

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GROUP GESTALT THERAPY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT OF FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN YAZD CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to investigate the effectiveness of group Gestalt therapy on the psychological empowerment of female secondary school students in Yazd. This study was a quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test and control group. The population consisted of all female high school students in the academic year 2014-15 in Yazd city and 30 students (15 in experimental group 15 in control group) were selected by available sampling. For experimental group, group Gestalt therapy was carried out over four weeks (8 sessions for 90 minutes). Aspertirej empowerment questionnaire instrument (1995) was employed for data collection. The results of analysis of covariance showed that group Gestalt therapy is effective on psychological empowerment of students.

Keywords: Group Gestalt Therapy, Psychological Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement is considered as one of the aspects of development of education system, which represents the achievement of standards and educational purposes. One of the goals of school activities is progress in lessons. The problems associated with academic failure are often the result of psychological barriers (Davison and Amfyl, 2009). One-dimensional look to factors associated with academic achievement cannot open the door to practical measures on the field and therefore, considering the psychological dimensions of the students can explain more comprehensive offer of educational attainment. One of the psychological aspects is empowerment of students during education, for how much student feels capable, competent and efficient in performing academic tasks, predicts the progress of the students in the study. So enabling empowerment is one of the main tasks of the country's educational authorities. Empowerment starts through changes in beliefs, thoughts and attitudes of individual and allows to him/her to believe that he has the ability and competence for the tasks to be successful and freedom and independence in carrying out her/his activities (Davison and Amfyl, 2009). Based on previous studies, using psychological approaches is one way to increase psychological empowerment and Gestalt therapy approach is recognizing done (Zahrakar, 2008). Gestalt therapy is focused on growth, self-awareness and awareness of content, namely the consciousness of relationship with oneself, others and the world. Based on Gestalt approach, one with life experiences and the views of other people internalizes the values and wants to use them to live. Growth in this therapeutic approach is to move from environmental protection to personal protection. Clients interpret their experiences by understanding them from moment to moment. Referred to re-experience of the painful problems and situations, clients complete their last unfinished works which have hampered their present function (Blanchard *et al.*, 1996) and arrive to a psychological synergy. Our problem in this study is whether group Gestalt therapy is effective on the psychological empowerment of high school students?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology

The present study is a quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test and the control group and the population of study is consisted of female high school students in 2014-15 in Yazd. Based on the pre-test (Aspertirej Questionnaire, 1995) 30 students who received the lowest score in psychological empowerment were selected and divided into two control and experimental groups of 15 participants and

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experimental group received group Gestalt therapy in 8 sessions for 90 minutes, and then both groups were taken post-test by above- mentioned questionnaire.

Data Collection

In this study, Aspertirej empowerment questionnaire was used (1995).

Aspertirej Empowerment Questionnaire (1995)

This questionnaire was developed in 1995 and has 5 components including significance, competence, self-determination, confidence and effectiveness. The scoring is based on the Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and reliability questionnaire with Cronbach's alpha was reported for aspects between 82.0 to 78.0 and 84.0 for the total scale respectively. Also in another study using Cronbach's alpha, Farahani (2011) reported reliability for significance 79.0, merit 81.0, self-determination 80.0, influence 82.0 and ultimately 85.0 for total questionnaire and reported the validity of questionnaire 52.0 by pairing with questions in 001.0 which shows high validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Table 1: Descriptive results

Tests	Groups	Numbers	Mean	Standard deviation
Pre- test	Control group	15	52.6	6/52
	Experimental group	15	52/20	6/40
Post- test	Control group	15	51/20	7/24
	Experimental group	15	64/73	4/36

Table 2: M box

Test – value	5/16
F- value	1/59
Level of significance	0/18

Table 3: Landie and Wilks

Test – value Level of significance
0/30 0/002

In this test, Landie test – value was reported 30.0 and indicates that there is significant difference between pre-test and post-test means.

Table 4: Internal effects of the test subjects

Acceptance testing	F value	Level of significance
141/06	12/29	0/002

According to tests, since the significance level of the test is equal to 0.002 and is smaller than 0.05, so it can be concluded that: the group Gestalt therapy intervention was effective and increased psychological empowerment in students and this hypothesis is confirmed.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was sought to evaluate the effects of group Gestalt therapy on psychological empowerment of female high school students in Yazd city.

Statistical data indicates that the average difference between pre-test and post-test in the control group and the experimental group who were under treatment shows significant differences in psychological

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empowerment component. These results mean that group Gestalt therapy will lead to a significant increase in psychological empowerment of female students and since the average difference between pre-test and post-test in this component is more than the control group, it is concluded that group Gestalt therapy intervention increased psychological empowerment in female students and is significant and effective. The results of the research are in line with Khezel (2013), Rezaei (2013), Solhie *et al.*, (2013), Salimie *et al.*, (2014), Yousefi *et al.*, (2009), Chan *et al.*, (2013), Adam (2010), Wagonis and Colleagues (2007), Leschyngre and Finnegan (2005), O'Leary and Richard (1990). The hypothesis can be said to explain that Gestalt therapy emphasizes the following points: 1) the uncompleted matters; 2) unities; 3. Self-microorganism; 4. Being in the present moment.

The main goal of Gestalt therapy is to help clients understand that they don't need to be dependent on others, and can be an independent entity, so as long the psychological obstacles are removed, the man seems to develop (Bandura, 2001). Gestalt therapy is to help the individual to increase his experience through his/her consciousness and becomes aware of failed experiences and efforts stopping his awareness. Another aspect is that the individual expands the relationship between figure and field, so that he can give his full attention to the main figure and leave everything else to the background. In Gestalt therapy, the avoidance behaviors are tried to reach the balance state. The goal is that individual interacts and to be in touch more with his/her environment, be aware of emotions and unwanted stimulation, contacts quite actually with himself and the environment and his/her whole organism to be maintained. Gestalt therapy is based on time and existing situation and earning maximum awareness. In the light of consciousness, a person can act on the Gestalt healthy principle, i.e. to detect the most important unfinished business or situation and to deal correctly with it. Unfinished situation or affairs are considered as unsatisfied needs that make up incomplete gestalts. Unfinished status and affairs usually exercise a lot of pressure and often strongly influence their behavior (Baild, 2006). Gestalt therapy spreads these experiences: feeling effective, feel deserve, and sense of choice and significance (Crawford, 2012). Empowerment programs increase the ability of people to look for problems and find solutions for them (Frank, 2012). Similarly, according to Fanl (2004), these programs will empower people to actively participate in the problem-solving processes. Empowerment means aid to people so that they can change. The results of the empowerment are including positive self-esteem, the ability to reach the target and having a sense of control over life and processes of change and also a sense of hope for the future. In empowerment, the procedure should be positive and the capacity of people should be emphasized more than problems and shortage (Grossman *et al.*, 2013).

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