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## **Comparing the Effectiveness of Reality Therapy and Positive Thinking Training for Cognitive Avoidance; Emotional Regulation Strategies with the Modifying Role of Gender in Blind Students**

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### **Extended Abstract**

#### **Aim**

The absence of vision leads students to encounter challenges in traditional learning, as they are unable to observe the postures, body language, and the surrounding environment. Consequently, they miss the opportunity to learn about nonverbal communication (Nameni, Hayat-Roshanai, & Torabi-Milani, 2016). Another critical aspect in human psychology is the regulation of emotions. While emotions are functional and evolutionary, their presence can enhance human survival chances (Satmir, 2007). Thus, it becomes imperative to regulate emotions to support mental health and overall well-being (Otaly & Jenkins, 2018). Emotion regulation serves as a mechanism to better cope with environmental demands, with emotions serving as vital indicators of external conditions or internal states (Jarymowicz & Imbir, 2015).

Positive thinking stands out as another significant component in psychology. A positive individual approaches stressful situation with optimism and focuses on surmounting challenges, sometimes requiring time. Cultivating optimism in life results in a shift in the quality and quantity of one's thoughts, creativity, rationality, and ultimately, fosters positive behavior (Motamed Jahormi, Feridouni, & Dehghan, 2017). Positive psychological interventions encompass treatments or activities aimed at fostering positive emotions, behaviors, perceptions, and knowledge, thereby enhancing well-being and alleviating depressive symptoms (Motamad Jahrami, Feridouni, & Dehghan, 2017). Another study suggests that interventions promoting positive thinking enhance adaptive performance and improve the quality of life across various demographic groups (Lightsey & Boiraz, 2011).

#### **Methodology**

To explore the current research, a quantitative data collection method (semi-experimental) was employed. This method utilized a pre-test-post-test design, supplemented by a follow-up test conducted after one month to assess the stability of the provided training. The research cohort consisted of visually impaired male and female secondary school students from Ardabil city during the academic year 2019. Sixty-six eligible volunteers (33 girls and 33 boys) were selected through random sampling. The participants were divided into two experimental groups: one receiving reality therapy training and the other receiving positive thinking training. Additionally, a control group was established through random allocation, with 22 individuals in each group (comprising 11 girls and 11 boys). Cognitive Avoidance Questionnaire (CAQ) (Sexton & Dugas, 2009) and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) (Garnefski, Kraaij & Spinhoven, 2001) were utilized for data collection. Positive thinking training comprised 10 sessions, while reality therapy training consisted of 8 sessions, each lasting 60 minutes.

**Findings**

The results revealed a disparity in therapeutic intervention between the two experimental groups and the control group. Furthermore, the therapeutic intervention program proved to be more impactful on cognitive avoidance and emotional regulation among girls compared to boys ( $P < 0.05$ ). Results from the follow-up test demonstrated the enduring effectiveness of therapeutic interventions among blind students after one month. Both reality therapy and positive thinking training were effective in enhancing the emotional regulation and cognitive avoidance of male and female students.

**Conclusion**

This research, delving into the variables and components among blind students for the first time, underscores the efficacy of reality therapy and positive thinking training in reshaping perspectives on avoidance and emotion regulation among the blind. In the current study, the mean level of cognitive avoidance decreased in blind students following reality therapy and positive thinking training, with this reduction persisting to an acceptable degree in the follow-up test conducted one-month post-training. Thus, to elucidate the findings of this research, it is crucial to compare the effectiveness of the discussed therapeutic interventions with other psychological components relevant to blind individuals.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Avoidance, Emotion Regulation Strategy, Positive Thinking, Reality Therapy.

**Ethical Considerations**

In this study, utmost care was taken to utilize the data solely in alignment with the research objectives. Additionally, participants were granted the right and freedom to withdraw from cooperation at any stage of the study if they so desired. Each member of the test group was also entitled to receive their test results. Moreover, for the control group, therapeutic intervention was offered post-research at their discretion.

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**Conflict of Interest**

This article declares no conflict of interest.

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