Research Paper

The Effectiveness of Social Competence Training Based on Felner's model on Academic Self-Efficacy and Academic Adjustment in Students with Poor Academic Achievement

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of social competence training based on Felner's model on academic self-efficacy and adjustment in students with poor academic achievement. The study has a quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest design with a control group. The statistical population consisted of all the 4000 male high school students in the city of Chaypareh, Iran, in academic year 2019-20. A total of 30 students were selected by convenience sampling according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected using the Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) and the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES). According to the results, it can be argued that social competence training has had a significant effect on increasing academic self-efficacy and reducing the mean academic adjustment in the trial group and led to improvement in the students' academic self-efficacy and adjustment.

Keywords: Social Competence, Academic Self-Efficacy, Academic Adjustment.

Introduction

Poor academic achievement depends on many factors, one of which is academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy refers to the individual's confidence in his ability to perform certain academic tasks (Zhen et al.,

2017). The framework for understanding how students' academic self-efficacy affects their academic achievement is rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (1997, as quoted by Doménech et al., 2017). Experts have also pointed out that academic self-efficacy is an important factor in improving academic adjustment (Bassi, Steca and Delle Fave, 2018). Various studies have been conducted with powerful findings targeting the improved performance of students with poor academic achievement, and one of the latest approaches in this field is social competence training. Studies on this subject have proposed that social competence can predict the level of self-efficacy very effectively (Rodgers, Markland, Selzler, Murray, & Wilson, 2014; Slavkovská, et al., 2014). Studies conducted by Laktarash et al. (2019) and Falahati (2018) have also shown that social competence training improves the mean scores of communication skills and social self-efficacy and adjustment significantly. Given all the above, the present study was conducted to find an answer to the question of whether social competence training based on Felner's model affects academic self-efficacy and adjustment in students with poor academic achievement. The study hypotheses included: (1) Social competence training based on Felner's model influences academic self-efficacy in students with poor academic achievement; (2) Social competence training based on Felner's model influences academic adjustment in students with poor academic achievement.

Methodology

This quasi-experimental, pretest-posttest, controlled study was conducted on a statistical population consisting of all the 4000 male high school students of Chaypareh, Iran, in academic year 2019-20. One out of the eight high schools in this town was randomly selected, and 30 students from that school who were willing to participate in the study and met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected and randomly assigned to the trial and control groups. The Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) developed by Sinha & Singh in 1993 was used to measure the students' academic adjustment (Esmaeelpour & Farzaneh, 2018). In another study, Hamid, Veisi and Sajadi (2013) confirmed the construct validity of the scale and reported its reliability coefficient as 0.81. The Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) designed by Jinks and Morgan in 1999 and standardized in Iran by Mazaheri & Sadeghi (2015) was used to assess the students' academic self-efficacy. Morgan and Jinks confirmed the construct validity of the scale and reported its reliability coefficient as 0.82 (Mashayekhi-Dowlatabadi and Mohammadi, 2014).

The social competence training package designed by Beyrami, Hashemi Nosratabad, Badri Gergeri & Dabiri (2016) based on the model by Felner et

al. was used for the training intervention. After the selection and random assignment of the participants, both groups completed AISS and MJSES as the pretest under similar temporal and spatial conditions. The trial group then received the social competence training program based on Felner's model, given by the researcher over twelve 75-minute sessions. Finally, the participants in both groups completed AISS and MJSES as the posttest. The results were analyzed in SPSS using multivariate covariance analysis (MANCOVA) after ensuring that the assumptions hold for the data.

Results

The MANCOVA was used to assess the first hypothesis of the study. Before this test, the assumptions of covariance analysis were assessed. First, the normal distribution of the data was investigated using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the results revealed the normal distribution of the data on academic self-efficacy and its dimensions. Then, the assumptions of homogeneity of variances were assessed using Levene's test and the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrix using Box's M test. The results confirmed that the assumptions of homogeneity of the variances and homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrix hold for academic self-efficacy and its dimensions. Given the significance of Wilks' Lambda test, the results of the multivariate tests in the two groups with regard to academic adjustment showed that social competence training based on Felner's model is effective on academic self-efficacy in students with poor academic achievement.

Table 1: The ANCOVA results for the intergroup effects of the mean dimensions of academic self-efficacy

Components	Source of Change	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Eta Coefficient
	Group* pretest	8.83	1	8.83	2.58	0.122	0.105
Talent	Pretest	53.05	1	53.05	15.12	0.001	0.377
	Group	38.74	1	38.74	11.04	0.003	0.306
	Error	87.69	25	3.51			
	Group* pretest	0.392	1	0.392	0.214	0.648	0.010
Effort	Pretest	198.36	1	198.36	114.34	0.0001	0.821
	Group	25.10	1	25.10	14.47	0.001	0.367
	Error	43.37	25	1.73			
	Group* pretest	0.650	1	0.650	0.339	0.566	0.015
Context	Pretest	57.78	1	57.78	29.99	0.0001	0.545
	Group	15.85	1	15.85	8.23	0.008	0.248
	Error	48.15	25	1.93			

Table (1) shows the results of examining the homogeneity assumptions of the regression line slope and the linear relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable, which suggest that these assumptions hold for the dimensions of academic self-efficacy. Table (1) also shows that social competence training based on Felner's model has caused a significant difference between the groups in the dimensions of talent (F=11.04, η^2=0.306), effort (F=14.47, η^2=0.367), and context (F=8.23, η^2=0.248).

The MANCOVA was used to find an answer to the second hypothesis of the study. Just as in the first assumption, the assumptions of this test were assessed before performing the ANCOVA. First, the normal distribution of the data was investigated using the Shapiro-Wilk test, and the results showed that the assumption of normal distribution of the data holds for academic adjustment. Then, the assumptions of homogeneity of variances were assessed using Levene's test and the homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrix using Box's M test. The results of these two tests showed that the assumptions of homogeneity of variances and homogeneity of the variance-covariance matrix hold for academic adjustment and its dimensions. Given the significance of Wilks' Lambda test, the results of the multivariate tests in the two groups with regard to academic adjustment showed that social competence training based on Felner's model is effective on academic adjustment in students with poor academic achievement.

Table 2: The ANCOVA results for the intergroup effects of the mean dimensions of academic adjustment

Components	Source of Change	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Eta Coefficient
	Group* pretest	1.05	1	1.05	0.616	0.441	0.027
Talent	Pretest	68.62	1	68.62	43.94	0.0001	0.637
	Group	8.87	1	8.87	5.68	0.025	0.185
	Error	39.04	25	1.56			
	Group* pretest	1.31	1	1.31	0.623	0.438	0.028
Effort	Pretest	20.63	1	20.63	10.53	0.003	0.296
	Group	19.89	1	19.89	10.16	0.004	0.289
	Error	48.97	25	1.96			
	Group* pretest	4.65	1	4.65	2.44	0.133	0.100
Context	Pretest	42.29	1	42.29	21.07	0.0001	0.457
	Group	14.17	1	14.17	7.06	0.014	0.220
	Error	50.18	25	2.00			

Table (2) shows the results of examining the homogeneity assumptions of the regression line slope and the linear relationship between the covariates and the dependent variable, which suggest that these assumptions hold for

the dimensions of academic adjustment. Table (2) also shows that social competence training based on Felner's model has caused a significant difference between the groups in the emotional (F=5.68, η^2=0.185), training (F=10.16, η^2=0.289), and social (F=7.06, η^2=0.220) dimensions.

Discussion and conclusion

The results on the first hypothesis of the study confirmed the effect of social competence training based on Felner's model on academic self-efficacy in students with poor academic achievement. To explain this result, it can be argued that academic self-efficacy is one of the most important factors with a prominent role in students' academic achievement. The results on the second hypothesis confirmed that using social competence training based on Felner's model has an effect on academic adjustment in students with poor academic achievement. To explain this finding, it can be argued that, after the social competence training intervention, the changes in social adjustment in different directions showed a significant difference between the trial and control groups. The limitations of this study included the lack of access to the students due to schools closing, which rendered the follow-up of the results impossible.Teachers are recommended to consider social competence training as a way for improving academic self-efficacy and adjustment in students with poor academic achievement.

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