

Abstract

Objective: In the present study, the effectiveness of emotional self-awareness skills training in increasing impulse control and decreasing tendency to drug use was investigated. **Method:** In this quasi-experimental study with pre-test post-test/control group, all the male students in third grade high school in district 3 of Ahvaz constituted the population of the study. Among the population, fifty participants were selected via simple random sampling method and were divided into two groups (experimental and control). Only the experimental group was exposed to eleven training sessions of emotional self-awareness. For data collection purposes, Bar-on's Impulse Control Subscale and Zargar's Addiction Potential test were used. **Results:** The results showed that emotional self-awareness skills training in the experimental group led to the increase of impulse control and the decrease of addiction potential. **Conclusion:** Emotional self-awareness skills training is necessary to promote prevention of abusive behaviors of narcotics.

Keywords: emotional self-awareness skills, impulse control, addiction potential

The Effectiveness of Self-Awareness Skills Training in Increased Impulse Control and Reduced Tendency to Drug Use

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been a lot of researches on emotional intelligence (Diala, Muntaner, & Walrath, 2004; Gordon, Kinlock, & Battjes s, 2004). In this context, some scholars such as Salovey, & Mayer (1990) were the first to define emotional intelligence. According to Bar-Anne (1997), emotional intelligence is a set of abilities and skills that equip a person to adapt to the environment and achieve success in life, and has a lot of potentials for individuals. Also, according to Bar-on (2006), social competence, emotional self-awareness, impulse control and empathy are among the principles of emotional intelligence. Research evidences suggest that disability in emotional management is one of the problems of people. Individuals who are aware of their emotions and their emotions are regulated (those who identify and guide their feelings and understand the feelings of others and effectively deal with it) are successful in better stress management and work function.

Individuals whose emotional skills have grown well are happy and efficient in their lives, they have thought habits that make them productive and trained (Kafetsios, & Zampetakis, 2008). Drug abusers have major problems in the constituent components of emotional intelligence and are unable to recognize their personal emotions. With the lack of proper recognition of their emotions and feelings, they lose the ability to adopt correct, rational, and realistic behaviors. On the other hand, these people have difficulty in proper application of the emotions (Torres et al., 2013). When a person is subjected to peer pressure for drug use, the skill of non-submission (resistance) to peer pressure as one of the components of emotional intelligence reduces the risk of admittance and drug use. The ability to control and manage emotions makes it possible for people to use effective coping strategies in problematic situations, including (drug use suggestions). Individuals with high emotional intelligence are more likely to predict the needs of others, they control their peers' perceptions and emotions and resist drug use recommendations; but those with low emotional intelligence tend to substance abuse to cope up with negative emotions (Lucciot, Freeman, Harrington and Altman, 1991).

In recent years, many experts and researchers have turned to emotional intelligence to prevent drugs addiction (Mayer, 2006). In other words, human being with emotional self-awareness brings order and stability to his life, so that emotional intelligence causes a person to experience less negative events in his life (Goleman, 1995). Obviously, the transfer period from high school to university is associated with emotional changes and may lead to the use of alcohol and drug (Schulenberg & Maggs, 2002). In other words, some theorists believe that the student's period is transition period to adulthood, the period of experience and risk of drug abuse (Quintero, Peterson & Young, 2006). Researches show that the prevalence of drug use among adolescents, especially during adulthood is very high (Harford, Grant, Yi, & Chen, 2005). Several

studies have suggested that emotional intelligence is associated with the drug use tendency (Coelho, 2012; Austin, Saklofske, & Egan, 2005; Riley, & Schutte, 2003). In this regard, the results of the research show that low level of emotional intelligence is due to the inability to deal effectively with emotions and their management (Parker, Taylor, Eastabrook, schell, & Wood, 2008). In other words, one of the causes of people's drug use tendency is deficiency and weakness in problem solving, stress management and prevention of dangerous and impulsive behaviors (Newcomb, & Earlywine, 1996).

Research evidences suggest that training emotional intelligence skills can be one of the effective factors in prevention of drug use and impulse control. In other words, one can control and anticipate drugs tendency through emotional intelligence. In this regard, Goleman (1995) argued that emotional intelligence including self-confidence, impulse control, and self-preservation is effective on emotional control. Some research studies also showed that higher levels of emotion seeking, aggression, impulsivity and rebellion, along with lower levels of commitment and disobedience, increase the risk of substance abuse (Ciarrochi, Dean, & Anderson, 2002). The results of research about emotional intelligence in everyday life indicate that about half of drug and alcohol addicts have low emotional intelligence (Trinidad, Unger, Chou, & Johnson, 2004). Other studies on emotional intelligence and the risk of drug and smoking during adolescents showed that people with low emotional intelligence are inclined to drug abuse to cope up with their negative emotions (Trinidad and Johnson, 2002; Taylor, Bagby, & Parker, 1997). The documentation of the present introduction showed via self-awareness training, we can increase the impulse control and reduce the drug use tendency. The purpose of this study is to answer the question of whether emotional self-awareness skills training is effective on increasing impulse control and reducing the drug use tendency?

Methodology

Population, Sample and Sampling method

The statistical population of this study included all second grade high school students in district 4 of Ahvaz education center, who were studying in 2015. To select a sample, the first step was to select a male high school and implement impulse control and drugs abuse tendency tests and the students who scored high in the drug use tendency and scored low in impulse control test were selected. Then, 50 subjects (25 experimental and 25 control group) were chosen and assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. Only, experimental group was exposed to 11 training sessions and at the end of the training sessions, again, the two mentioned tests were performed on two groups.

Instrument

1- Addiction Potential test: To assess the drug use tendency, Iranian addiction potential questionnaire of Zargar (2006) was used. This questionnaire includes

36 items and two factors (active and passive). Its reliability for the total questionnaire was 0.90 via Cronbach's alpha, for the first factor (active) 0.91 and for the second factor (passive) was 0.75. The rating was based on a four-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), agree (2) and strongly agree (3). Meanwhile, for its convergent validity, its correlation with the SCL 25 scale was used which was 0.45.

2-Impulse control: To assess impulse control, a six-point subscale of impulse control of Bar-on Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (1997) was applied. This questionnaire was standardized by Dehshiri (2002) on students and its items was reduced to 90 items (Dehshiri, 2002). In the present study, the reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was 0.79. The scoring is based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "I strongly agree" (5) to "I strongly disagree" (1).

Procedure

In order to increase the impulse control and decrease the drug use tendency, in the experimental group, eleven training sessions were prepared for experimental group. At the first session, impulsive control and drug addiction potential were conducted on a group of students. In the second session, besides introducing members for each other, the benefits of participation in educational sessions were discussed. The third session was regarding addiction, substance abuse, different types of drugs and addictive substances, long-term and short-term physical and mental effects of addictive substances. The topic of the fourth session was self-knowledge and awareness of self- feelings and self-esteem. At the fifth session, the issue of decision-making and problem solving was presented. In the sixth session , communication skills; in the seventh session , anxiety coping skills ; in the eighth session , self-expression skills ; at the ninth session , emotion and anger definition and ways of protection against anger and empathy skills; ; at the tenth session, coping with failure and aggression were presented. Finally, at the 11th session, besides repeating the presented discussions in the previous sessions, again the previous tests (post-test) were implemented.

Findings

The descriptive statistics of the studied variables by the type of test and the groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Studied Variables by Type of Tests and Groups

Variables	Test type	Groups	Mean	SD
Impulse control	Pretest	Experiment	17/72	2/11
		Control	19/16	1/74
	Posttest	Experiment	24/88	3/35
		Control	17/32	2/17
Drug use potentials	Pretest	Experiment	48/56	13/90
		Control	41/92	11/99
	Posttest	Experiment	31/16	10/85
		Control	42/44	8/06

A multivariate covariance analysis should be used to assess the effectiveness of training on drug use potentials and impulse control. One of the assumptions of this analysis is the variance error. The results of the Leven’s test showed that both in drug use potentials ($F = 0.933, P > 0.05$), as well as in impulse control variable ($F = 1.46, P > 0.05$), this assumption is satisfied. The normal distribution was investigated using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the results are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: The Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Evaluation of the Normality of Distributions based on Groups and Type of Test

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Group-test type</i>	<i>Z statistics</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Group-test type</i>	<i>Z statistics</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Impulse control	Experiment- pre-test	0/168	0/068	Control- pretest	0/144	0/156
Drugs use potentials	Post-test experiment	0/148	0/161	Control posttest	0/082	0/200

As can be seen in Table 2, in all cases, the normal distribution of scores is confirmed. Another assumption is the homogeneity of regression slope. The results of the analysis showed that in impulse control ($F=1.11, P>0.05$ group interaction and pretest), and drug use potentials ($F=2.64, P>0.05$, group interaction and pre-test), this assumption is satisfied. Therefore, multivariate covariance analysis was performed and the results showed a significant difference between the two groups ($F=64.52, P<0.001, \text{Lambda Willks}=0.259$). Uni-variate covariance analysis was used to evaluate models of difference. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Uni-variate Covariance Analysis to Evaluate Difference Models in Effectiveness of Training on Studied Variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean of squares</i>	<i>F statistics</i>	<i>Significance</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Test power</i>
Impulse control	516/74	63/34	0/001	0/58	1/00
Drug use potentials	2194/32	43/30	0/001	0/47	1/00

As shown in Table 3, by controlling pretest among the male students of high school of experimental and control group, there is significant difference in terms of impulse control ($F=63.34, P<0.001$). In other words, training emotional self-awareness skills has increased impulse control. The effect rate is 0.58. In other words, 58% of individual differences in post-test scores were related to the effect of emotional self-awareness skills training. Also, there was a significant difference in drug addiction tendency ($F=43.30, P<0.001$). In other words, emotional self-awareness skills training have reduced the drug use tendency. The effect rate is 0.47. In other words, 47% of individual differences in post-test scores is rated to the effect of emotional self-awareness skills training.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study showed that emotional self-awareness training is effective on increasing impulse control. Surveys show that personal and social problems including drug addiction, substance abuse, crime, domestic violence, failure in school, the transmission of diseases through sexual intercourse, smoking and obesity are the deficit consequences of impulse control. They are considered impulse (Doran, McChargue, & Cohen, 2006). On the other hand, some studies have shown that impulsive behaviors are the main core of many psychiatric disorders such as hyperactivity / attention deficit, conduct disorder, impulse control disorder, drug abuse, suicidal behavior, personality disorders and learning disorders (Akerjordet, & Severinsson, 2007; Altun, 2003). Some scholars like Goelman (1995) argued that the benefits of emotional intelligence are to motivate individuals, help them control their emotions and allow them to succeed in facing barriers (Shalenberg & Muggs, 2002). In other words, regarding emotional intelligence skill, especially emotional self-awareness, we should say that this skill helps individuals to become familiar with their emotions, behavior and reactions (Altun, 2003) because self-awareness helps in understanding thoughts, conflicts, motivations and constraints (Rochester, Kilstoff, & Scott, 2005; Baran, 1999). The results of some studies indicate that the lower the impulse control, the higher the drug use (Egart, 1994). Concerning the importance of emotional intelligence training, some studies suggest that emotional intelligence skills training increases self-esteem, decision making, impulse control and interpersonal communication (Brackett, Mayer, & Warner, 2004).

The other results of the present study indicated that emotional self-awareness skills training was effective on reducing drug addiction tendency. In other words, the emotional self-awareness skill training has reduced the drug addiction tendency in students. Comparison of research findings with theoretical and empirical findings is in line with some of the reported findings in terms of the effect of educational intervention (emotional self-awareness skills training) on reducing the drug use tendency and changing them. Therefore, the results of this study showed that emotional intelligence skills training significantly changed the tendency of adolescents to use drugs and individual risk factors for substance use, such as self-concept, self-control skills, impulse control skills, social skills, self-expression skills has created the locus of control and attitude toward drug use (Brackett, Mayer, and Warermar, 2004). The results of the studies show that preventive programs based on the promotion of individual and social empowerment are effective on preventing drug use in adolescents.

Emotional intelligence skills training program is a preventive approach based on increasing the individual and social capabilities that has been evaluated in recent years and has had good advances in addiction prevention. The researches on drug abuse have shown that one of the main factors of drug use tendency is the lack of recognition of emotional self-awareness leading to the low self-esteem, low

communication skills and lack of impulse control by an individual (Schutte, Malouff, Simunek, McKenley, & Hollande, 2001; Botvin, 2000). Therefore, emotional self-awareness and impulse control can be a deterrent to peers and psychosocial skills. To do this, the program of life skills training and increasing the emotional intelligence skills can be a deterrent or a reduction of social harms in different groups of society. In summary, according to the results, emotional intelligence skills training is an effective preventive program that can significantly change the risk factors associated with drug use. These findings help to clarify the mechanism of emotional intelligence skills training program. We should consider important sociological and psychological factors such as communicative skills, internal inclination, personality, attitude, beliefs, view, values, emotional and psychological problems of an individual (Salovey, & Mayer, 1990). The necessity of paying attention to cultural affairs and intellectual and psychological dimensions, strengthening of will and self-reliance training for changing attitudes of people is well felt. On this basis, it is assumed that the design of methods and programs for the development of individual and social characteristics can help the adolescent to help the adolescent to overcome the shortcomings that increase his risk of drug use. In other words, developing some characteristics such as high self-esteem, emotional self-awareness, emotional impulse control, authoritative decision making, establishing and keeping healthy relations and self-expression, etc. can increase the skills and preparation of adolescents in effective coping with the risky factors and situations including drug use tendency. Low educational cooperation in providing research facilities (sufficient space for conducting educational sessions) is one of the limitations of the present research. This study emphasizes on the use of the results of this study to increase impulse control and reduce drug addiction tendency in students, states that providing emotional intelligence training courses for students is necessary

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