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**EFFECTIVENESS OF INSTRUCTING ENCOURAGEMENT, BASED ON ADLER'S THEORY, TO TEACHERS IN INTERACTION WITH STUDENTS EXPERIENCING ACADEMIC FAILURE, AND ITS EFFECT ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

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**ABSTRACT**

Academic failure is one of the dilemmas in education systems. in a way that this variable and other variables related to it play an important role in the recent final study. In the present study the possible effects of instructing encouragement, based on Adler's theory, to teachers in interaction with the students experiencing academic failure and the improvement of the students' performance in *Tehran primary schools*. The statistical population consisted of all the teachers in fifth and sixth grade at primary schools in Tehran in 2013. Convenience sampling was applied in which fourteen people were chosen for experimental (or test) group and fourteen others were determined as control group in waiting list. Dortaj's assessment of academic performance was administered and applied in the study. Co-variance analytical method was used to determine and analyze the variables. data analyzed by statistical SPSS (18) soft ware. The results showed that that instructing encouragement to teachers has had effects on the enhancement of performance ( $p < .001$ ). As a result, it can be concluded that instructing encouragement to teachers has led to a decline in academic failure, and ultimately rise of academic performance.

**Keywords:** *Encouragement, Student's Academic Failure, Educational Performance*

**INTRODUCTION**

Developing responsible and responsive students is one of the goals of the Education. Paying attention to this class of society is of great importance in terms of training and education. The serious problem in the Education and education system is its students' weak performances and academic failures (Zahrakar, 2007). Academic failure results in the disruption of student's mental health, in addition to enormous economic losses incurred by education system. William Glosser believes that many students, today, fail in education and there are factors which influence academic conditions, among which are: individual factors, family-related, social and academic factors (Zahrakar, 2005). One of the factors influencing academic performance and thus academic failure is the teacher (Col, 1997).

Nadimi and Borouj believe that most qualified and prospective teachers should be selected for primary schools; because children's personality is not fully formed at this time and teachers can have substantial impact on them. Teacher is identified as the underlying factor in school success (Corozel, 2006).

The qualifications of the teachers are the most decisive factors in students' development. Therefore, investment in teacher education can enhance the students' performance more than anything else (Darling Hamend, 2003). In fact, teacher plays a major role in students' success and academic development in society (Tornaky & Poodle, 2005).

The research conducted in Australia also suggests that there is a direct relationship between the quality of teacher instruction and the students' academic progress (The Australian Department of Education, 2003). It was mentioned in a study that increase in students' performance is heavily dependent on educating a qualified and effective teacher (Molla'inejad, 2012). The major setback is a philosophy based on lack of

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emotional relationship, interaction (or rapport) with students (Hamzeh. Hamzeh Tabrizi, 2012). Today, a large number of teachers feel disencouraged (Nasirifard, 2009). A host of various methods have been put forward for the betterment of interaction between teachers and students suffering academic failure and promoting academic performance. Encouragement is one of them. Encouragement is a significant and valuable concept in Adler's individual psychology theory (Ali Mohammadi, 2011). Encouragement is something that makes the individual feel a sense of belonging (Thomson & Rodolb, 2000). Encouragement is a positive feedback which focuses on endeavors and achievement, rather than results. Evans (2005) deemed that encouragement is a key to personal growth and self-nurture and enhancement of social interest among individuals.

Teachers have been taught to spend most of their time pointing out the mistakes the students make. As a result, students suppose that their value is judged based on their mistakes; therefore, they eschew activities which may lead to their being criticized to avoid any contempt arising from their mistakes (Nasirifard, 2009). part of encouragement task lies in avoidance of discouragement. A few teachers take this valuable concept into consideration (Nasirifard, 2009). Darling Hamend (2003) indicated that teachers have the most significant effect on the academic performance of the students. There is a direct relationship between students' perception of way of behavior and teachers' rapport with them (Shi. Fisher, 2006). Similarly, a study indicated that students prefer those teachers who are more affable (Killen, 1998). Glosser believes that no one is more conversant with children's problem than those who work in schools; even in some cases, they caused teachers to feel despondent and disappointed (Hamzeh & Hamzeh Tabrizi, 2012). Adlerian psychologists, in reality, help to overcome despondency and restore encouragement and hope. Encouragement is of crucial importance to overcome the uneasiness simply triggered by the life's current complications (Carlson, Dan Dink Mayer, translated by Firozbakht, 2008). Encouragement boosts individuals' self-efficacy, and they feel valued because of what they are. A prodigious number of people encounter no or little encouragement throughout their lifetime; thus, their life is fraught with feelings of contempt and incompetence, and they enter into their career, marriage, relationships, and their life, in general (Mayer & McKay, 1989; translated by Ra'is Dana, 2007).

Some teachers receiving less encouragement may feel worthless. and it can influence the instruction process. In fact, teachers can be a source of either encouragement or discouragement. When teachers' expectations are not fulfilled. they get discouraged. For this reason, their relationship with the students will be adversely affected, which leads to students' academic problems. Then, identifying encouraging factors and developing them among teachers as well as eliminating discouraging factors would lay the foundation for generating encouragement among teachers and consequently facilitate co-operative and encouraging relationships with students who have experienced academic failure. Hence, the enhancement of academic development would be the end result. Therefore, regarding the importance of the matters discussed as well as the prevention of academic failure and improvement of academic performance of the students, the effectiveness of instructing encouragement based on Adler's theory to teachers in interaction with students experiencing academic failure has been taken into consideration.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

To do the research. Statistical population was composed of teachers in fifth and sixth grade at primary schools in Tehran in 2013, who had experienced a decrease in academic activities compared to the previous year, which, teachers and parents suppose, have led to decline in students' grades and academic performance. Sampling was carried out through convenience method. After our visiting some schools in Shahrriar and describing the details of the study project, principals of the schools extended their sincere co-operation for conducting the study of their teachers. Then the teachers were enrolled in the courses designed for teaching different methods of encouraging students with decline in academic performance. A group of fourteen was appointed as the experimental group, and yet fourteen others have been kept in waiting list as the control group.

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Academic performance questionnaire:

This test was developed by Dortaj (2003). This test consists of 48 items. Several items proved to be effective for a single factor, while several others were effective for more than one factor. It measures the academic performance in 5 such areas as: self-efficacy, emotional effects and impressions, planning (or programming), loss of consequence control, and motivation. The obtained reliability of this test equals (0.73 Cronbach’s alpha) through internal consistency. The obtained reliability in each of the areas related to academic performance is as follows: Academic self- efficacy (0.92), emotional (excitement) effects (0.93), Planning (or programming) (0.73), loss of consequence control (0.74), and motivation (0.72). Likert scale has been employed in order to rate the academic performance test. the present study is semi-pilot. Along with pre-test and post-test, both experimental group and control group were measured twice. Participants (or experimentals) were arbitrarily chosen and randomly distributed in test and control groups. Then the participants of both groups are examined by pre-test and post-test before and after employing independent variable. After referring to the Education (Organization), explaining the details of their project, and applying for written permission, the studyors managed to receive official approval to go ahead with the project. They randomly selected several primary schools in Shahriar. Afterwards, they have been granted the license to go to the selected schools. Having talked to the principals of the schools to win their consent and co-operation, they randomly chose the teachers from the fifth and sixth grades in the schools. The total number of the teachers selected equals 28. Several sessions were held to instruct encouragement methods to teachers based on Shunaker.

academic performance synthesis as follow:

Hypothesis one: encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the rise in academic self- efficacy of boy students suffering from a decline in academic performance.

Hypothesis two: encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the rise in emotional (effects and) impressions of boy students undergoing a decline in academic performance.

Hypothesis three: encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the rise in programming or planning of boy students experiencing a decline in academic performance.

Hypothesis four: encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the decrease in loss of consequences control of boy students experiencing a decline in academic performance.

Hypothesis five: encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the increase in motivation of boy students experiencing a decline in academic performance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of variable of the academic performance in separate groups**

Statistical- index	Group	Test	Quantity	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance	Min	Max
Academic performance	Control	Pre-test	14	111	16.55	274	84	138
		Post-test	14	112.50	15.88	252.42	87	139
	Experimental	Pre-test	14	115.64	7.61	57.94	99	129
		Post-test	14	143.35	8.73	76.24	129	165

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**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of variable of the academic performance and its related components in separate groups**

Statistical index	Group	Test	Quantity	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance	Min	Max	Total Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Academic self-efficacy</b>	Control	Pre-test	14	56.14	8.84	78.28	40	71	.72
		Post-test	14	58.14	9.26	85.82	40	71	
	Experimental	Pre-test	14	61.92	4.84	23.45	54	70	
		Post-test	14	70.85	5.23	27.36	60	79	
<b>Excitement effects</b>	Control	Pre-test	14	23.14	7.51	56.44	13	35	
		Post-test	14	25.07	8.42	70.99	15	41	
	Experimental	Pre-test	14	21.50	5.09	25.96	11	31	
		Post-test	14	26.57	6.96	48.57	14	45	
<b>Planning</b>	Control	Pre-test	14	13.85	3.93	15.51	6	20	
		Post-test	14	14.07	2.64	6.99	9	18	
	Experimental	Pre-test	14	13	2.28	5.23	10	18	
		Post-test	14	16.92	2.55	6.53	10	21	
<b>Loss of consequence control</b>	Control	Pre-test	14	7.35	1.94	3.78	3	10	
		Post-test	14	7.92	2.16	4.68	3	11	
	Test	Pre-test	14	7.35	2.09	4.40	4	11	
		Post-test	14	12.35	2.46	6.09	9	16	
<b>Motivation</b>	Control	Pre-test	14	10.50	2.50	6.26	4	13	
		Post-test	14	12.41	1.87	6.26	4	13	
	Test	Pre-test	14	11.85	1.35	1.82	9	14	
		Post-test	14	15.21	1.84	3.41	12	18	

**Table 3: Single sample K-T test for present variables in study. in post-tests**

Statistical index	Z	P	Significance level of both domains
<b>Academic self-efficacy</b>	.69	.71	.05
<b>Excitement effects</b>	.53	.93	
<b>Planning</b>	.84	.47	
<b>Loss of consequence control</b>	.66	.76	
<b>Motivation</b>	.73	.64	
<b>Total self-efficacy</b>	.85	.45	

According to table 3 since the obtained significance level for independent variable and its components is greater than 0.05. the data of this study are normal and parametric tests can be used for analysis.

**Table 4: Results of covariance test in order to determine the effectiveness of encouragement to teachers in interaction with students experiencing a decline in academic performance**

Variable	Statistical index	SS	Df	MS	F	Significance	Effect extent
<b>Academic performance</b>	Pre-test	2886.26	1	2886.26	48.8	.000	.65
	Group	4618.47	1	4618.47	76.94	.000	.75
	Error	1500.66	25	60.02			
	Total	4655.77	28				

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**Table 5: results of covariance analysis test to determine the effectiveness of encouragement based on Adler’s theory to teachers working with students experiencing decline in academic performance**

Variable	Statistical index	SS	Df	MS	F	Effect extent	Effect extent
Academic self-efficacy	Pre-test	828.12	1	828.12	32.18	.56	.56
	Group	393.64	1	393.64	15.29	.96	.96
	Error	643.30	25	25.73			
	Total	119090	28				
Excitement effects	Pre-test	1341.71	1	1341.71	157.73	.26	.26
	Group	152.68	1	152.68	9.01	.82	.82
	Error	212.64	25	8.50			
	Total	20239	28				
Planning	Pre-test	1.35	1	1.35	1.95	.07	.07
	Group	58.48	1	58.48	8.37	.79	.79
	Error	174.49	25	174.49			
	Total	6960	28				
Loss of consequence control	Pre-test	88.40	1	88.40	41.35	.62	.62
	Group	120.14	1	120.14	56.19	.69	.69
	Error	53.45	25	2.13			
	Total	3062	28				
Motivation	Pre-test	19.61	1	19.61	5.30	.60	.60
	Group	39.42	1	39.42	10.66	.88	.88
	Error	92.45	25	3.69			
	Total	7467	28				

**RESULTS**

This study showed instructing encouragement, based on Adler’s theory, to teachers with students experiencing a decline in academic performance and encouraging them decrease the students’ decline in academic performance. The obtained results of the effectiveness of instructing encouragement, based on Adler’s theory, to teachers in interaction with students experiencing academic failure were demonstrated in tables (1-2) and tables (4-5).

**DISCUSSION**

In this study, the effectiveness of instructing encouragement, based on Adler’s theory, to teachers in interaction with students experiencing academic failure has been taken into consideration. Encouraging and hope-giving play an important role in growth and purposefulness. The objectives and programs of the Department of Education should be designed on the grounds of students’ sense of self-worth and progress, and all the other aspects within this area should be taken into account.

Students’ academic performance consists of academic self- efficacy, excitement control, loss of consequence control, planning, and motivation (Dortaj, 2007). In this study, five components of academic performance have been confirmed. In addition to considering the results of the hypotheses, conclusions will be drawn concerning them.

Hypothesis one claiming that encouragement instruction based on Adler’s theory to teachers has effects on the rise in academic self- efficacy of boy students suffering from a decline in academic performance is confirmed. Encouragement boosts individuals’ self-efficacy and inculcates a sense of self-worth because of what they are. Since quite a lot of people encounter no or little encouragement throughout their lifetime (Mayer & McKay, 1989; translated by Ra’is Dana, 2007), they need instruction within the area of encouragement and hope-giving or eliminating discouragement and self-acceptance; thus, it leads to their

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self-efficacy enhancement. Hain & Chang & Lee (2005) demonstrated in their study that encouragement is effective for academic self- efficacy.

Hypothesis two regarding this issue that encouragement instruction based on Adler's theory to teachers has effects on the rise in excitement control has been supported, and these findings agree with Hosseini's study (2004). In this study, encouragement instruction, based on Adler's theory, to teachers and establishing rapport with students caused to a lower degree of stress among students. Excitement control influences exam anxiety and academic performance in a positive way. (Pasha'I, Poor Ebrahim, Khoshkand, 2009).

Hypothesis three has also been confirmed. Encouragement instruction based on Adler's theory to teachers has effects on the rise in programming or planning of boy students experiencing a decline in academic performance. As the results indicated, encouragement instruction, based on Adler's theory, has had influences on the rise in students' planning. Encouragement is a positive feedback which focuses on endeavors and achievement, rather than results. Evans (2005) indicated in his study, those students who are exposed to encouragement are able to decide on their own education and participate in different plans. It has also been indicated that students become more disciplined; this is similar to the results of the study. Hypothesis four saying that encouragement instruction based on Adler's theory to teachers has effects on the increase in motivation of boy students experiencing a decline in academic performance has been supported. This agrees with Murray's study (2002) in which it has been pointed out that teachers influence students' motivation through their manners. Zandi (2003) indicated in a study that teachers' level of relationship and exposure to encouragement in interaction with learners has effects on students' motivation. based on the results of this study, instructing encouragement, based on Adler's theory, to teachers with students experiencing a decline in academic performance and eliminating despondence and disappointment and encouraging them decrease the students' decline in academic performance. When students like or adore their teachers, they make more attempts; and thus, their academic performance improves.

### **CONCLUSION**

instructing encouragement leads the teachers to learn how to encourage themselves and other teachers or eliminate disappointment and discouragement and change their attitudes toward their capabilities; consequently, they will be more effective in interaction with students. Students' decline in academic achievement decreases and academic performance improves.

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