

Effectiveness of Lazarus Approach-based Group Consulting in Social Problem Solving and Emotional Maturity of Adolescences

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Abstract: The main objective of this study was to examine effectiveness of Lazarus approach-based group consultation in solving social problem and emotional maturity of female adolescences living in Kashan, Iran. The applied methodology in this research was quasi-experiment with pretest and posttest groups. Statistical society of study comprised all of adolescent girls who live in Kashan. First, cluster random sampling was used as 36 members were selected as sample size ($n=36$) and 18 members were randomly assigned to test group and 18 members were assigned to control group. The applied instrument in this study was Social Problem Solving Inventory (SPSI-R) designed by D'Zurilla et al. (2002) and Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) designed by Yashwir Singh & Mahesh Bhargave (1991) that were filled out by control and test groups within two steps before and after the experiment. Collecting data, results were analyzed using ANCOVA through SPSS Software and results showed that Lazarus approach-based group consultation had a significant effect on social problem solving and emotional maturity of adolescent girls. Detailed results indicated significant effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on solving social problem of adolescent girls. Moreover, Lazarus approach-based group consultation had a significant effect on emotional maturity of adolescent girls.

Keywords: Group Consultation, Lazarus Multifaceted Approach, Social Problem Solving, Emotional Maturity, Adolescent Girls.

INTRODUCTION

Almost all of psychologists and experts in educational sciences believe that adolescence is the most sensitive, critical and important growth period of human. In this period, the person become mature, looks for his/her identity, tend to be independent and become separate from childhood; hence, adolescents do not have a stable mental status so face many behavioral problems during this period (Holling et al., 2010). According to Colman (1988), problems of adolescences reach to their peak of tension at a specific age that may vary considering gender difference and when several problems reach their peak of tension simultaneously at a specific age then adaption of adolescent will be problematic. Under such circumstances, they will face more behavioral problems. Eriksson define adolescence as the period of identification against lack of identity and since identification is a conformity between three biological, social and mental systems, there will be behavioral turmoil in relationships of adolescence in absence of such conformity (Anisi et al., 2007). Since girls are exposure to limits caused by gender role and since they receive more support from their peers compared to boys, one of effective factors in their adolescence and youth is the social problem. Problem solving is a vital skill for living in current age. Many believe in majority of societies that problem-solving skills should be increased (Shabazi & Heidari, 2012). The skill for social problem solving is a process in which, the person tries to identify and discover amicable solutions

in difficult situations that occur in real life so that such behavioral-cognitive process indicates self-management ability of the person. There are also differences between individuals in terms of problem solving; ability for problem solving is related to social competency, mental health, adaption and ability to solve stressful problems that is strongly in relation with personal and social performance. Inability in problem solving skill is related to significant health and social issues including suicide, addiction, revelry, suffering from AIDS and delinquency. Researches show that the more able the person to solve the problem, more successful and healthier will be in his/her life. Problem-solving skill helps individuals to solve their problems logically and regularly (Mostafa et al., 2016).

Emotional growth and maturity is another important factor leading to successful life for girls. Emotional maturity is a process in which, person's character tries to show more emotional health mental and individually. 7 components of intimacy, empathy, intimacy, empathy, self-expression, psychological stability, independence, psychological balance, and ability to observe emotional affection are introduced as complete definition for emotional maturity. Emotional maturity is originated from this understanding that nobody else or nothing else can harm the person making him/her angry unless the person allows that thing or that person to do this. However, maturity does not just mean ability for a specific attitude or action but also means the ability to enjoy them. The most prominent signal of emotional maturity is the ability to bear tension and another signal is indifference toward some motives that affect the person making him/her upset or emotional. Moreover, a mature person has emotional capacity for happiness and entertainment; such person enjoys work and entertainment making balance between them. It is obvious that not only emotional growth rate does not depend just to the age of birth certificate but also mental, social, emotional and physical ages are factors affecting maturity (Mansoornejad et al., 2013).

According to the above-mentioned points about success in life in terms of social problem solving skills and dimensions of emotional maturity in adolescents girls, it is essential to have technical skill (enough and update knowledge), perceptual skills (correct understanding of issues and problems) and human skill (ability to make good relationship with others). There are various method for training and enrichment regarding problem solving and timely emotional maturity. Lazarus multimodal therapy is one of these methods (Rahmani et al., 2010).

Lazarus believes that human personality can be described by 7 dimensions including behavior, affect, sensation, imagery, cognition, interpersonal relationships, and drug-biology. Although these dimensions are defined separately but are interacting together so that any experience of human may be determined by a dimension that is in relation with other dimensions and any change in one dimension can affect other dimensions (Bahramkhani et al., 2012). Accordingly, these seven dimensions are evaluated individually but in relation with together in this therapy, that is a prospect of significant relationship between these dimensions. In summary, multifaceted psychotherapy of Lazarus is a comprehensive method in this field (Lotif & Farkhondeh, 2016). Fundamental assumption of this type of therapy is that patients have specific problems that should be solved using several methods (Prochaska & Norcross, 2007). Lazarus Multifaceted Therapy is a systematic and comprehensive approach about the psychotherapy that looks for stable changes based on human and efficient method. Cognitive-behavioral methods are used in this kind of therapy besides other technics of theories. Lazarus (2005) emphasizes that integration of psychotherapy should not be essentially relied on theoretical combination and clinical experts can select a method by combining methods of different theories without supporting theories that have created these methods (Karami et al., 2012).

This study was conducted to examine effectiveness of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on social problem solving and emotional maturity of adolescent girls studying at second grade high school in Kashan, Iran because this approach consists of different approaches evaluating various aspects of personality; on the other hand, social problem solving (Positive Problem Orientation, Negative Problem Orientation, Rational Problem Solving, Impulsivity/Carelessness Style, and Avoidance Style) and emotional maturity (Emotional Instability, Emotional Regression, Personality Disintegration, Social Maladjustment, and Lack of Independence) have various dimensions. This study was carried out because there was not any study on social problem solving or emotional maturity using Lazarus Multifaceted

Approach. In fact, we tended to answer this question whether Lazarus approach-based group consultation can affect social problem solving and emotional maturity of adolescent girls at second-grade high school in Kashan.

Methodology

Research plan of this consisted of pretest-posttest plan with control group including two respondent groups that were measured twice. First measurement was done implementing one pretest and second measurement was implemented within one posttest. Researcher randomly assigned respondents who had inclusion criteria to two test and control groups using random sampling method then test group received group training based on Lazarus Multifaceted Therapy while control group received no training. Posttest was implemented for test and control groups after the end of therapy.

Statistical society of this study comprised of all female second-grade high school students in Kashan, Iran during 2018. 15 members ($n=15$) is required as the minimum sample size for interventional researches (Delawar, 2010). Sample size obtained to $n=18$ for each group in this study in order not to reduce adequacy indicators of sample size in case of possible drop in sample size. Hence, sample size ($N=36$) includes 36 female second-grade high school students in Kashan, Iran. Cluster random sampling method was used in this research in which, one of high schools of Kashan was selected randomly due to large number of society and then questionnaires were distributed among them. Of them, 36 members with minimum scores were selected and divided to two $n=18$ groups (test and control). Lazarus Multifaceted Consultation Approach was implemented for members of test group through 8 90-minute sessions twice a week. Posttest and social problem solving and emotional maturity tests were performed simultaneously (after one month) after the end of training sessions for both groups.

Social Problem Solving Inventory: short form of revised social problem solving inventory (SPSI-R; D’Zurilla et al. 2002) is a self-report instrument with Likert Type including 25 items that measure your skill in solving social problem. Subscales of this questionnaire include positive problem orientation (PPO), negative problem orientation (NPO), rational problem solving (RPS), impulsivity/carelessness style, and avoidance style. This scale has been designed based on the previous work of authors that included main 5 subscales and measured 5 different dimensions of social problem solving by D’Zurilla et al. This questionnaire was scored based on the 5-point Likert scale from never (1) to very much (5). Reliability of retest of this questionnaire was reported to 0.68-0.91 with alpha coefficient of 0.69-0.95. Content validity of this questionnaire was approved using Exploratory Factor Analysis, correlation with other problem solving scales, and overlapping psychological structures (D’Zurilla et al., 2002). Mokhberi et al. (2010) evaluated alpha coefficient for 5 factors and calculated it to 0.85 also reported reliability of retest equal to 0.88 for SPSI in Iran. In addition, factor analysis indicated existence of 5 above-mentioned factors. All of validity analyses approved SPSI as a social problem solving scale (Mokhberi et al. 2011).

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS): this scale was designed by Yashwir Singh and Mahesh Bhargave (1991). This scale consists of 48 items that measure different dimensions of emotional maturity (Emotional Instability, Emotional regression, Personality Disintegration, Social Maladjustment, and Lack of Independence). This scale is scored based on the 5-point Likert Scale varying from never (1) to very much (5). Validity of this scale was determined based on external criteria including Adjustment Questionnaire of “Geha” for university students by Sinha and Singh. This questionnaire emotional adjustment of university students is measures and there are 21 items in this score. Moment correlation between scores in 21 items related to this scope and total numbers in ESM obtained to 0.67 (quoted from Hafexabadi & Bafti, 2007). Reliability was measured using test-retest of students that were 20-24 year old girls and boys. Time interval between these two tests was 6 months and moment correlation between them obtained to 0.75 (quoted from Imani et al. 2009).

Lazarus Multifaceted Therapy Protocol: the applied training method was hold during 8 90-minute sessions. Training protocol was prepared based on the Lazarus approach. Implementation method was as follows:

First session: introducing participants and explaining work tem rules, social problem solving and emotional maturity. **Second session:** familiarity with consultation nature and specifications of Lazarus

therapy, and answering multifaceted life events discussing it. **Third session:** preparing pattern profile for client based on the information given by the client in multidimensional questionnaire of life history. **Fourth Session:** elaborating on logical and illogical thoughts and cognitions and their effects on feeling, behavior and emotions of person besides social problem solving. **Fifth session:** focusing on emotions, teaching and performing muscle relaxation. **Sixth session:** focusing on client's behavior, show program to represent self, strengthening good behaviors and using empty chair technic. **Seventh session:** encouraging client to create positive imaginations about life incidents or changes that may occur. **Eighth session:** At this time, individuals review therapy sessions and send feedbacks; meanwhile, some teachings are given about how to exchange and share findings outside of the group. Finally, posttest is performed.

Data processing is done at inferential level using ANCOVA with repetitive intragroup measures through SPSS-18 Software. Variance of pretest variable is removed from dependent variable in these analyses then groups will be compared.

Findings

Hypothesis 1: Lazarus approach-based group consultation has significant effect on social problem solving and emotional maturity of adolescent girls.

Table 1. Results of MANCOVA for effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on social problem solving and emotional maturity

| Statistical indicatorTests | Value | F ratio | Hypothesis df | Error df | P-value |
|----------------------------|-------|---------|---------------|----------|---------|
| Pillai's Trace | 0.763 | 49.836 | 2 | 31 | 0.000 |
| Wilks' Lambda | 0.237 | 49.836 | 2 | 31 | 0.000 |
| Hotelling's Trace | 3.215 | 49.836 | 2 | 31 | 0.000 |
| Roy's Largest Root | 3.215 | 49.836 | 2 | 31 | 0.000 |

To examine effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on social problem solving and emotional maturity of students, MANCOVA was used and results showed significant effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on at least one of dependent variables (social problem solving and emotional maturity) ($F=49.836$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$, Wilks' Lambda=0.237).

Hypothesis 2: Lazarus approach-based group consultation has significant effect on social problem solving among adolescent girls.

Table 2. Results of homogeneity of regression slope for interaction between independent variable (group) and control (pretest of social problem solving)

| Resource | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance |
|---|----------------|----|--------------|---------|--------------|
| Group*pretest of social solving problem | 13.21 | 1 | 13.121 | 2.148 | 0.115 |

According to table 2, F value of interaction between independent variable (group) and control variable (pretest of social solving problem) is not significant ($P>0.05$); hence, there is homogeneity of regression slope.

Table 3. Results of linearity of correlation between control (pretest of social problem solving) and independent variable (group)

| Resource | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|--------------|
| pretest of social solving problem | 2962.84 | 1 | 2962.84 | 245.60 | 0.000 |

According to table 3, there is linearity of correlation between control (pretest of social problem solving) and independent variable (group) since significance level is lower than 0.05.

Table 4. Results of ANCOVA for effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on social problem solving

| Variable | Source of changes | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance (P) |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|------------------|
|----------|-------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|------------------|

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|-----------|----|---------|--------|-------|
| Social problem solving | Group | 847.01 | 1 | 847.01 | 70.213 | 0.000 |
| | Pretest | 2962.84 | 1 | 2962.84 | 245.60 | 0.000 |
| | Error | 398.09 | 33 | 12.06 | - | - |
| | Total | 93347.000 | 36 | - | - | - |

According to table 4, results of ANCOVA indicate significant effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on social problem solving ($F=70.213$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$).

Hypothesis 3: Lazarus approach-based group consultation has significant effect on emotional maturity of adolescent girls.

Table 5. Results of homogeneity of regression slope for interaction between independent variable (group) and control (pretest of emotional maturity)

| Resource | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|--------------|
| Group*pretest of emotional maturity | 12.233 | 1 | 12.233 | 2.033 | 0.163 |

According to table 5, F value of interaction between independent variable (group) and control variable (pretest of emotional maturity) is not significant ($P>0.05$); hence, there is homogeneity of regression slope.

Table 6. Results of linearity of correlation between control (pretest of emotional maturity) and independent variable (group)

| Resource | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|--------------|
| pretest of social solving problem | 5986.45 | 1 | 5986.45 | 286.17 | 0.000 |

According to table 6, there is linearity of correlation between control (pretest of emotional maturity) and independent variable (group) since significance level is lower than 0.05.

Table 7. Results of ANCOVA for effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on emotional maturity

| Variable | Source of changes | Sum of squares | df | Mena squares | F value | Significance (P) |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|----|--------------|---------|------------------|
| Emotional maturity | Group | 854.58 | 1 | 854.58 | 40.852 | 0.000 |
| | Pretest | 5986.45 | 1 | 5986.45 | 286.17 | 0.000 |
| | Error | 690.32 | 33 | 20.91 | - | - |
| | Total | 379352.00 | 36 | - | - | - |

According to table 7, results of ANCOVA indicate significant effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on emotional maturity ($F=40.852$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$).

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results obtained from hypothesis 1 and MANCOVA, Lazarus approach-based group consultation had significant effect on at least one of dependent variables (social problem solving and emotional maturity) ($F=49.836$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$, Wilks' Lambda=0.237). We reviewed all of studies conducted inside and outside of Iran and found no study in this field or at least there was not any study available for us. Studies that have conducted in field of effectiveness of Lazarus Multifaceted Approach inside and outside of Iran have indicated effect of this approach on some matters like mental health, reconstruction of relationships, negligence, depression, relationship between mothers and daughters, anxiety, physical symptoms, etc. For instance, findings obtained from study conducted by Rahmani et al. (2010) showed a significant difference between test and control groups in terms of subscales including positive affection, modeling and relationship. In addition, Bahramkhani et al. (2010) declared that multifaceted therapy led to a significant reduction in perceived negative tension and increased perceived positive stress in test group. Etemadi and Golmohammadian (2014) found a significant difference between test and control groups in terms of self-concept and negligence. Moreover, Lotfi and Farkhondeh carried out a study in this field and indicated a significant difference between two test and control groups in terms

of anxiety and physical symptoms. Finally, Golshan and Sobhi (2017) proved that teaching group consultation through mutual behavior analysis could significantly reduce depression in test group so that there was a significant difference between pretest, posttest and follow-up steps when pairwise comparison between test steps in test group; in this case, posttest and follow-up were at the same statistical step. It can be explained about this hypothesis that Lazarus approach-based group consultation has effect on social problem solving and emotional maturity of adolescent girls. It seems that this method not only has therapeutic role but also plays a preventive role. Therefore, the concepts of this approach can be used and taught to families in order to prevent from inefficient relationships and conflicts between parents and children and to enrich solutions for social problems. In other words, Lazarus approach-based group consultation provides the field for the person to make direct relationship with existence and existential processes compared to others; although this therapy may be long and difficult, it can be stable due to depth of group consultation process. In this process, the person directs him/herself toward a perfection and excellence within a dynamic and original interaction increasing intellectual level in field of solving social and individual problems besides mental level toward the environment and peers leading to increased emotional maturity and ability for problem solving.

According to the results obtained from hypothesis 2 and ANCOVA, Lazarus approach-based group consultation had significant effect on social problem solving by adolescent girls ($F=70.213$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$). We reviewed all of studies conducted inside and outside of Iran and found no study in this field or at least there was not any study available for us. It can be explained that problem solving is a cognitive-behavioral process that creates effective potential responses to a problematic situation that increases possibility the most effective response among various responses (Malouff et al., 2007). Problem solving is a compatible dealing with problem based on specific purposeful policies; this ability also helps people to define their social and individual problems, provide different solutions, make decisions and perform a solution (Gladfried & Davidson, Translated by Maher, 1999). Results of this study in terms of effectiveness of Lazarus approach-based group consultation in social problem solving that this therapy could increase application of various problem-solving strategies in field of identification and removal of problems by adolescent girls. In fact, this multimodal approach relies on 7 dimensions of personality (BASIC-ID), evaluations and dimensions and structural profiles to perform an accurate analysis of patient's problem then adopt some suitable technics for problems; therefore, patient can solve hi/her problems in particular social issues using this approach.

Results of ANCOVA for hypothesis 3 indicated significant effect of Lazarus approach-based group consultation on emotional maturity of adolescent girls ($F= 40.852$, $P\text{-value}=0.000$). This result was in line with findings obtained by Mehrani (2008) indicating effect of multifaceted approach-based group consultation on emotional maturity of students. It can be explained about this finding that multifaceted approach is a comprehensive model to distinguish between feelings and emotions, imagines and cognitions with emphasis on interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships within a biological field (Lazarus, 2005). Accordingly, humans are biological organisms that have behavior (action and reaction), sensation (sense of touch and smell and so on), imagination (imagining images, voices and other events in mind), and thought (beliefs, opinions, values and attitudes in mind); they are interacting with each other and enjoy interpersonal relationships or tolerate them. Hence, it is believed that a person becomes emotionally mature and makes constructive relationships when is able to do such differentiation (Lazarus, 2008). Results of this hypothesis indicated that Lazarus Multifaceted Approach had effect on emotional maturity evolution because this approach reduces illogical expectations, increases emotional maturity and prevents from dissatisfaction. It can be more obviously explained that Merler (quoted from Mansoornejad et al. 2013) has introduced three factors as criteria for emotional maturity. These factors are as follows: 1- ability to cope with reality and facing it instead of avoiding problems; 2- ability to make good relationship with others instead of having critical view and anger toward them; 3- tendency toward honesty and accepting that there are opportunities in life for success and some other things do not worth worrying about. If these factors introduced by Merler are accepted for emotional maturity, then making good relationship with others (Lazarus approach-based group consultation) provides the field for expanding emotional maturity

among individuals. This finding is approved since teaching group consultation to sample members enabled them to listen to each other, share their feelings and become closer mentally and emotionally. The improved relationship can remove mental pressure and anxiety originated from the inside of the person increasing some abilities such as patience and conciliation at the time of anger and understanding when evaluating thoughts and mood adjusting them for excellence and emotional maturity.

Some recommendations are given based on the positive results of study:

- 1) It recommended for further studies to design and implement researches using stochastic sampling methods in larger groups due to limitations in present paper. Moreover, random selection can reduce excessive homogeneity in terms of demographic variables and generalization.
- 2) This study was carried out in one city so we should take precaution when generalizing its results to other cities and provinces. So, it is recommended to study effectiveness of Lazarus Approach-based group consultation in improving problem solving process and emotional maturity in different educational environments (such as schools and universities), clinical environments (hospitals and healthcare centers), organizations and institutions in Kashan and other cities.
- 3) Considering the importance of problem solving and emotional maturity in promoting mental health of individuals, it is recommended to educators that hold educational workshops based on the Lazarus Multifaceted approach at the beginning of each semester in order to increase sense of responsibility regarding problem solving and emotional maturity in students.
- 4) it is suggested to hold several group consultation sessions at all educational grades, welfare organization and recreation centers for adolescences in particular those who suffer from severe social dilemmas. Meanwhile, these sessions can prevent from illogical beliefs in life that may cause mental and physical disorders.

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