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Research Paper

The Effectiveness of Positive Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy on Boredom and Academic Procrastination of Female Students

Salman Zarei[*1], Khadijeh Fooladvand [2], Zahra Zebarjadi Shabani [3]

1. Corresponding Author: Assistant professor, Psychology Department, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran
2. Assistant professor, Psychology Department, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Lorestan University, Khorramabad, Iran
3. M.A. in Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Azad University, South Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of present study was to investigate the effectiveness of the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy on boredom and academic procrastination of female students. In this pretest–posttest quasi-experimental research with a control group, 34 female high school students in Shahre-Rey were selected in the academic year 2019-2020 through simple random sampling method and randomly divided into an experimental group (n = 17) and a control group (n = 17). The experimental group underwent ten sessions of positive cognitive-behavioral therapy while the control group did not receive any intervention. Data were collected through the Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (Fahlman et al., 2013) and the Academic Procrastination Scale (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). The collected data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance. The results showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of boredom and academic procrastination.

***Keywords**: Academic procrastination, Boredom, Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy*

Introduction

Recently published studies report that boredom is one of the constructs that can be associated with the academic failure among adolescents (Watt & Hargis, 2018). Boredom is usually described as a transient unpleasant affective state, associated with a lack of challenge and stimulation by the task or environment (Holte & Ferraro, 2020). Empirical studies indicate that boredom is a prevalent experience among high school students and positively correlates with depression, anxiety, low motivation and interpersonal problems (Nabilla, Christia & Dannisworo, 2018). Another variable implicated in academic failure is procrastination, which can be conceptualized as a kind of self-regulatory failure in which individuals delay doing a task even though it leads to worse situations (Erdemir, 2019). More than 70% of students frequently procrastinate and for more than half of them procrastination is an ongoing problem (Eisenbeck, Carreno & Ucles-Juarez, 2019). Procrastination has many causes, ranging from fear of failure to poor time management. Regardless of the cause, procrastination often produces academic problems for students (Krispenz, Gort, Schultke & Dickhauser, 2019). Although the most important goal of any educational system is to improve students' academic achievement, there are some barriers such as boredom and procrastination. Therefore, these preventive factors should be reduced with appropriate methods. Research indicates that positive cognitive-behavioral therapy is one of the effective treatment methods for reducing boredom and procrastination. Positive cognitive-behavioral therapy with a shift in the focus of therapy from what is wrong with clients to what is right with them aims at improving their well-being by using an "upward arrow" instead of a "downward arrow" approach. Therapists try to help their clients develop longer-term resilience by increasing clients' self-efficacy and self-esteem (Bannink, 2014). Therefore, the current study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy on boredom and academic procrastination of female students.

Methodology

The present quasi-experimental research used a pre-test and post-test design with an experimental group and a control group. To implement the research design, 34 female students in Shahre-Rey were selected by simple random sampling method and were randomly divided into an experimental group (n = 17) and a control group (n = 17). The inclusion criteria were 1) the age range of 15 to 17 years old, and 2) no history of psychological problems based on a preliminary interview and participants' self- report. The experimental group underwent ten sessions of cognitive-behavioral therapy while the control group did not receive any intervention. The data were collected through the Multidimensional State Boredom Scale (Fahlman et al., 2013) and the Academic Procrastination Scale (Solomon & Rothblum,

1984). These questionnaires were administered before the training program and after the training sessions in both groups. Before completing the questionnaires, all participants gave their written informed consent, being informed that their participation was anonymous, their data were confidential, and they had the right to withdraw at any time without explanation. The collected data of the pre-test and post-test were analyzed in SPSS 24 software using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (multivariate analysis of covariance at significance level of $P<0.01$).

Results

Mean and standard deviation of boredom and academic procrastination scores pretest and posttest stages are separately presented for the experimental and control groups in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students' boredom and academic procrastination

Variables	Test	Experimental group		Control group	
		M	SD	M	SD
Boredom	Pre-test	73.86	9.89	70.50	13.96
	Post-test	62.50	7.99	71.70	9.88
Academic procrastination	Pre-test	71.23	9.37	66.53	13.43
	Post-test	58.65	8.04	68.28	9.41

Multivariate analysis of covariance was used to examine the assumptions of the study: Linear relationship between the dependent variable and the covariate, homogeneity of regression coefficients, independence of dependent variable's scores, homogeneity of variance, and normal distribution of dependent variable in the population. MANCOVA was used because its assumptions were established. The results of multivariate analysis of covariance are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of multivariate covariance analysis on the total score of boredom and academic procrastination

Variable	Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig	Eta	Power
Boredom	Pre- test	79.599	1	79.599	5.44	0.027	0.168	0.265
	Group	168.116	1	168.116	11.018	0.003	0.29	0.612
	Error	82.301	27	39.325				
Academic procrastination	Pre- test	35.965	1	35.965	5/012	0.034	0.157	0.254
	Group	75.517	1	75.517	13.062	0.002	0.32	0.675
	Error	28.713	27	14.285				

As shown in Table 2, the results revealed a significant difference in boredom ($F=11.01$, $P<0.01$) and academic procrastination ($F=13.06$, $P<0.01$) between the experimental and control groups. Therefore, positive cognitive-behavioral therapy is effective in reducing boredom and academic procrastination.

Discussion and conclusion

The present study investigated the effectiveness of the positive cognitive-behavioral therapy on boredom and academic procrastination of female students. The results showed a significant difference in boredom between the experimental and control groups, which is consistent with the results of previous research. A possible explanation is that positive cognitive-behavioral therapy reconstructs negative behavioral perceptions of students and continuously presents appropriate behaviors, which clearly leads to more balanced behaviors among students and reduces their boredom (Brydon, Walker, Wawrzyniak, Chart & Steptoe, 2009). Furthermore, the results showed a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of academic procrastination, which is in line with other studies. Positive cognitive-behavioral techniques emphasize the importance of acquiring skills and applying them, which can explain their efficacy. Therefore, in addition to working on negative thoughts, effective behaviors are taught to students. As a result, students can use these behavioral skills to control automatic and irrational thoughts and eventually overcome their procrastination (Hundt, Mignogna, Underhill & Cully, 2012). Several limitations should be noted when interpreting this study's findings. First, the present study only investigated female high school students, and therefore, and may not represent the general population. Second, all of the measures were self-reports, which might have influenced the study's validity. Finally, another limitation of this study was the sampling method which limits the generalization of the results.

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