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## Effect of Life Skill Training on Self-Esteem of the Iranian High School Students

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### **Abstract:**

*Present study was aimed at studying the effect of life skill training in high school female students in Tehran, Iran. For this purpose initially five high schools were selected randomly. Then from each school 30 students were selected whom the authorities of schools felt had some problems. Finally, 60 students were selected 12 from each school. Therefore, total sample of the present study comprised sixty (60) female students. Then, they were assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. Each group had 30 subjects the experimental group was given Life skill training for 10 days, while the control group wasn't given such training. The Self esteem of the Experimental and control group was measured before and after Life skill training. Self –esteem was measured with the help of Coppersmith's self-esteem inventory (1981). This inventory had general, social, school academic and home parent dimensions. Analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) was used to analyze the data. Results showed that on all the dimensions of self-esteem the experimental group had scored better on post condition than control group. Thus, life skill training was highly effective in improving the self-esteem of the subjects.*

**Key words:** Life skill training, Self-esteem, experimental group, control group

### **1. Introduction**

In Iran, age of high school students ranges from 14 to 17 years. This age group comes under adolescence period. This period is very sensitive for the development as adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Its age boundaries are not exact, but in western society adolescence begins at around age 13 and ends at about age 22 (Weiten & Lloyd, 2007), during which a young person is no longer physically a child but is not yet an independent, self-supporting adult. In the past, adolescence was always defined as the "teens" from ages 13 to 19. But adolescence isn't necessarily determined by chronological age. It also concerns how a person deals with life issues such as work, family, and relationships. So although there is a clear age of onset, the end of adolescence may come early or late for different individuals (Ciccharelli & Meyer, 2006). The beginning of adolescence is marked by puberty, an increase in biological events leading to an adult sized body and sexual maturation (Berk, 2007).

It is also a period of "storm and stress" for many adolescents all over the world. Though, biological forces play a significant role in the physical changes that take place during the transition period from a child to an adult, a combination of biological, psychological and social forces influence an adolescent's development. This transition is so crucial that adolescents face problems in certain areas of life such as parent child conflicts, risky behaviors and mood changes. If these issues are not resolved the individual suffers role diffusion or negative identity, which results in mismatched abilities and desires, direction lessens and unpreparedness for the psychological challenges of adulthood (Berk, 2007). As a result, self-esteem of many students is affected negatively.

#### *1.1. Self-Esteem*

Self-esteem reflects a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs (for example, "I am competent," "I am worthy") and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride, and shame (Hewitt, 2009). Self-esteem is a disposition that a person has which represents their judgments of their own worthiness (Oslen, Breckler, & Wiggins, 2008).

Self-esteem is generally considered the evaluative component of the self-concept, a broader representation of the self that includes cognitive and behavioral aspects as well as evaluative or affective ones (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). While the construct is most often used to refer to a global sense of self-worth, narrower concepts such as self-confidence or body-esteem are used to imply a sense of self-esteem in more specific domains. It is also widely assumed that self-esteem functions as a trait, that is, it is stable

across time within individuals. Due to the importance of self-esteem in young people, authors suggest ways how to develop positive self-esteem in young people (Collins-Donnelly, 2014).

According to Rosenberg (1979) "A person with high self esteem is fundamentally satisfied with the type of the person he is, yet he, may acknowledge his faults while hoping to overcome them". High self-esteem implies a realistic evaluation of the self's characteristics and competencies, coupled with an attitude of self-acceptance and self-respect.

Internal stresses and social expectations lead to moments of uncertainty, self doubts and disappointment in the adolescents. As a result, self-esteem of adolescents is affected negatively. In view of this, life skill training is important to help young people cope with challenges that they face in their day to day lives.

### 1.2. Life Skills Training

Life skills have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) (1999) as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life".

The main aim of life skills training is to make children perform better in all walks of life by acquiring psychological competence. The life skills approach lends itself well to implementation across cultures and has been integrated into curriculum in various countries (Godfrey, Toumbourou, Rowland, Hemphill, & Munro, 2002; Lloyd, Joyce, Hurry, & Ashton, 2000). This training has been found to be effective in many countries in dealing with many problems of young people. But there is a paucity of research of effectiveness of this training on young people in Iran.

In view of this, effort has been made to see effect of life skill training on the self-esteem of Iranian high school students.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Sample and Design

Total sample of the present study comprised sixty (60) female students. They were selected from five different schools of Tehran, Iran. Then, they were assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. Each group had 30 subjects. Age of the subjects ranges from 14 to 17 years.

### 2.2. Tool

- **Self Esteem questionnaire:** Self –esteem was measured with the help of coppersmith's self-esteem inventory (1981). This inventory consists of 58 items that constitute the lie scale which is a measure of the student's defensiveness. All SEI items are distributed in the following areas:

General-self (GS)- This subscale include 26 items and they are as follows: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 36, 37, 38, 43, 44, 49, 50, 51, 56, 57.

Social self (Ss) - This subscale include 8 items and they are as follows: 4, 11, 18, 25, 32, 39, 45, 52.

Home parents (Ho) - There are 8 items for this subscale and they are as follows: 5, 12, 19, 26, 33, 40, 46, and 53.

School Academic (Sc) - This subscale include 8 items and they are as follows: 7, 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 48, and 55

Lie scale- There is 8 items for this subscale and they are as follows: 6, 13, 20, 27, 34, 41, 47, and 54.

In the sample of present study, the Cronbach alpha was .84, for general self, .80 for social self, .85 for home parents and .78 for school academic.

### 2.3. Procedure

In the beginning five high schools were selected randomly. Then from each school 30 students were selected whom the authorities of schools felt had some problems. Thereafter, self-esteem questionnaire was administered to all these 150 female students. Finally, 60 students were selected 12 from each school that was having low self-esteem. Therefore, total sample of the present study comprised sixty (60) female students. Then they were assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. Each group had 30 subjects. The experimental group was given Life skill training for 10 days. Each session lasted from 45 to 75 minutes.

The types Of life skills UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO list are:1-Self-awareness building skills2-Problem solving 3-Critical thinking 4-Creative thinking 5-Decision making 6-Interpersonal relationship skills7- Communication skills 8-Empathy 9-Learning to set goals 10-Coping with stress and 11-Advocacy. In the present research only the six life skills as indicated in the following table were taught to the experimental group by the trainers, Mr. Hasan Rahimi and Mis.Fahime Rezaei.

	Number of sessions	Life skill
1	2sessions	self-awareness
2	1sessions	Empathy
3	2sessions	Learning to set goals
4	1sessions	decision –making
5	2sessions	coping with stress
6	2sessions	interpersonal skills

Self esteem of Experimental group was measured before and after Life skill training. While Self Esteem of control group was measured twice but without Life Skill training. Obtained data were analyzed with the help of Analysis of Co-variance (ANCOVA)

### 3. Results

Obtained results are being presented in the following tables:

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	2540.730(a)	3	846.910	30.230	.000
Intercept	2682.006	1	2682.006	95.733	.000
Group	17.403	1	17.403	.621	.434
selfesteem.1	146.617	1	146.617	5.233	.026
group * selfesteem.1	260.017	1	260.017	.737	.394
Error	1568.870	56	28.016		
Total	76772.000	60			
Corrected Total	4109.600	59			

Table1: Comparison between control group and experimental group on total self esteem (Covariate in pre condition)

It can be observed from table-1 that there was non significant F ratio ( $F = .737, p > .05$ ) between variance of experimental and control group on self- esteem. It means that variance is equal in these two groups. Therefore, we can perform analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	40.9333	3.24763	30
Control	28.6667	7.30297	30
Total	34.8000	8.34591	60

Table 2: Mean and S.D. of Experimental and Control group for total Self-esteem (Post)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	2335.062	1	2335.062	83.349	0.01	.598
Error	1568.870	56	28.016			

Table3: Comparison between Experimental and Control group on total Self-esteem (Post)

Table-3 showed that there was significant difference at .01 levels between the two groups on post assessment of total self-esteem. It may be seen from above table -2 that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean=40.93) than that of control group (Mean=28.66). It means life skill training was effective in improving the total self-esteem. The effect size of the life skill training on total self-esteem was large (as per the guidelines of Cohen, 1988; .01 small, .06 moderate, .14 large) as depicted by partial Eta squared (.598).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	81.522(a)	3	27.174	23.158	.000
Intercept	94.723	1	94.723	80.725	.000
Group	.069	1	.069	.059	.810
selfesteem.1	1.107	1	1.107	.944	.336
group * selfesteem.1	5.506	1	5.506	5.692	.075
Error	65.711	56	1.173		
Total	2225.109	60			
Corrected Total	147.233	59			

Table 4: Comparison between control group and experimental group on General self esteem (Covariate in pre condition)

It can be observed from table-4 that there was insignificant F ratio ( $F = 5.692, p > .05$ ) between variance of experimental and control group on general self. It means that variance is equal in these two groups. Therefore, we can perform the covariance test.

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	7.0103	.58152	30
Control	4.7593	1.45532	30
Total	5.8848	1.57971	60

Table 5: Mean and S.D. of Experimental and Control group for general Self-esteem (Post)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	70.412	1	70.412	60.006	0.01	.517
Error	65.711	56	1.173			

Table 6: Comparison between Experimental and Control group on general Self-esteem (Post)

Table-6 revealed that there was significant difference between the two groups on post assessment on general self-esteem at .01 levels. It may be seen from above table -5 that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 7.01) than that of control group (Mean =4.73). It means life skill training was effective in improving the general self-esteem of experimental group.

The effect size of the life skill training on general self-esteem was large (as per the guidelines of Cohen, 1988; .01 small, .06 moderate, .14 large) as depicted by Partial Eta Squared (.517).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	29.984(a)	3	9.995	4.171	.010
Intercept	220.207	1	220.207	91.890	.000
Group	.285	1	.285	.119	.732
socialself.1	.165	1	.165	.069	.794
group * socialself.1	1.964	1	1.964	.819	.369
Error	134.200	56	2.396		
Total	2057.000	60			
Corrected Total	164.183	59			

Table7: Comparison between control group and experimental group on social self (Covariate in pre condition)

It can be observed from table-7 that there was insignificant F ratio (F= .819,  $p > .05$ ) between variance of experimental and control group on social self. It means that variance is equal in these two groups. Therefore, we can perform the covariance test.

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimenta l	6.3000	1.39333	30
Control	4.9333	1.65952	30
Total	5.6167	1.66816	60

Table 8: Mean and S.D. of Experimental and Control group for social Self-esteem (Post)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	27.211	1	27.211	11.355	.001	.169
Error	134.200	56	2.396			

Table 9: Comparison between Experimental and Control group on social Self-esteem (Post)

There was a significant difference at .01 levels between the two groups on social self-esteem in post condition (table-9). It may be seen from above table -8 that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 6.30) than that of control group (Mean =4.93). It shows that life skill training was effective in improving social self-esteem. The effect size of the life skill training on social self-esteem was large (as per the guidelines of Cohen, 1988; .01 small, .06 moderate, .14 large) as depicted by Partial Eta squared (.169).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	39.193(a)	3	13.064	4.597	.006
Intercept	356.792	1	356.792	125.552	.000
Group	.383	1	.383	.135	.715
schoolacademic.1	.385	1	.385	.136	.714
group * schoolacademic.1	12.526	1	12.526	4.408	.060
Error	159.140	56	2.842		
Total	1800.000	60			
Corrected Total	198.333	59			

Table 10: comparison between control group and experimental group on school academic (Covariate in pre condition)

It can be observed from table-10 that there was insignificant F ratio ( $F= 4.4080$ ,  $p>.05$ ) between variance of experimental and control group on school academic. It means that variance is equal in these two groups. Therefore, we can perform the covariance test.

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimenta 1	5.8333	1.51050	30
Control	4.5000	1.90734	30
Total	5.1667	1.83346	60

Table 11: Mean and S.D. of Experimental and Control group for school academic Self-esteem (Post)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	27.035	1	27.035	9.514	0.01	.145
Error	159.140	56	2.842			

Table 12: Comparison between Experimental and Control group on school academic Self-esteem (Post)

Table-12 showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups at .01 levels on school academic self-esteem in post condition. It may be seen from above table -13 that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 5.83) than that of control group (Mean =4.50). The effect size of the life skill training on school academic self-esteem was large (as per the guidelines of Cohen, 1988; .01 small, .06 moderate, .14 large) as depicted by Partial Eta squared (.145).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	33.772(a)	3	11.257	6.621	.001
Intercept	263.195	1	263.195	154.802	.000
Group	4.437	1	4.437	2.609	.112
homeparent.1	.010	1	.010	.006	.939
group * homeparent.1	.010	1	.010	.006	.939
Error	95.212	56	1.700		
Total	1933.000	60			
Corrected Total	128.983	59			

Table13: Comparison between control group and experimental group on home parent (Covariate in pre condition)

It can be observed from table-13 that there was a none significant F ratio ( $F= .006$ ,  $p>.05$ ) between variance of experimental and control group on home parent. It means that variance is equal in these two groups. Therefore, we can perform the covariance test.

Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Experimental	6.2333	.93526	30
Control	4.7333	1.55216	30
Total	5.4833	1.47857	60

Table14: Mean and S.D. of Experimental and Control group for home parent Self-esteem (Post)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Contrast	32.708	1	32.708	19.237	0.01	.256
Error	95.212	56	1.700			

Table15: Comparison between Experimental and Control group on home parent Self-esteem (Post)

There was significant difference between the two groups at .01 levels on post assessment of home parent self-esteem (table-15). It may be seen from above table -14 that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 6.23) than that of control group( Mean =4.73). It means life skill training was effective in improving home parent self-esteem of the experimental group.

The effect size of the life skill training on home parent self-esteem was large (as per the guidelines of Cohen, 1988; .01 small, .06 moderate, .14 large) as depicted by Partial Eta squared (.256).

#### 4. Discussion

Table-2 shows that in the post condition the mean of the experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 40.93) than that of the control group (Mean =28.66). This means that life skill training was effective in increasing total self esteem of experimental group.

Table- 3 shows that the rate of the ETA coefficient was .598 which means that effect size of the life skills training on total self-esteem was large as per Cohen (1988) guidelines.

Thus, Life skill training was effective in increasing the total self-esteem of adolescents. Life skills training were given by the researcher in self-awareness, setting goals and decision making. This result has been supported by various studies ( Friesenhahn, 1999; Winkleby et al., 2004; Yadav & Iqbal, 2009). Friesenhahn's (1999) study confirmed that there was a significant difference in the self esteem of adolescents after LST, along with improved ability to interact with others, ability to make their own decisions and manage their resources, and greatly improved ability to effectively work in groups to accomplish group goals. The results of these studies clearly illustrate the positive effect of life skills training on adolescents and importance of self-esteem as an important personality variable that needs to be strengthened as it is directly related to negative behaviors. If adolescents develop some life skills, then positive feelings of self worth will follow or if such youth have positive feelings of self-worth, they will be more likely to develop and practice new life skills. It could be said that Group learning provides opportunity for social skills by encouraging social interaction and thus promotes self-esteem in the subjects.

Table -6 of ANCOVA shows that in the post condition, there was significant difference between two groups. Table-5 showed that the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 7.01) than that of control group (Mean =4.73). This means that life skill training was effective in increasing general self esteem of experimental group. Table- 6 shows that the rate of ETA coefficient was .517, it means that effect size was large.

General self-esteem is one type of the self esteem that refers to a general sense of pride in oneself. Self-awareness life skill training was given by the researcher for eight hours and this is responsible for the improvement of the experimental group. The Life Skills Training Elementary School Program is a comprehensive, dynamic, and developmentally appropriate substance abuse and violence prevention program designed for upper elementary school students. This highly effective curriculum has been proven to help increase self-esteem, develop healthy attitudes, and improve their knowledge of essential life skills – all of which promote healthy and positive personal development

Table -9 of ANCOVA shows that there was significant difference between the groups in post condition for social self. Table-8 revealed that the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 6.30) than that of control group (Mean =4.93). This means that life skill training was effective in increasing social self esteem of experimental group. Table -9 shows that the rate of ETA coefficient was .169, it means that the effect size of life skill training on social self was large.

General social skills enhance students' social competence with a variety of general skills including effective communication, overcoming shyness, learning to meet new people and developing healthy friendships. The goal of the life skills training was to enable participants to become pro-active in developing, maintaining, and improving upon skills that are useful for positive social interaction. Furthermore, this training sought to reduce anxiety and improve self-control through mastery of problem-solving strategies. This was achieved by helping participants develop effective interpersonal skills, appropriate work habits, and the ability to resolve conflict. Participants also quickly learnt to improve self-confidence and develop a sense of self-efficacy in daily interactions.

Table -12 of ANCOVA showed the significant difference between the group on school academic self-esteem in post condition. Table-11 revealed that in the post condition the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 5.83) than that of

control group (Mean =4.50). This means that life skill training was effective in increasing school academic self esteem of experimental group. Table -12 shows that the rate of ETA coefficient was .145, it means that the effect size was large.

These results were obtained because Life Skills Training as given by the researcher addressed such issues as talking in front of groups. Homework was given to increase the confidence of students giving them the opportunity to practice and have positive experiences doing so. Students were taught not to ignore problems, how to set goals, how to make decisions, and how to overcome problems, all important life skills for academic self-esteem.

Table -15 of ANCOVA shows that in the post condition, the two groups differed significantly. Table-14 revealed that the mean of experimental group was significantly higher (Mean= 6.23) than that of control group (Mean =4.73). This means that life skill training was effective in increasing home parent self esteem of experimental group. Table -15 showed that the rate of ETA coefficient was .256, it means that the effect size was large.

The Life Skills Training given by the researchers was very interactional in nature and family issues, conflicts, and strategies and advice for resolution and understanding were a common part of the forty hours of training. Additionally, a book on understanding adolescents was introduced to the parents. The results of the present study demonstrate that this training was indeed effective in improving home parent self-esteem.

In sum, life skill was very effective in improving self-esteem of high school students.

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