81	0.001	0.480	1

T-test analysis comparing pre- and post-test scores for social/adaptive performance ($t=5.47$) and psychological well-being ($t=2.79$) revealed that cognitive-behavioral training significantly increases children's social/adaptive performance ($P < 0.001$). Eta-squared values indicate that 32.6% and 13.6% of the variance in for social/adaptive performance and psychological well-being are attributable to the experimental effects, respectively.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the research showed that cognitive-behavioral training leads to an increase in the psychological well-being of children labor. This finding is in line with the results of other research (for example [Zhang et al., 2019](#)). Cognitive-behavioral therapy helps clients change distorted patterns of dysfunctional behavior. The results of the present study also showed that cognitive and behavioral training increases social and adaptive performance in working children. This finding is in line with the results of other research ([Zhang et al., 2019](#); [Wergeland et al., 2014](#)). In explaining this finding, it can be said that social skills are behaviors that play an important role in communication. Children who have high social skills establish better interpersonal relationships and avoid irrational behaviors. Having these skills helps a lot to get reinforcement from the environment. This training enhances children's cognitive and social skills, helping them interact more effectively with others. The ability to interact favorably with others increases the person's social support resources and this makes it easier for children to cope with problems because they feel that they are not alone in the face of problems and there is a person to listen to and a hand to help. The use of self-reporting tools, and the fact that the researcher and the experimenter are the same were some of the limitations of the research. It is suggested to use such training for children in vulnerable and at-risk environments to increase mental health and improve behavioral and emotional problems.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical Code

This study was pre-registered with the Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Graduate Education, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, University of Guilan, Iran.

Financial Support

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Authors' Contributions

Masomeh Jafazadeh conducted the research, implementation of training, statistical analysis, wrote the manuscript as part of her MA thesis at the University of Gilan, and approved the final version for publication.

Conflicts of Interest

This study is based on a master's thesis, supported by the University of Guilan and no potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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