The Effect of Social Problem-Solving Skills Training on the Educational Resilience of Children in Labour

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Abstract

This article aimed to study the effect of social problem solving skills training on the educational resilience of children in labour. The statistical population of the study included all the girls in labour, aged 12 to 18 years old, who were supported by the educational charity centres and associations in Tehran in the academic year of 2018-2019. The sample body consisted of 30 individuals from the population, who scored the lowest grades in the educational resilience questionnaire. They were randomly assigned to two experimental and control groups. To measure the educational resilience, the educational resilience questionnaire (Samuels, 2004) was used. The study was of quasi-experimental nature with pre-test, post-test and the control group. The experimental group was trained for 8 sessions to learn the social problem solving based on Dizurilla's and Goldfried model. Post-test was conducted for both groups. To examine the effect of problem solving training on the educational resilience, the Multivariate Covariance Analysis was performed. The results showed that the social problem solving training affects the learners' problem-based bias and providence.

Keywords: child in labour, educational resilience, problem-based bias, providence, social problem-solving

Introduction

The child in labour is a term to describe the individuals aged under 18 years old (whether boy or girl), and is applied for those children in labour that are recruited continuously and permanently; which prevents them to attend school and to enjoy the childhood experiments, and threatens their physical and spiritual health (Moosavi Chelak, 2007).

Observing the children in various environments always brings the following questions to the mind: can the children benefit from education and educational achievements? Can they confront the basic challenges of the school? And, why do some of them, contrary to the other children have a particular flexibility to confront the stressful factors? The answer to these questions refers to a rather new concept called "resilience". The resilience belongs to the normal concepts and constructs considered by the positivist psychology, and indicates the successful adaptation despite the challenges and threats (Hanewald, 2001; quoted from Aarabiyan, 2017).

Kaufman et al (1999), and Luther, Ciccetti & Baker (2000) stated that in most of the studies, this construct has been considered as a mono-dimensional construct; but, over recent years, due to the outbreak of ambiguities of interpreting the study results, the theoreticians and the scholars have followed a multidimensional view of resilience (Luthar et al, 2000; Hashemi, 2015). Therefore, the scholars have considered various resilience dimensions, such as the educational resilience, the behavioural resilience, and the emotional resilience.

The educational resilience, the learner's flexibility to confront the problems, stress, and the challenging educational attributes and conditions, leads to gaining success and improving the educational performance. In other words, the resilient students are more motivated, appear more successful in the educational period, and gain more success compared to other

students; and, in these learners, the chances of failure are lower (Kilmister, 2015).

Masten (2001; in Yeats & Masten, 2004) stated that the resilience is not an inherent capability, but obtainable; Despite the risky factors, it will be achievable while the appropriate protective factors are present in the resilient individuals' lives (Hashemi, 2015).

The protective factors moderate the effects of undesirable conditions on the growth and its outcomes, and encourage the adoption of positive solutions. Garmezy (1985) has classified the protective factors into three groups: a) the individual factors, b) the family factors, and c) factors at the community level (Hashemi, 2105). Reviewing the previous literature in this principle has shown that from among the protective factors in the individual level which seems to bear a special stand in the resilience functions, we can refer to the active problem solving skills, and the way the students confront the undesirable and stressful conditions (Hashemi, 2011).

Problem solving skills belong to those ones that help individuals to act more effectively while confronting the problems, and pave the way for finding a solution to the problem, and enhance their resilience and tolerance. The effective problem solving skills are related to good personal adaptation. The thinking skills, such as problem solving, play an essential role in the educational achievement; and, it seems that attention to the thinking skills is essential in the educational achievement (Shokoohi Yekta & Parand, 2011).

One of the most successful intervening programs at school to prevent and to reduce the students' behavioural problems is training of social problem solving (Mohammadi, 2002). The social problem solving is a social cognizance variable; and, it is a behavioural-cognitive process whereby the individuals attempt to identify and discover adaptive and efficient solutions for the problematic situations they encounter in the daily life. In this definition, the social problem solving is considered as a purposeful, deliberate, conscious activity, and also as a deliberate cognitive outcome (Nezo, Dizurilla & Nezo, 2005; quoted from Taher, 2013).

Based on the presented evidences, the problem solving training by parents and teachers has been effective on reducing the unacceptable behaviours andimproving the social behaviours among children (Beelmann, 2004; Logsdon, 2004; Scott, 2005; Shokoohi Yekta, Zamani, & Poor Karimi, in press), reducing aggression (Kazdin & Whitely, 2003), increasing the capability of self-control, attention to the educational performance (Monoz & Garsia, 2001),

improving the children's cognitive and educational skills (Visberg & Gesten, 1982), and reforming the children's unacceptable behaviours (Shokoohi Yekta & Parand, 2008, 2009,) (Shokoohi Yekta & Zamani, 2013).

Dizurilla (1999) stated that regarding the effects of training methods of problem solving on children and teenagers, studies indicated the advancement of of problem solving cognitive skills. Problem solving training, due to enhancing problem-based solving method, and reducing emotional-based solving method, leads to the individual's more efficiency in the face of a stressful condition, and to the reduction of abnormal behavioural symptoms (Asadi Dastejerdi, 2013).

In this regard, the results of Sinay's study (2009), aimed at identifying factors related to educational resilience among the 6th grade students, showed that the personal factors related to the educational resilience include: class participation, the use of information and problem solving skills, as well as the family factors such as parental education, the parent's presence at home, and parents' expectations.

Many studies have shown that problem solving training can significantly predict the increase of resilience. A study by Jabari Mohammad Abadi (2011) showed that problem-solving skills training can increase the level of resilience among high school students. Also, other researchers (e.g. Arian, 2017; Ashouri, 2014; Atadokht et al., 2013; Barker, 2002; Fornells & Olivers, 2000; Fraser, Galinsky, Smokvski, Terzian, Rose & Guo, 2006; Grant et al., 2001; Saeedi Moghaddam, 2018; Salami & Aremv, 2006; Selgi, 2016) showed that training solving social problems can increase the educational performance among the individuals.

As was noted earlier, the phenomenon of street children in labour is a social problem that has long existed in different countries, and has been increasing due to various factors over recent decades. According to the census announced by the statistics centre of Iran in 2006, of the total 13 million and 253,000 children, aged 10-18 years old, 3 million and 600,000 children were out of the education cycle, and 1,700 thousand children were directly recruited (Economic Newspaper of Iran's Morning, June11, 2016). However, these children are faced with many psychological and educational problems; and, they suffer from weaknesses in cognitive factors such as problem solving and resilience. Taherpour Juzmi and Fatahi Aghdam (2016) in their study concluded that there was a significant difference between children in labour and normal children in terms of resilience, the feeling of personal capability, level of resistance, and the

capability of problem solving, and that children in labour are less resilient. Alireza Saleh (2000), in his review, "A comparative study of the cognitive, behavioural and social characteristics of street children and Dormitory children in Tehran in 2000", conducted in a descriptive and inferential way, found that the mean of cognitive scores for street children are less than that for children in the dormitory, and at the level of social characteristics, there is a difference between the mean scores of street children and the children in dormitory on Wiland's scale of social development , i.e. the street children have a lower social face than their peer dormitory children.

While many studies have been conducted on resilience over recent years, few studies have been carried out on the educational resilience of vulnerable groups, and the factors that are affecting it. As was noted, the degree of resilience is one of the factors paving the way for the educational success. Therefore, due to the effectiveness of problem solving skills training on solving different types of educational and non- educational problems, and due to the presence of significant differences between the children in labour and the normal children in the variables of resilience and problem- solving skills, training the skills should be considered. In addition, previous studies have not explicitly addressed the problem solving education among the children in labour; However, attention to the education and training of this group of the society will lead to healthy psychological outcomes, and will prevent them from many disorders in their adulthood. Hence, the main objective of this study was to determine the effect of problem solving skills training on the educational resilience of children in labour. The most important hypotheses of this research were:

Hypothesis (1): Social problem-solving training leads to an increase in the educational resilience.

Hypothesis (2): Social problem solving training increases the variable of positive problem-based bias in the educational resilience.

Hypothesis (3): Social problem solving training increases the variable of providence in the educational resilience.

Hypothesis (4): Social problem solving training increases the variable of communication skills in the educational resilience.

Method

The method of the research is experimental, and the research design is quasi- experimental with pre-test, post-test and the control group.

Participants

The statistical population of this study included all the girls in labour, aged 12-18 years old, who were protected by charity centres and associations in 2018-2019 academic year. A centre as a ready sample was selected from children in labour support centres in Tehran, and a pre-test was conducted for all the girls in labour, whose average age were 15 years old. Then, among the children in labour, those whose grades in the educational resilience were lower than the average, were selected and randomly divided into two groups of 15. Finally, after implementation of 8 sessions of social problem solving training in the experimental group, a post-test was conducted for both groups.

Instruments

To examine the research variables, the educational resilience questionnaire (Samuels, 2004) was used. The questionnaire was constructed by Samuels in 2004. The predictive fitness of its validity and its construct validity were confirmed in two studies on a sample of students. All the results of linear regression analysis were significant. Also, Cronbach's alpha was 89% for 40 questions.

After its normalization in Iran, Soltani Nejad et al. (2013) reduced the number of questions in the educational resilience questionnaire from 40 to 29. The reliability of the questionnaire, evaluated in two samples of students and university students, indicated that the reliability of communication skills variable among students and university students were 77% and 76% respectively; the reliability of providence variable among students and university students were, 68% and 65%, respectively; and, the reliability of positive problem-based bias variable among students and university students were 63% and 62%, respectively.

Procedure

In this research, social problem-solving skills were trained based on the Dizurilla and Goldfried (1971)'s model during 8 sessions of 45 minutes as the following:

Table 1.

A Summary of Social Problem Solving Sessions

No. of session	Subject	Objectives, materials
1	Primary introduction to problem solving	Introducing the scholar to the members, describing the objective of the meetings, and setting the group rules, a general introduction to the concept of problem solving, and introducing the processes of social problem solving
2	General orientation	Examining the members' orientation toward the problems, selecting a proper approach, and problem orientation, doing homework assignments, and completing the unfinished story
3	Problem Definition	Exact definition of the problem or issue, training of stopping and thinking, evaluating the problems proposed by the members
4	Generation of various solutions	Finding various solutions by brainstorming method
5	Decisions on selecting solutions	Examining solutions and selecting the best one, doing classwork and homework assignments for selecting the best solution to the problems
6	Execution of solution	Training of implementing selected solutions
7	Review	Reviewing and re- inspecting the executed solutions
8	Summary, conducting post-test	Reviewing and summarizing all the subjects over the previous sessions, conducting post-test on the control and test groups

Findings

In this section, initially, the descriptive characteristics of the pre- and post-tests of the study variables in the control and the experimental groups are examined.

According to Table 2, the comparison of post-test mean scores in both experimental and control groups indicates that the mean post-test scores are increased.

Also, comparing the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group showed that the mean scores increased. Of course, the meaningful understanding of this difference requires the inferential analysis. Therefore, using the multivariable covariance analysis (observing the pre-hypotheses of the test), the main hypothesis of the study is investigated.

Table 2.

Descriptive Variables of the Educational Resilience in the Control, And Experimental Groups (Pre-Test and Post-Test)

variable	Sub-variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Educational resilience scores on pretest	Control group	83.2	6.39	71	93
	Test group	82.60	7.14	64	90
Educational resilience scores on post-test	Control group	83.86	6.83	72	96
	Test group	93.93	6.61	76	101

According to the data in Table 3, since the value of F=04.15 is significant at the significance level of $\alpha=0.01$, the study hypothesis is confirmed with 99% confidence. In other words, social problem solving training has an effect on the educational resilience among children in labour. And, the effect of social problem solving training on the educational resilience of children in labour has been estimated to be 35% according to the obtained H coefficients.

Table 3.
A Summary of Covariance Analysis of Educational Resilience in Control and Experimental Groups by Removing Cross-Effects

Source of variation	Statistical index					
	Sum of squares type III	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F coefficient	Level of significance	level of Impact
Pretest	326.012	1	326.012	9.358	.5	0.275
Group	524.143	1	524.143	15.045	.001	0.358
Fault	940.654	27	34.839			
Total	233547	30				

Accordingly, it can be said that at least for one of the variables of educational resilience (positive problem-based bias, providence, communication skills), there is a significant difference in post-test between the two groups. To find out this difference, and to examine other hypotheses, multivariate covariance analysis was performed. To examine the study hypothesis by the covariance test, it is required to observe the pre-dispositions of the covariance test. In Table 4, four pre-dispositions have been considered.

The results of Table 4 are indicative of the significance of the four tests; therefore, the multivariate covariance analysis could be used to examine the study hypotheses.

Table 4.
Results of MANCOVA Test on the Mean Scores of the Variables of Positive Problem-Based Bias, Providence, and Communication Skills

variable	Value	F ratio	Degree of Freedom of Hypotheses	Level of significance	Level of Impact	Test power
Piley's Effect	.995	1.663E3[a]	3.000	.000	0.995	0.98
Wilks' Lambda	.005	1.663E3[a]	3.000	.000	0.995	0.98
Hoteling's Effect	191.860	1.663E3[a]	3.000	.000	0.995	0.98
The biggest Rotting	191.860	1.663E3[a]	3.000	.000	0.995	0.98

According to the results in Table 5, in which the multivariate covariance analysis of the educational resilience variables with the controlling effect of the pre-test was conducted, it can be stated that:

For the variable of the positive problem-based bias, since the value of F=6.463 is significant at the significance level of α=0.05; so, the social problem solving training has a positive effect on increasing the educational resilience in the positive problem-based dimension among the students in labour; and, according to the obtained H coefficients, it is estimated to be 18.8%.

For the providence variable, since the value of F=15.34 is significant at the significant level of α=0.01; so, the social problem solving training has a positive effect on the increase of educational resilience in the dimension of providence among students in labour, and, according to the obtained H coefficients, it is estimated to be 35.4. In this way, the social problem solving training has had the highest effect on the sub-variable of providence.

For the communication skills variable, since the value of F=0.36 is not significant at the significance level of α=0.05; so, the social problem solving training does not affect the increase of educational resilience in the dimension of communication skills among students in labour; and, according to the obtained H coefficients, it is estimated to be 1.3%.

Table 5.

Multivariate Covariance Analysis Based on the Comparison between the Educational Resilience and the Controlled Effect of the Pre-Test

Dependent variable: Post-test							
Statistical Index							
Source of variation	Educational Resilience variables	Sum of squares Type III	Degree of freedom	Mean squares	F coefficients	Level of significance	Level of Impact
Modified Model	Positive problem-based bias	34.133	1	34.133	6.463	.017	.188
	Providence	197.633	1	197.633	15.343	.001	0.354
	Communication skills	4.800	1	4.800	.363	.552	.013
y-coordinate	Positive problem-based bias	9720.000	1	9720.000	1.841	.000	.985
	Providence	24710.700	1	24710.700	1.918	.000	.986
	Communication skills	50923.200	1	50923.200	3.854	.000	.993
Group	Positive problem-based bias	34.133	1	34.133	6.463	.017*	.188
	Providence	197.633	1	197.633	15.343	.001*	.354
	Communication skills	4.800	1	4.800	.363	.552	.013
Fault	Positive problem-based bias	147.867	28	5.281			
	Providence	360.667	28	12.881			
	Communication skills	370.000	28	13.214			
Total	Positive problem-based bias	9902.000	30				
	Providence	25269.000	30				
	Communication skills	51298.000	30				
Modified Total	Positive problem-based bias	182.000	29				
	Providence	558.300	29				
	Communication skills	374.800	29				

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, the effect of social problem solving training on the resilience of students in labour was investigated. According to the statistical results, the study hypotheses were confirmed indicating that the social problem solving training can have a positive effect on increasing the educational resilience in positive problem-based bias , and providence variables among students in labour, and it causes a significant mean difference between the two experimental and control groups.

The results of this study were in concordance to the results of Jabari Mohammad Abadi's study (2011), that showed problem solving skills can increase the level of resilience among high school students, as well as Fraser, Galinsky, Smowski, Terzian, Rose and Guo (2006), Salami and Aremv (2006), Saeedi Moghaddam (2018), Arian (2017), Selgi (2016), and Atadokht et al (2013), who showed that solving social problems can increase the individual's educational performance. Also, the results of the present study are consistent with the results found by Taher Pour Juzami and Fatahi Aghdam (2016), who compared the resilience in normal children and children in labour in Shahr-e-Babak city and the results of the study by Shahani et al (2015), who investigated the relationship between problem solving skills and resiliency in drug-dependent individuals seeking quitting. Thus, problem-solving skills are capable of predicting resiliency. Believing in solving life problems increases

the level of tolerance which can be used as an important aspect of training the students in labour.

Also, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of many previous studies conducted on the effect of problem solving on resilience (Apple & Kaestner, 1979; Dizurilla, 1992; Intagliata, 1987; Platt et al, 1973). In this way, social problem solving training, as a strategy, can help students in labour to improve their ability to work on the correct ways of coping with problems and, by increasing their resilience to problems, it can help them to properly cope with psychological pressures from the work. The increased resilience achieved by improving problem solving abilities, not only helps the students in labour to maintain their physical and mental health, but also leads them to manage the conditions and problems better.

According to the problem-solving theories in this research, the problem solving was investigated as a cognitive and behavioural process based on the problem solving model of Dizurilla and Goldfried (1971), who defined the social problem solving as a deliberate, meaningful, conscious activity as well as a targeted and effective cognitive outcome. Dizurilla stated that the social problem solving consists of 5 dimensions:

The first is the positive problem solving bias; i.e., the positive orientation towards the problem; A cognitive tendency to problem solving is essential. For example, it is stated that 'believe that the problem is a challenge' and that 'all challenges can be overcome'. The second dimension of the social problem solving is the negative problem solving bias, which is against the positive orientation towards the problem. It is the deterrent or ineffective cognitive-emotional set and is introduced to the student in social-problem solving as a problem solving issue and, the individual is forbidden from this kind of negative bias. Concerning the relationship between the first and the second dimensions of social problem-solving and the sub-variables of educational resilience, it can be said that, as the results show, by social problem-solving training the sub-variables of the educational resilience can be positively influenced. One of these sub-variables is the providence, which has almost common concepts with the first dimension of social problem solving. Therefore, it can be said that training social problem-solving, with respect to the concepts of positive and negative biases can have a positive effect on the providence variable, which is a sub-variable of the educational resilience.

The third dimension of problem solving is logical; logical problem-solving is the essential problem-solving method, which can be defined as systematic,

conscious and logical use of effective problem solving skills; which, it is comprised of defining and compiling the problem; producing various solutions; decision making; and, verifying the solution. According to the results, the social problem solving training can have a positive effect on the sub-variable of positive problem-based bias in the educational resilience, which almost bears common aspects with the third dimension of social problem solving.

The fourth dimension is the shock-carelessness style that is the inefficient model of problem-solving where the individual actively uses techniques and strategies to solve the problem, which are limited, shocking, impenetrable, hasty and defective. And, in social problem solving training, it is taught to the student as a problem-solving challenge, and the person is forbidden from this kind of shock- carelessness style.

Finally, the fifth dimension is the avoidance style, which is another inefficient pattern characterized by negligence, passivity, procrastination and dependence. A person using this method prefers withdrawing from facing the problems. And, in training social problem solving, it is taught to students as a problem-solving challenge, and the person is forbidden from this kind of avoidance style.

Given the fact that children in labour are faced with several problems, such as depression and anxiety, hunger and inappropriate nutrition, health problems, illness, developmental delays, psychological and educational problems, and that these children can easily be mistreated by professional offenders, including robbers, drug dealers, or prostitution house owners, etc., the role of psychological interventions for this spectrum of individuals becomes vibrant. Of course, these tense situations can be transformed into successful situations by the intervention, the educational resilience, which has been addressed in this study. It has been strengthened through student's social problem-solving training. It enables the students in labour to achieve success in school, despite the adverse environmental and personal experiences, and makes it possible for resilient students to prepare themselves for the high-risk environment.

The beneficial effects of the present study can be designed as a social problem solving training system, and applied in the family environment, education, and other social institutions. However, it should be mentioned that this research was carried out on girls in labour with an average age of 15 years old. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other age groups or male groups. Other studies can be done on both sexes to make the generalization more appropriate.

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