



The effectiveness of drama therapy on aggression and adjustment in adolescent female students

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Adolescence is the subject of many researches in behavioral sciences due to its evolutionary importance. The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effectiveness of drama therapy on aggression and adjustment in adolescent female students. **Method:** The current research was of an experimental type with a pre-test, post-test, follow-up plan with a control group. The statistical population of the research consisted of all secondary school girls in Tehran in the academic year 2017-18. 40 people from the community were selected by multi-stage and purposeful cluster sampling and were randomly assigned to two experimental and control groups. In both groups, students' aggression and adaptability were evaluated through Bass and Perry's aggression questionnaire (1992) and Sinha and Singh's (1993) adaptability questionnaire. The first group received drama therapy based on the method proposed by Lawton (2009) in 10 sessions, but the second group did not receive any intervention. Then Again, in the post-test and two months later in the follow-up phase, the aggression and adaptation of both groups were evaluated. The data were analyzed using multivariate covariance analysis. **Results:** The results of the research showed that play therapy on aggression ($F = 944.19, P < 0.001$) and adaptability ($F = 91.56, P < 0.001$) were effective in adolescent female students. Also, play therapy in both post-test and follow-up stages had an effect on students' aggression and adaptability. and this effect continued until the follow-up period. **Conclusion:** Considering that adolescence itself is associated with incompatibility and behavioral abnormalities including aggression, it is possible to use the drama therapy method in order to prevent aggression and create adaptation.



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Introduction

Many medicinal and non-pharmacological methods are used to reduce psychological problems during adolescence. Unlike medicinal methods, non-pharmacological methods do not have consequences and side effects. One of the non-pharmacological treatment methods is the play therapy method (Orkibi, 2018). Drama therapy is one of the creative methods in art therapy that combines role-playing, story, improvisation and other theater techniques and therapeutic methods (Flustina, Teodoracci, Michel, Erzbet, and Dota, 2015). Drama is a part of play that contributes to self-confidence, hope, a sense of security, empathy, and focus (Gordon, Schnarr, & Pendzik, 2018). In the method of play therapy, identification with the group leader or others causes a feeling of emotional discharge, sympathy and relief. Also, in this method, clients can make significant changes in their relationships with family members and others by developing suppressed talents and learning how to face problems through the existing potential (Lee, Wang, Guo, and Lee, 2015). Drama therapy is the targeted use of dramatic/theatrical processes and productions to achieve specific therapeutic goals such as physical, mental and emotional improvement, getting rid of symptoms, personal growth and improving mental health (Lee & Tsai, 2014). Many studies support the effectiveness of this treatment method on aggression and adaptation, including Rostampour and Hossein Sabet (2018), in their research, which showed that emotion regulation of high school students was improved in the two stages of post-test and follow-up with drama therapy. Emotional and behavioral problems, including aggression, according to several studies in different statistical communities, including women addicts (Ethani Eshran, Yazdakhasi, and Parhehi, 2018), patients with bipolar disorder (Bagheri, Saadat, Poladi, 2018), students (Gazit, Ching Mei, Yen Abala, 2012), adolescents (Karatas, Gokakan, 2009), has been significantly reduced by drama therapy. In Soodha's (2019) research, the result indicated that drama therapy and counseling sessions reduced the amount of bullying and aggressive behaviors in high school students. Also, research results indicate that drama therapy is effective in improving adaptation. For example, Minchitti, Giusti, Fossati, and Vigni (2016) investigated the effect of this treatment method on the adaptation of cancer patients, and the results indicated the

effectiveness of the treatment. Rozea et al. (2007) showed that classroom drama therapy programs improved social adjustment in immigrant students. Adolescents are the future builders of societies and educators of the next generation. The prevalence of aggressive and maladaptive behaviors during adolescence, and because adaptive behaviors during adolescence will significantly affect their emotional, social, and academic development. As a result, it is difficult and impossible to achieve educational goals despite behavioral disorders such as aggression and incompatibility. Therefore, conducting the present research is of particular necessity and importance.

Method

The current research is experimental, with a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up plan with a control group. The statistical population of the present study was all second-grade high school students in Tehran who were studying in the 2018-2019 academic year. In order to do multi-stage cluster sampling, first, one direction was selected from among the four geographical directions. One direction was selected from among its education districts, and one high school was selected from among the high schools of that district by simple random method.

Tools

1. High school students' adjustment questionnaire. This questionnaire was prepared by Sinha and Singh (1993, translated by Karami, 2010), distinguishing high school students with good adjustment from students with poor adjustment in three factors, including emotional, social, and educational adjustment. Each of these contains 20 items. The final questionnaire has 60 questions, and the scoring of the questions is yes-no. A score of 1 is given to answers that indicate compatibility, and 0 otherwise. Some questions of the questionnaire are scored reversely so that the sum of the scores indicates the general compatibility of the person. The range of scores is between 0-60. Moreover, the high scores show more compatibility among students.

2. Aggression questionnaire. The aggression questionnaire was created by Bass and Perry (1992). This tool has 29 items that are scored based on a five-point Likert scale (1=completely disagree to 5=completely agree). The score of this tool is obtained through the item's total score,

so the range of scores is between 29 and 145, and a higher score means more aggression.

3. Drama therapy. In this research, drama therapy sessions were used for the first group based on the method suggested by Lawton (2009), which was used and confirmed by Korki et al. (2013). In this method, the educational content is designed for ten 90-minute sessions

Results

The mean (standard deviation) age in the experimental group was 17.5 (4.2), and in the control group, it was 16.9 (4.1). There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of age. The average and standard deviation of the scores of the dependent variables of the experimental group, compared to the control group, from pre-test to post-test and follow-up are given.

In examining the significance of the difference between the groups (experimental group and control group) in the post-test, the first choice was multivariate covariance analysis to control the effect of the pre-test according to the research plan. Before analyzing the data related to the hypotheses, its assumptions were examined to ensure that the data of this research estimate the underlying assumptions of covariance analysis. For this purpose, the normality of the data with the Shapiro-Wilks test showed that the significance level in the aforementioned test is greater than 0.05, so the distribution of scores in the research variables was normal ($P < 0.05$). Also, to check the assumption of homogeneity of variances (to ensure that the variances of the two experimental and control groups are the same), Levin's test was used ($F = 3.156$ and $p > 0.05$) and the results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is valid and the use of covariance analysis is allowed. Also, to check the assumption of homogeneity of the regression line's slope, the variance test analysis was used ($F = 707.59$ and $p > 0.5$). The non-significance of this interaction indicates compliance with the assumption of homogeneity of the slope of the regression line. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of the slope of the regression line is also valid for the research variables. Therefore, according to the assumptions, multivariate covariance analysis test is allowed.

All four relevant multivariate statistics (Pillay's effect, Wilks's lambda, Hotelling's effect and the largest zinc root) are significant. In other words, between the subjects who received the

intervention (experimental group) and the subjects who did not receive the intervention (control group), There is a significant difference in at least one of the dependent variables in the post-test stage ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, after that, it is time to examine whether each dependent variable is affected separately from the independent variable. For this reason, the effect of the independent variable on each of the dependent variables has been investigated using the one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOA) test.

The result of the univariate test is significant for each dependent variable ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, it was concluded that the independent variable affects each dependent variable separately in the post-test. Moreover, the first and second hypotheses of the research are confirmed. In order to evaluate the continuity of the effect of drama therapy, multivariate covariance analysis was performed in the follow-up phase.

All four relevant multivariate statistics (Pillay's effect, Wilks's lambda, Hotelling's effect and the largest zinc root) are also significant in the follow-up phase. In other words, between the subjects who received the intervention (experimental group) and the subjects who did not receive the intervention (control group), there is a significant difference in at least one of the dependent variables in the follow-up phase ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, after that, it is time to examine whether each dependent variable has a continuous effect separately. For this reason, the effect of the independent variable on each of the dependent variables in the follow-up stage has been investigated by using the one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOA) single-variable test.

The result of the univariate test for each dependent variable in the follow-up phase is also significant ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, it was concluded that the independent variable continuously affects each dependent variable individually. Moreover, the third and fourth hypotheses of the research are confirmed.

Conclusion

Although aggression is a part of human instinct, it does not appear only because of the innate tendency and motivation of the driver of aggression. However, failure to achieve goals and dissatisfaction is the main cause of aggression. During adolescence, the balance between impulse and internal control is disturbed due to the person's incompatibility with the

people around him, and we will see more aggressive behaviors (Sadock & Sadock, 2015). Since personality characteristics, interpersonal relationships, conflicts and psychological conflicts, and emotional disorders are examined and treated in therapy, a person is helped to understand the psychological dimensions of his problem and revise it by showing it. Drama therapy links cognitive analysis with experiential and action dimensions. In practice, by implementing interpersonal interaction in an issue and involving the body and mind around the fact that an event is happening in the current situation, it conveys opinions and feelings to the level of a person's consciousness that only talking about that issue is not enough. Non-verbal aspects not only affect the quantity and quality of the relationship but are also clues of motivation and latent attitudes. The occurrence of behaviors with a higher level of anger or more obvious states of fear causes awareness of emotions that may be hidden and suppressed in the person (Moreno, 2000). On the other hand, the reversed and neutral roles played by the students in drama therapy helped them to have a new look at the issue of aggression and bullying, and in this way, it caused aggression in teenagers to decrease.

In drama therapy, people can perform what they have learned outside of the group. It emphasizes the here and now and interpersonal interactions, confrontation, spontaneity, creativity, and emotional discharge (Corey, 1990). Most of the time, the effect of theatrical performances is emotional discharge, in this case, three concepts should be explained. First of all, the show has led to the release of negative emotions, as a result of calling emotions, bad memories are released. According to Moreno's opinion, the second concept is that emotional discharge creates creativity and spontaneity, which takes place in connection with the active audience and with actor training, and creates new solutions. Third, according to Buell, when the audience actively enters the game, they find solutions to face their real-life problems after displaying their formed emotions (Missick, 2004). On the other hand, teenagers transform due to physical, emotional, and psychological changes that may disrupt their social, academic, and interpersonal performance. Therefore, group therapies such as drama therapy, due to its characteristics, can reduce individual, social, and school incompatibilities and incompatibilities in teenagers by keeping

their minds active. Through the treatment sessions, the students were able to visualize and implement their behavioral problems and consequences. By seeing these consequences, they made the best choices and adaptive behaviors.

Conflict of Interest

According to the authors, this article has no financial sponsor or conflict of interest.

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