

Abstract

Objective: This study focuses on teachers' perspective about addiction prevention elements in the content of the Thinking and Lifestyle book of the seventh grade in the academic year of 2013-2014. **Method:** This study is a descriptive survey with a sample of 74 seventh-grade teachers who were selected by stratified random sampling method. A researcher-constructed questionnaire was the measurement instrument in this study that reviewed teachers' perceptions and expectations in seven elements. **Results:** The results showed that teachers believed the highest attention has been paid to the emotion and stress management component about substance in the content of Thinking and Lifestyle book of the seventh grade. Moreover, Freedman test results showed that emotions and stress management had the highest mean score and education about substance abuse had the lowest mean score. However, the results of paired t-test showed the existence of a significant difference between teachers' perceptions and expectations in addiction prevention elements and, thereby, it is necessary to pay more attention to the components of addiction prevention. **Conclusion:** Teachers' perspective about addiction prevention elements in Thinking and Lifestyle book of the seventh grade is positive and it is important to pay attention to addiction prevention issues and life skills, such as thinking skills and the integration of teaching materials in textbooks in different aspects.

Key words: addiction prevention, book content, Thinking and Lifestyle

Addiction Prevention Components in the Content of Thinking and Lifestyle Book of Seventh Grade from Teachers' Perspective

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Introduction

In recent decades, the world has witnessed shocking statistics about the prevalence of substance abuse, generally at the community level, especially in the teenage and young adult population (Ammari, Pashashrifi, Hashemian & Mirzamani, 2011). Meanwhile, adolescents' addiction to narcotic drugs has more serious consequences because the survival and development of any society hinges on the vitality, happiness, and active participation of adolescents in the future of the society. On the other hand, adolescents are in a critical situation due to rapid physical and mental changes and their emerging identity and, thereby, they are more sensitive to environmental inclinations and more at risk to drug addiction (Sarrami, Ghorbani & Minooi, 2013). The adolescents' tendency to drug use is one of the biggest concerns among parents. The average age of the onset of smoking in Iran has been reported to be 16.6 years and the highest age proportion of the onset of addiction (45.7) has been between the ages of 17 and 22 years. This is so while the early onset of drug use increases the higher consumption, more frequent use, and the use of more hazardous substances (Fathi & Fadavi, 2012).

Adolescence is a critical period in life wherein inappropriate behavioral patterns start. Childhood and adolescent injuries have a relationship with drug abuse (Draucker, Claire Burke, & Mazurczyk, 2013). Poor self-efficacy provides the basis for substance abuse in students (Bruckner et al., 2013). Ibabe, Stein, Nyamathi, Bentler, & Peter (2013) conducted a study on the homeless in Los Angeles and California and showed that the history of injury and drug use as well as the history of chronic homelessness and psychological stress are predictors of substance abuse. In addition, there is a relationship between ineffective coping strategies and unsuitable problem-solving methods in addicts. Addicts use more inappropriate problem-solving methods, such as helplessness, inhibition, and avoidance, and they use constructive problem-solving methods, such as creativity, trust, and willingness to a lesser extent. People lacking social skills and having poor decision-making show the worst precociousness and highest rates of drug use (Bahrami, Mo'azedian, & Hosseini al-Madani, 2013). Moreover, antisocial and aggressive behaviors are the most important risk factors for substance use (Ammari et al., 2011), and the school students who feel incompetent turn to drug use to escape stress and problems and, finally, their vulnerability is more than their peers (Pourkord, Abolghasemi, Narimani & Jamalui, 2013).

Numerous studies have shown that substance abuse disorder has an unfavorable prognosis and imposes tremendous direct and indirect medical costs on the family and society (Bahrami et al., 2013). The difficulty and high cost of treatments has directed the main focus towards primary prevention programs on drug abuse, especially at school level and among students (Mehri, Esmaeili, Rostami, & Torkashvand, 2012). The adolescents and young adults who turn to

addiction not only cannot be a constructive element for society anymore, but they will be neutral creatures in the best state, and will be the origin of social irregularities and anomalies at the worst state until they can be extricated from addiction. The complications of substance abuse are irreparable in many cases and even the most effective treatment is likely to encounter relapse. In such a situation, it assumes high importance to logically replace prevention with treatment, and it is assumed that preventing people from becoming infected is more effective than the treatment of this disorder (Jamali & Ghorbani, 2008).

In recent years, different approaches and techniques for the treatment of substance abuse and relapse prevention have received attentions, one of the most important of which was life-skills training on drug prevention. Through life-skills training, individuals can express assertion in the community and meet their need for respect inasmuch as the establishment of healthy and friendly relationships with peers and others (Herbert et al., 2005, Kopelowice, Liberman, & Zarate, 2006). Over the fifty years since the first prevention program, various strategies and plans have been introduced for the prevention of drug abuse (Botvin, Griffin, & Williams, 2001). One of the reasons for tendency toward drug use is the lack of young people's familiarity with life skills (Botvin & Griffin, 2004).

Schools have always had a special place in the comprehensive education prevention plan (Jamali & Ghorbani, 2008). Nies, & Ma Ewen (2001) have found that school education is a major step in the early prevention of adolescent addiction. Ariza et al. (2013) also indicated that school-based programs are effective in reducing cannabis use. Faggiano et al. (2010) also found that school-based and student-oriented programs are effective in the reduction of smoking and drug use. Bruckner et al. (2013) analyzed the content of preventive school curricula in the United States with regard to the application of educational standards in these programs, and reported that public social and emotional skills have been used in primary schools for addiction prevention, and information- and knowledge-based programs on the consequences of drug use have been used in secondary schools for addiction prevention. Tahiri, Gashi, Lsmajli, & Muja (2012), Cuijpers (2002); Farmani, Mo'azedian, Hosseini al-Madani & Bahrami (2011); Taremian & Amir Houshang (2007); Younesi & Mohammadi (2006); Ghaderi Dehkordi (2000) have all pointed out that information is provided about the consequences of drug use and education on drugs at schools. Similarly, Matsumoto et al. (2011) examined the possible impact of intervention through self-teaching books on drug addicts and showed that the use of workbook increases their awareness of drug dependence problems and motivates them to be treated. Some scholars (Speath, Weichold, Rainer, & Wienser, 2010; Bahrami et al., 2013; and Refahi, 2008) believe that the most effective and most accessible programs among all preventive programs in schools are life and social skills training programs. These skills include decision-making and problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, ability to communicate effectively, interpersonal

relationships, self-awareness and empathy, and emotional and stress management. These programs usually expand protective factors and reduce risk factors. Botvin's Life Skills Training Program (1998) was designed to prevent drug abuse, smoking, and alcohol drinking. This program is aimed at educating about substances, drugs and attitudes toward them, teaching resistance skills to social effects, and promoting and developing self-management skills and interpersonal skills. In their research, Turner (2008); Watson, Jeanne, & Gordon (2006); Botvin, Griffin, & Williams (2001); Botvin & Griffin (2004, 2005); Zollinger (2003); and Bahrami et al. (2013) showed that the teaching of decision-making and problem-solving skills is effective in the reduction of addiction.

Drug prevention training in school curricula is one of the basic goals of education for bringing up a healthy and creative generation of the community. In order to make prevention programs effective, the way the content and gist of the plans are presented to students is of importance. It is important to focus on two important points in presenting the content of school drug addiction education: 1- Curriculum should lay their emphasis on life skills and social skills and the principles governing the curriculum should be observed. 2. It should be presented as an extracurricular program in the form of educationally attractive and appropriate programs to the children, adolescents, and young people's interests. In addition, the presentation of the content of educational addiction prevention programs in the curriculum of different school grades with the observance of horizontal and vertical cohesion is one of the structures of each proposed model for addiction prevention in schools (Jamali & Ghorbani, 2008). Since the textbook is considered to be the most basic source of learning in the educational system of our society and considering the educational position in changing misbehaviors in the positive direction and promoting the standards of living, it is imperative to include proper content in terms of primary addiction and abuse prevention in textbooks. Therefore, textbooks at different levels, especially the high school level, should be reviewed and evaluated. In this regard, in addition to the consideration of content by materials developers, teachers need to learn about drugs, substance abuse, and national programs on fighting against these problems to be informed and knowledgeable about the consequences of this phenomenon and find awareness, sensitivity, and appropriate attitudes to fight this problem. In this way, teachers will be able to gain the skills required for winning students' confidence and talking to them about the sensitive issues related to drug abuse. In the case of the non-assignment of attention to these points, it is possible that the inclusion of a specific subject in the curriculum does not have any positive result except a waste of time for teachers and students; therefore, it may lead to the development of a pessimistic attitude toward the national plan of fighting against drugs among the addresses (Mehriar & Jazayeri, 1998). Hence, it seems important and necessary to examine teachers' viewpoint as the implementers of education programs about the content of Thinking and Lifestyle Book in terms of the addiction prevention program.

The main research question in this research is formulated as follows: To what extent addiction prevention components have been assigned credit in the content of Thinking and Lifestyle Book from teachers' perspective?

Method

Population, sample, and sampling method

This study is a descriptive survey and its statistical population included the number of 91 seventh-grade teachers in Miandoab and Shahin Dezh cities who taught Thinking and Lifestyle book in the academic year of 2013-2014. From among this population, 74 seventh-grade teachers were selected via stratified random sampling method based on Krejcie & Morgan table where 34 teachers (46%) were male and 40 teachers (54%) were female. The number of 10 (13.5%) teachers was in the age range of 23-30 years, 23 teachers (31.1%) were in the age range of 31-40 years, and 41 teachers (55.4%) were in the age range of 41 years and above. In addition, 23 subjects (31.1%) were Empirical Sciences teachers, 11 subjects (14.9%) were Educational Affairs teachers, 15 subjects (20.2%) were Educational Sciences teachers, 12 subjects (16.2%) were Persian Literature teachers, and 13 subjects (17.6%) were teachers of other subjects. The number of 17 teachers (23%) had a 1-10-year teaching experience, 16 (21.6%) had an 11-20-year teaching experience, and 41 (55.4%) had a 21-30-year teaching experience. In terms of education degree, four teachers (5.4%) had high school diplomas or associate's degrees, 65 teachers (8.87%) had bachelor's degrees, and 5 teachers (6.8%) had master's degrees.

Instruments

A 40-item researcher-constructed questionnaire was used in this study to review teachers' perceptions and expectations. The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale (very high, high, moderate, low, and very low). For the construction of this questionnaire and selection of the components and indicators of addiction prevention, theoretical and empirical background and relevant and accessible resources relating to the objectives of the Comprehensive Document for the Prevention of Addiction were used. After the determination of the initial components and items, the reliability and validity of the questionnaire were examined. In this way, the components and relevant items were submitted to curriculum development experts and educational psychologists in order to evaluate the content validity of the questionnaire; and their corrective comments were applied. The reliability of the questionnaire was obtained equal to 0.95 through Cronbach's alpha in the final administration. The construct validity was determined through exploratory factor analysis by principal component analysis and Varimax rotation. For the evaluation of the assumption of correlation between variables, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was used and the results indicates the presence of the required correlation ($P < 0.001$; Bartlett's test of Sphericity = 2.271; KMO = 0.822).

Principal component analysis was used to perform factor analysis. The initial results of this analysis showed 13 factors (components) with an eigenvalue higher than one, which explained 0.69 of the variance. Due to the loadings below 0.45, 16 items were excluded from the analysis. Once more, 21 items were eliminated as a result of the conduct of Varimax rotation in the factor analysis. This led to the final extraction of 7 factors (components) with 40 items, namely training about drugs (7 items), thinking skills (9 items), skills of success and coping with failure (8 items), communication skills (4 items), emotional management and coping with stress (4 items), assertiveness (4 items), and self-awareness and empathy (4 items). The following Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained for the components as: 0.92 for thinking skills, 0.90 for training about drugs, 0.88 for skills of success and coping with failure, 0.88 for communication skills, 0.87 for emotional management and coping with stress, 0.82 for assertiveness, and 0.76 for self-awareness and empathy.

Results

The descriptive statistics of the components of addiction prevention in the content of Thinking and Lifestyle textbook (the 7th school grade) and its comparison with the mean score (3) are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of components of addiction prevention in the content of Thinking and Lifestyle textbook

<i>Component</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Thinking skills	2.74	0.70	33.310	0.0005
Training about drugs	2.44	0.84	23.880	0.0005
Skills of success and coping with failure	3.15	0.66	40.260	0.0005
Communication skills (interpersonal relationships)	2.82	0.78	30.980	0.0005
Emotional and stress management	3.26	0.76	36.620	0.0005
Assertiveness	2.84	0.80	30.580	0.0005
Self-awareness and empathy	3.05	0.66	20.430	0.0005
Total	2.92	0.602	39.830	0.0005

As shown in Table 1, according to teachers' opinions, the highest mean score was related to emotional and stress management component and the lowest mean score belonged to training on drugs. For the comparison of the mean difference between teachers' perceptions and expectations, dependent t test was run and its results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Dependent t test for the examination of the mean difference between teachers' perceptions and expectations about the components of addiction prevention in the content of Thinking and Lifestyle textbook

<i>Component</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Thinking skills	Perceptions	2.74	0.70	13.01	0.0005
	Expectations	4.21	0.75		
Training about drugs	Perceptions	2.44	0.87	14.60	0.0005
	Expectations	4.26	0.72		
Skills of success and coping with failure	Perceptions	3.15	0.66	14.02	0.0005
	Expectations	4.45	0.66		
Communication skills (interpersonal relationships)	Perceptions	2.82	0.78	10.14	0.0005
	Expectations	4.09	0.79		
Emotional and stress management	Perceptions	3.26	0.76	10.18	0.0005
	Expectations	4.33	0.69		
Assertiveness	Perceptions	2.84	0.80	10.85	0.0005
	Expectations	4.16	0.81		
Self-awareness and empathy	Perceptions	3.05	0.66	9.56	0.0005
	Expectations	4.15	0.78		

As it can be observed in Table 2, the mean score of perceptions is lower than that of expectations ($P < 0.001$). Friedman test was used to rank the components and the results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Ranking of addiction prevention components based on Friedman test

<i>No.</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Mean of ranks</i>	<i>Ranking</i>
1	Thinking skills	3.54	6
2	Training about drugs	2.91	7
3	Skills of success and coping with failure	4.75	2
4	Communication skills (interpersonal relationships)	3.63	5
5	Emotional and stress management	4.93	1
6	Assertiveness	3.88	4
7	Self-awareness and empathy	4.36	3

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate teachers' viewpoint regarding the importance of the content of Thinking and Lifestyle textbook (the seventh school grade) in components of drug addiction prevention. The findings showed that the mean scores of components of addiction prevention (thinking skills, training about drugs, skills of success and coping with failure, communication skills (interpersonal relationships), emotional and stress management, assertiveness, empathy and self-awareness) were significant with the mean score; and this reflects the attention of Thinking and Lifestyle textbook to the components of addiction potential from teachers' viewpoint. Since the mean score of emotional and stress management component is higher, this component has received teachers' attention more than the other components in Thinking and Lifestyle textbook. On the other hand, training about drugs component has taken up the lowest mean score from teachers' perspective. In addition, from teachers'

viewpoint, the thinking skills component has also received little attention. To explain this finding, it can be argued that the consumption and abuse of drugs are among the most risky behaviors during childbirth, adolescence, and youth (Rutter, 2002; Weinberg et al., 2002; cited in Babapour Khairuddin, Dardashzadeh & Tusi, 2011). Therefore, considering the personal and social problems caused by students' low level of awareness and drug addiction disadvantages, educational programs and curricula as well as the contents of textbooks related to this issue should provide students with sufficient information. The use of other countries' experiences and programs, such as school-based programs with emphasis on students (Ariza et al., 2013) and the use of general and emotional skills for addiction prevention (Faggiano et al., 2010) can be effective in informing students about disadvantages of drug use and reduction of substance consumption.

The findings indicated that there is a significant difference between the two states of perceptions and expectations in the component of drug addiction. The results of Friedman test showed that the component of emotional and stress management had the highest and the component of training about drugs had the lowest mean rankings. The findings of this study are consistent with those of the studies carried out by Ariza et al. (2013), Huang et al. (2012), Speath, Weichold, Rainer, & Wienser (2010), Faggiano et al. (2009), Turner (2008), Botvin, & Griffin (2004), Zollinger (2003), Boyd (1991), Bagheri & Bahrami (2003). These authors reported that life-skills education can be founded upon substance abuse preventive behaviors. On the other hand, the obtained results are to some extent consistent with those of the studies conducted by Bruckner et al. (2013), Tahiri (2012), Matsu Motto (2011), Cuijpers (2002), Farmani et al (2011), Younesi & Mohammadi (2006). These researchers have shown that what is happening nowadays in high schools about drug addiction prevention is to get information about the consequences of drugs and teach about drugs. In addition, it should be taught about the losses of drug use, smoking, and alcohol drinking tailored to the education level and other curriculum contexts at all levels of education.

Considering research findings and the review of the research on addiction prevention, one can say that the training of decision-making and problem-solving skills to students helps them choose the best possible decision and solution in dealing with problems since these skills are among the thinking skills and effective factors in addiction prevention. However, in the content of the book, thinking skills are the second component after training about drugs that has not received enough attention. This is so while the teaching of thinking and decision-making skills has a positive effect on decreasing addicted people's attitude toward the risks of narcotic drugs and tendency to drug use (Bahrami et al., 2013). Turner (2008), Watson et al. (2006), Botvin & Griffin (2005), Marilyn (2005), Zollinger (2003), and Bahrami et al. (2013) showed that decision-making and problem-solving skills and, consequently, thinking skills are the

effective components in prevention. Hence, school curricula should prepare students to identify problems and pertaining solutions by creating appropriate educational opportunities. Therefore, the inclusion of the topics of addiction prevention and life skills, including thinking skills and training about drugs in textbooks can be important in many ways because the inclusion of these materials in the textbooks leads to students' familiarity with this social problem. In addition, life skills training is effective in changing attitudes and increasing learners' awareness about the complications of drug abuse.

It is suggested that the components of addiction prevention, especially thinking skills and training about drugs be assigned more credit in Thinking and Lifestyle textbook (the seventh school grade). Teachers, as principal implementers of school curriculum, are also recommended to acquire the required training on the methods and foundations of drug prevention. Moreover, other methods, especially the content analysis technique, are suggested to be used in future research on addiction prevention in order to study and analyze the content of the mentioned book regarding the assignment of attention to the components of drug addiction prevention.

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