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The Effectiveness of Dweck's Mind Set Intervention on Students' Negative Orientation towards Problem and Hopelessness during the COVID-19

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Extended Abstract

Aim

As a result of the global spread of the Covid-19 disease, significant changes have occurred in people's lifestyles, and schools' educational approaches have been profoundly affected. The World Health Organization (2020) has identified this disease as a significant threat to both physical and mental health. This situation has led to short-term and long-term psychological impacts on children and adolescents, fostering feelings of fear and anxiety (Shen et al., 2020). Various factors such as age, educational status, mental health status, economic challenges, as well as fear of infection and exposure to the disease, play crucial roles in determining the extent and quality of its impact on the mental well-being of children and adolescents (Singh et al., 2020). Moreover, measures such as quarantine, school closures, limited outdoor activities, dietary changes, and sleep disturbances have altered students' lifestyles, exacerbating psychological pressures (Gash et al., 2020). Additionally, the global Covid-19 crisis has diminished safe spaces and heightened concerns about the future (Hakimsalar et al., 2020). Increased levels of depression and hopelessness symptoms can strengthen cognitive distortions and negative problem orientation, thereby reducing the likelihood of successful problem-solving and leading individuals to employ inappropriate coping strategies (Nezu et al., 2004). Consequently, enduring these educational challenges and elevated stress levels can disrupt students' performance and further diminish adolescents' mental health. Research indicates limited investigations in Iran regarding Dweck's Mindset theory, particularly in the context of negative problem orientation among students. Thus, this study posits that motivational interventions based on Dweck's Mindset theory could effectively reduce students' negative problem orientation and feelings of hopelessness. The objective of the current study was to examine the effectiveness of Dweck's Mindset intervention on negative problem orientation and hopelessness among high school students.

Methodology

This study adopts an applied approach, utilizing a quasi-experimental design (pretest-posttest) with a control group. The target population comprised female high school students in Isfahan, selected through a multi-stage random sampling method. Participants included 30 female high school students from 11th and 12th grades, with an average age of 17 ± 0.5 and 18 ± 0.5 , respectively, residing in Isfahan city. The research utilized the Negative Orientation towards Problem Questionnaire (NPOQ) and the Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) as assessment tools. A total of 183 students completed the questionnaires. Initially, 50 students were purposively selected for screening, from which 30 students were randomly assigned to either the experimental ($n=15$) or control group ($n=15$). The experimental group underwent 8 intervention sessions. Data analysis was conducted using MANCOVA in SPSS-23.

Findings

The findings reveal that the pre-test and post-test averages of the negative orientation variable for the experimental group were 35.33 and 29.06, respectively. Additionally, the pre-test and post-test averages of the disappointment variable for the experimental group were 11.40 and 11.13, respectively. There was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of negative orientation towards problems ($P < 0.01$), with Dweck's Mindset intervention contributing to its reduction. However, regarding the hopelessness scale, the intervention only showed effectiveness in addressing dimensions related to despair in achieving desires and negative expectations of the future.

Conclusion

The results indicate that the intervention based on Dweck's Mindset has effectively reduced students' negative orientation towards problems in the experimental group. This intervention likely enhances students' adaptation and emotion regulation through cognitive appraisal strategies and fostering a growth mindset (De Castella et al., 2013). Consequently, promoting a shift in mentality and attitude towards challenges can enhance stability and performance, enabling students to tackle stressful factors with greater insight (Schroder et al., 2017).

However, the intervention did not significantly impact confidence in the future, trust in the future, and pessimistic motivation. Persistent disappointment, associated with negative future expectations and lack of motivation, may lead to negative evaluations of new situations and inappropriate coping strategies (Avci et al., 2009). Disappointment often arises from repeated failures and inadequate problem-solving skills, affecting emotional and cognitive control (Oguzturk, Akca, & Sahin, 2011). Therefore, interventions aimed at identifying and mitigating unrealistic expectations, reducing feelings of helplessness, and addressing external factors may help alleviate internal anxiety levels.

Based on the results, the motivational Dweck's Mindset intervention has positively influenced reducing negative orientation towards problems, negative future expectations, and hopelessness regarding achieving desires, fostering a more optimistic attitude towards problem-solving. Consequently, it has led to improved student attitudes in this study. Thus, this intervention holds promise for alleviating psychological issues among students, contributing to the effectiveness of psychosocial interventions, and safeguarding public health, especially for high-risk groups.

Keywords: COVID-19, Dweck's Mindset, Hopelessness, Negative Orientation towards Problem.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, all ethical standards, including obtaining informed consent from participants and parents, ensuring the confidentiality of personal information, and voluntary participation of participants, have been observed. Additionally, ethical considerations in line with principles of ethics have been given attention in this research.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest in reporting the results of this study.

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