PROMOTION OF SOCIAL SKILLS FOR TREATING BEHAVIOR DISORDERS AMONG ARAB CHILDREN IN SECOND GRADE IN ISRAEL

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ABSTRACT

Childhood is a crucial period in the formation of every person's identity. Skills and abilities acquired by a child during this time are the foundations of his future identity. Accordingly, children with behavioral disorders are not an easy challenge for their parents. Children who display negative and socially unacceptable behaviors effect badly their environment, including their family, parents, friends, teachers, and others (Melekoğlu, Bal and Diken, 2017).

The above findings highlight the importance for social skill interventions at an early age to avoid the detrimental effects that conduct disorders can have on the future of children and their adult life.

The Israeli society exhibits elements of disobedience, expressed by lack of respect for formal authorities, abundance of informal activities and disregard to obeying the law. It has been argued that conditions in schools throughout the country, that is, large classrooms and the low pay of teachers, contribute to the recurrence of conduct disorders in schools. Many studies have examined conduct disorders among the Jewish population while only a few focused on the Arab population specifically investigating adolescents. Such research has focused on the scope of the phenomenon and pointed out social organizations as a possible source for conduct disorders. The lack of sufficient studies examining conduct disorders among the early childhood period in the Israeli Arab population, establishes the present study as pioneering and innovative.

For this reason, the present study will focus on examining the efficacy of an intervention based upon providing social skills -behavioral models in reducing conduct disorders within children at first and second grades in elementary schools.

I. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the effectiveness of behavioral and social skills promoting in reducing behavior disorders among children in second grade?

Social skills training consists of techniques that help individuals to achieve meaningful interpersonal relationships, correct communication, assess himself, and reward own adaptive behaviors (Harrell, Mercer &DeRosier, 2009). Undoubtedly, failing to achieve social skills can be very detrimental leading to damage. It can impact one on every level emotionally, mentally, psychologically and hence cause an imbalance in personality. Children who fail to learn social skills are unable to establish proper relationships, express oneself, compete healthily, cooperate, decide, and defend their rights.

The literature shows there have been many studies which have developed social skill programs and tested their impact on different aspects of personality. The Super Skills is once such program that includes collateral skill interventions and child-specific interventions.

Previous studies made throughout the world have indicated the effectiveness of interventions based upon developing behavioral and social skills in reducing conduct disorders.

A RCT (Randomized Control Trial) was carried out recently in 2018 in Chinese students aged between the ages of 9-12 years. The trial aimed to evaluate the effects of a cognitive behavioral approach-based social skills training program in reducing internalizing behavior disorders symptoms. They assigned students to both a control group and an intervention group. The analyses of the results suggest that students receiving the social skills...
training program reported a significant decrease of anxiety, depression and withdrawal symptoms during the end of the intervention and follow-up interval than did students in the control group (Tan and Haiyun, 2018).

A Canadian study which lasted for two years tested an intervention program upon seventy-three boys, of seven to nine years of age whom had conduct disorders. The study involved activities in small groups, occurring once a week, and aimed at providing the children with social and strategic skills for problem solving. The findings of the study confirmed previous findings that had established the effectiveness of behavioral and cognitive strategies in reducing conduct disorders (Bushrian, 2013).

A study examining Arab adolescents in Israel, applied behavioral cognitive interventions in order to observe the effects on the reduction of violence within adolescents. The intervention focused on identifying the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behavior, as well as developing skills for modifying behavior. The findings indicated a reduction in the frequency of most conduct disorders (social difficulties, juvenile delinquency, violence and attention deficit disorders) (Agbaria and Hamama, 2012).

The main purposes of the study are:

Understanding the phenomenon of internalizing behavior disorders in the first grades of an elementary schools in the Arab sector in Israel

1. Evaluation the effectiveness of training intervention, for improvement of social skills.
2. Figuring the effect of social skills improvement on reducing of internalizing behavior disorders

The present study is an applied research, which will examine the influence of the independent variable upon the dependent variable by controlling the highest number of intervening variables.

Research Participants

The study will aim to examine the efficacy of Group Behavioral intervention using a partial nonconcurrent multiple-baseline across the groups. The study participant number will consist of forty Arab Israeli children, studying in first or second grades, chosen from one elementary school in the northern district of Israel by the Achenbach questionnaire (1991). After initial screening, 40 students will be located and defined as children with conducted disorders (with high grades in the questionnaire). Twenty students will chosen from each class and divided randomly into the experimental and control groups – ten for experiment and another ten for the control group. The choice of small groups resulted from the argument that effective intervention should be done in small groups, so as to nurture and develop social skills.

All the participating children speak Arabic as their first language and have not yet been diagnosed with conduct disorders. The participants will be chosen with the help of the school's teachers and advisors. The participants are expected to present parent consent and to express their own willingness to participate in the research.

Tools

1. Personal details form: the mother's age, the mother's education, the sex of the child, the order the child is born in the family and the number of children in the family.
2. Achenbach questionnaire (Achenbach, 1991): used for mothers and the teachers to fill out their children's behavior, as the children are seven or eight years of age. The checklist presents 100 sayings that will assess the child's functioning according to eight scales of behavior.

Research Process

1. Collecting consents from all the involved respondents and participants.
2. Distributing questionnaires among the schoolteachers and the mothers who participate in the research during two stages of the research: prior to the intervention and following the intervention.
3. Conducting the intervention.
II. RESEARCH VARIABLES AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

**Independent variable**: an intervention based upon providing the participants with behavioral and social skills. Participants in the intervention group will receive a cognitive-behavioral approach-based social skills training program during a 45-minute session, two sessions per week. Students in the control group received the daily usual program during the period.

**Dependent variable**: the informants' (teachers and mothers) reports in the Achenbach questionnaire which assesses conduct disorder among children attending first or second grade.

**Demographic variables**: the order the child is born in the family, number of children in the family, the sex of the child, the mother's education and the mother's age.

**Statistical analysis**: multiple regression to assess the effectiveness of behavioral and social skills intervention in reducing conduct disorders among Israeli Arab children in first or second grade.

REFERENCES


