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**THE STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF LIFE SKILL TRAINING ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL COMPATIBILITY AMONG FIRST- GRADE FEMALE HIGH SCHOOL IN NEKA CITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Present study has been conducted with the purpose of investigating life skills training effects on social development, emotional and social compatibility of female students in first- grade of high school in Neka city in 2011. The present study is experimental type in which pre- test and post- test design were used with control group. The statistical population of study was all female students in first- grade of high school in Neka and among them 30 subjects were randomly selected in two experimental and control groups of 15 subjects. The experimental group was trained in life skills about 10 two-hour sessions, once a week. The tool used in this research was social development questionnaire of Alice Witsman and high school students' adjustment questionnaire of Sinha and Singh (1993), respectively. To analyze the data, after calculating the pre- and posttest score for both groups, independent sample test and Multi- variable variance analysis (MANOVA) were used. Findings showed that life skills training has a positive effect on social development, emotional and social adjustment (emotional compatibility,  $F=11.948$ ,  $P<0.001$ ), social adjustment ( $F=5.714$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and social development ( $F=18.403$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Therefore, social skills training improved social development, emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and finally this kind of skill training could increase the public health level and children and adolescence compatibility.

**Key Words:** *Life Skills Training, Social Development, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment*

**INTRODUCTION**

Social behavior forms the basis of each individual's life and social development in its turn led to promote of intellectual growth and other aspects of individual development. Social development is the most important aspect of each individual's development. Those who have flourished in the area of social development have achieved to a level of competence in social relationships that they can easily live with people and have compatibility (Masan *et al.*, 1384; translated by Yasai, 2005). Social development refers to a balanced set of social skills and learned adaptive behaviors that enable individual to have interaction with other people, incidence of positive reactions and refrains from behaviors that have negative consequences. There are skills such as cooperation, responsibility, empathy and self-restraint that are counted as components of social development (Kartelj and Milbern, 2006; translated by Nazari Nezhad, 2006). In today's age and due to the complexity of society and incidence of mental and behavioral disorder among children and adolescents, the need for socialization process and providing appropriate strategies to strengthening and prosperity of this phenomenon can be felt more than ever. If our children parallel to physical and mental growth do not have social development, they will confront to problems in their social life and cannot live, and even cannot utilize their already done education (Mehrabi, 1998).

Behavioral problems that seem to hinder the progress of children's educational programs can be "incompatible" and low self-concept. Compatibility with self and environment is vital to any creature and also people's everyday effort necessarily centered on this adjustment (Atkinson, 2001; translated by Barahani, 2001).

Scott (1989, as cited in Sharifi, 2004) states the types of compatibility: educational or training compatibility, social adjustment and interpersonal and emotional adjustment.

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Compatibility between the individual and social is mechanisms by which an individual can belong to a group. Individual has willingness to cooperate and participate in social activities with others and escapes of self-centered isolation (Masan *et al.*, 1384; translated by Yasai, 2005). Emotional adjustment can be included in good mental health, personal life satisfaction and harmony between feelings, thoughts and actions. In other words, the emotional adjustment means mechanisms by which a person gets emotional stability.

It can be said that one of the signs of mental health and individuals' ability in dealing with various problems of life, refers to existence of social relations and having effective life skills (Kelinkem, translated by Mohamad Khani, 2005). Despite the many efforts and activities that taking place in the educational system, we can observe the troubling news about the academic, moral, social and emotional status of students. Those students that are not able to use their knowledge, do not have required ability to solve their problems, are not able to make correct decisions about personal and social issues, are maverick and self-centered, do not know very well the values and culture of their community and are easily influenced by promotions and movies.

Due to the profound cultural changes, currently our students need to learn more about the skills and abilities' growth such as insight, awareness, communicate, negotiate and make decisions. They need to be able to effectively use these skills in their daily lives. They need to learn to know what they want to say, what they want to do, get help from whom when needed, or employ what strategies to solve their problems (Ghiasi Fakhri, 2006). In 1996, the World Health Organization (WHO) to prevent and also enhancement of individuals' mental health level and society's, develop life skills training program. The term life skills refers to a large group of mental, social and interpersonal skills, and can help people to make their decisions with awareness, communicate effectively, develop coping skills and self-management and having healthy living and productivity (Sepah Mansour, 2007). Researches show that life skills training have caused to the development of social adapted behaviors and decrease their negative behaviors in order to adapt their behavior to the environment. Researchers conducted several studies about the effects of skills on mental health and have concluded that life skills training at different ages (especially teens) were effective and cause to the fundamental changes in their character. In a research conducted by Poor Seyedi *et al.*, (2010), entitled "the effectiveness of life skills training program on the adjustment rate of the blind and low vision students" data analysis indicates that life skills training program is an effective way to increase low vision and blind student's compatibility. Hamidi (2005), in his research indicates that life skills training significantly improve adolescent behavioral condition. A research conducted by Sepah Mansour (2007) examined the effect of life skills training on achievement motivation, self-respect and social adjustment of students. Findings indicated that life skills training are effective in enhancement of students' achievement motivation, self-respect and social adjustment. Shorts (2006) found that social skills training lead to enhancement of social networking, social desirable behavior, regulated behaviors and starting talking at the appropriate time in children with attention deficit hyperactivity. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Tarmyan (2003) indicated that life skills training program plays major role in providing of psycho - social specificity of children and adolescents. A research done by Ahadi and colleagues (2009) indicate that social problem-solving training can improve social adjustment and academic performance of shy students. Research conducted by Mott *et al.*, (1999) showed that social skills deficits are a determinant factor in increase of mental and emotional problems in children. Atari and Shahni Yeylaghi (2005) conducted a research and concluded that social skills training increase compatibility of juvenile offenders. Safarzadeh (2004), in an empirical research showed that life skills training are effective in efficient social communication in first grade female students of secondary schools. Tuttle *et al.*, (2006), during the investigation add the life skills to students' curriculum. The results of this study suggested the extraordinary capability of teens to positive promotion and flexibility. Albertyn and colleagues (2004) have concluded that life skills training cause to enhancement of the active role in living, responsibility in job environment, planning for the future and the critical think ability. A research conducted by Navidi (2006), entitled "the effectiveness of anger management training on self-

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regulation skills, compatibility and public health of Tehran high school boys". The results showed that due to the implementation of anger management training program, participants' skills in the area of developed anger managing and simultaneously the levels of maladaptive behaviors and symptoms of the disorder in the public health of participants decreased. It seems that due to the complexity of the current society, with educational courses and activities which students acquire within general education courses, do not completely reach to the targets of moral, spiritual, cultural, social and psychological necessary growth and, most importantly, do not acquire the required preparation to practice the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Consequently, they do not reach to the appropriate level of mental health and have problems in confronting to the life's challenges. Therefore, it is necessary that students in addition to public education that they spend during the educational courses for literacy learn systematic and coherent program to acquire necessary abilities and skills to achieve the stated goals. Among these Life Skills Training program is a valid program that in the primary prevention level emphasis on enhancement and strengthen of mental - social abilities. Considering the impact of life skills training in preparation of young people for having healthy and free of stress life, as investigations show that such trainings can be done in all the skills. So, due to the importance of these skills in adolescent and their importance in adolescent's personality development, present study investigates life skills training effects on social development, emotional and social compatibility of female students in first- grade of high school. In fact, the research question raised was whether life skills training have influence on social development, emotional and social compatibility or not.

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. Life skills training leads to an enhancement of social development of female students in the experimental group compared to the control group.
2. Life skills training leads to an enhancement of emotional compatibility of female students in the experimental group compared to the control group.
3. Life skills training leads to an enhancement of social compatibility of female students in the experimental group compared to the control group.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Methodology**

This is a pilot study with pretest - posttest and control group and random selection. Training was conducted in group and in 10 sessions, one session per week for 120 minutes using a standard set of educational content, which includes a booklet entitled Life Skills. This book includes theoretical and practical content with providing of exercises (individual and group) in relation to each of the life skills (communication styles, assertiveness, stress management, and problem solving). This booklet has been compiled by Ghiyas Fakhri ordered by Welfare Organization of country, Social Injury Prevention Office in 2006 for students' utilization.

### **Population, Sample and Sampling Method**

The population of this study included all female students in first- grade of high school in Neka and among these population 30 subjects were randomly selected and placed in two experimental and control groups (15 subjects in experimental group and 15 subjects in control groups).

### **Instrument**

In this study, the following instruments were used:

#### **Social Development Test of Alice Witsman**

Social Development test was made by Alice witsman and has been translated and standardized by Sima Nazari. This test was used to measure the social development of those aged 13 to 18 years old. The test has 27 questions; each question has three or four options. The maximum score is 60. Scores above 30 indicate high social development and scores between 25 to 30 show good, 10 to 25 moderate and lower than 10 are graded in poor degree. The scoring method refers to Likert method. In one research done Amiri (2006), the reliability coefficient of the scale in internal consistency was reported to be 0.72

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through using Cronbach's alpha. In the present study, its internal consistency obtained 0.76. Concurrent validity coefficient between scores of Scl-90-R is equal to 0.68 that was calculated in Amiri (2006)'s research.

#### ***Student's Compatibility Questionnaire***

This questionnaire has been developed by Sinha and Singh (1993, as cited in Karami, 2001) which evaluates students in terms of overall compatibility rate and also in three emotional, social and educational dimensions. In this study, the form of 47 questions is used and for scoring of answers in accordance with the compatibility the score of zero, and for response with non-conforming the score of one was considered. Total scores indicate individual's general compatibility and sum of individual's score in each compatibility area (emotional, educational and social) determines the individual's compatibility in that area.

Lower scores indicate greater compatibility and higher scores indicate lower compatibility. In this test, each of three social and emotional and educational levels has appropriate reliability and validity. Reliability coefficient of this test are reported by authors (Sinha and Singh, 1993, as cited in Karami, 2001) through making two halves, for total, emotional, social and educational compatibility respectively, 0.95, 0.94, 0.93 and 0.96 and with test-retest method are reported to be 0.93, 0.96, 0.90 and 0.93. Navidi (2008), with the implementation of this questionnaire about 164 high school students, reported the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for total compatibility as 0.82 and for educational, social and emotional compatibility has respectively reported 0.70, 0.68 and 0.65.

#### ***Procedure***

After selecting the participants for the main study, life skills training were administered in 10 training sessions of 120-minute and once a week for subjects of the experimental group.

#### ***Intervention program***

**First Session:** Describe life skills and explain the necessity of life skills training to students to cope with the challenges of life and exchange ideas with group members in the form of practical work as well as to familiarize students with classroom rules.

**Second Session:** Recognize the values and their importance in life. Explain that the values can be changed and we can replace the positive and healthy values with unhealthy and negative values.

**Third Session:** Familiarity with communication styles and factors that cause our relationship with others going well or factors that weaken our relationship with others

**Fourth Session:** Become familiar with a variety of communication styles (passive behavior, aggressive behavior and assertive behaviors) - How to express our wishes and how to say no to others' ectopic request.

**Fifth Session:** Understanding assertiveness skills, familiarity with two assertiveness skills of "saying no" and "requesting"

**Sixth Session:** Familiarity with ways of saying no (simply say no, excuse making, dodge, change the subject, repeating, turning away, disregard, avoid of situations).

**Seventh Session:** Familiarity with psychological pressure and recognition of its symptoms

**Eighth Session:** how to manage stress and psychological pressure

**Ninth Session:** Familiarity with problem solving skills. Explain this issue that the problem is not isolated from human's life and we should learn how to solve them and become skillful in that and with acquiring of these skills be able to have a happy and healthy life

**Tenth Session:** Continued familiarity with the problem solving skills.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In this study, independent sample t-test was used at a significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . Accordingly and based on the data contained in Table 1, hypothesis testing were examined between mean difference of pre- & post-test in both experimental and control group by considering three variables of emotional ytilibitapmoc, social ytilibitapmoc and social development in students.

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**Table 1: Independent t-test for the mean scores of the experimental and control group among three variables**

t	sig	Degrees of freedom	Difference between the groups		SD	mean difference	Mean	Sample size	Test	Variable
			SD	Mean						
-457.3	002.0	28	166.2	-866.1	651.8	-2.2	53.23	15	Pretest	Social development of experimental group
					120.9		20.31	15	Posttest	
			175.1	333.0	768.8		20.24	15	Pretest	Social development of control group
					869.7		07.25	15	Posttest	
-39.2	024.0	28	964.3	-000.3	507.2	-666.2	7	15	Pretest	Emotional adjustment of experimental group
					366.2		80.4	15	Posttest	
			718.1	-333.0	410.2		67.6	15	Pretest	Emotional adjustment of control group
					799.1		33.6	15	Posttest	
29.4	001.0	28	4.4	4.5	920.2	066.5	67.7	15	Pretest	Social adjustment of experimental group
					093.2		67.4	15	Posttest	
			234.1	343.0	743.2		33.7	15	Pretest	Social adjustment of control group
					981.2		20.7	15	Posttest	

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Accordingly, this difference in each of three variables of emotional adjustment (t=-3.457, p=0.02), social compatibility (t=-2.39, p=0.024) and social development (t=4.29, p=0.001) was significant. As can be seen in the above table, there is a significant difference in the differences rate of three variables in experimental group at post-test than pre-test, with differences rate of the same variables in control group in post-test towards the pretest. In this study, due to the results of Box test and meaningful equality of variances of two groups, for evaluating the pre-test and post-test score and for evaluating life skills training effect on emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development of students in the two control and experimental groups the multivariate ANOVA (MANOVA) was used. (Box M=32.654, f=4.805, sig=0.001). The results of ANOVA (Table 4) multiple variables and significance level of conducted tests indicate that there is a significant difference between control and experimental group, at least in terms of one of the dependent variables (emotional adjustment, social adjustment, social development) (p<0.001).

Accordingly, for a more detailed analysis of the results, the MANOVA was used to assess the impact of denoitemvariable on the dependent variables (Table 5).

**Table 2: Results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) on the difference scores (pre-test - post-test), Emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development of experimental and control group**

sig	rorre df	sisetopyh df	F	eulaV	Name of test
001.0	000.26	000.3	387.16	645.0	tset tceffe ialiP
001.0	000.26	000.3	387.16	346.0	Wilks Lambda test
001.0	000.26	000.3	387.16	89.1	Halting effect test
001.0	000.26	000.3	387.16	89.1	The largest root test

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference among the students of the experimental and control groups in terms of three variables of emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development. In other words, the life skills training are effective due to the average of components of emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development.

**Table 3: The variance analysis results for the study of life skills training effect on increasing emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development**

Variable	Sum of square	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Sig
Emotional Adjustment	Intercept	633.17	1	633.17	023.0
	Life Skills	3.36	1	3.36	002.0
	Error	067.85	28	038.3	-
	Total	136	30	-	-
Social Adjustment	Intercept	333.83	1	333.83	006.0
	Life Skills	333.53	1	333.53	024.0
	Error	333.261	28	333.9	-
	Total	398	30	-	-
Social Development	Intercept	533.246	1	533.246	001.0
	Life Skills	533.192	1	533.192	001.0
	Error	933.292	28	468.10	-
	Total	732	30	-	-

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Accordingly, there is significant difference between students of control and experimental group in terms of emotional adjustment variable ( $F=11.948$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), social adjustment ( $F=5.714$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and social development ( $F=18.403$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

### **Conclusion**

Since education is an organization that can train creative, healthy, thoughtful and efficient human beings and since the base of mental health programs is prevention, the role of the school as one of the main centers of prevention is important. Therefore, life skills training can definitely help students in direction to social, moral, emotional adjustment and other life problems. In this study, the life skills training effect on social development, emotional adjustment, and social adjustment were examined. Based on the first hypothesis, the life skills training cause to the enhancement of social development. The result of this research is consistent with findings of Tringer (1998), Taramiyan (2003) and Mehrabi (2009).

As we have seen, life skills training are effective in improving emotional adjustment. The results of this hypothesis is consistent with findings of Albertyn and colleagues (2004), Grant *et al.*, (2002), Barker (2002), Dreer *et al.*, (2005), Tuttle and colleagues (2006), Pour Seydi *et al.*, (2010), Mir Mousavi and colleagues (2007), Navidi (2008) and Hamidi (2005).

However, our research's findings showed that life skills training increase social adjustment. The finding is consistent with the studies of Major and co-workers (1998), Park *et al.*, (1997) and Mott (1999), Gamble (2006), Short (2006), Sepah Mansour (2007), Sajedi (2009), Tarmiyan (2003), Ahadi *et al.*, (2009), Atari and Shehni Yeylaghi (2005), Safarzadeh (2002), Shohadaie (2007).

When teens cannot successfully overcome the crises and development challenges, they will experience psychological distress and substantial disorder will occur in the normal flow of daily life and the emotional, social and cognitive aspects and consequently their personality will be disturbed (Garbr *et al.*, 2002).

In conceptual terms, life skills are a set of abilities that provide the background of adjustment, positive and useful behavior. This capability enables individuals to accept their social responsibility and without hurting yourself and others face to desires, expectations and daily problems, especially in interpersonal relationship. It is necessary to mention that development of social skills lead to promote and acquire the new and complex skills, and creating a positive self-understanding and finally individual establish good relationships with the people around him, and will cause to his social adjustment. Psychologists in recent decades, by evaluating of behavioral disorder and social corruptions have found that tsom of disorders and injuries in individual's disability have rooted in the correct analysis of their self and their own position, lack of self-control and unpreparedness to solve life problems in an appropriate way. So, due to the increasing changes and complexities of society and expansion of social relations, preparedness of individuals especially the young generation to cope with difficult situations seems necessary. Life skills training era a program that its usefulness has been demonstrated in numerous studies. Generally, the findings of this study and similar studies indicate that through life skills training we can improve general health and children and adolescents' adjustment. According to the World Health Organization, life skills refers to a set of capabilities that their application has great impact in planning and improving interpersonal relationships, acceptance of social responsibility, good decision making and conflict resolution. Achieving to this goal is not practically possible unless the essential skills are taught to children. If a small part of the school curriculum is allocated to teaching of control of negative emotions, problem solving process, decision making, establishing appropriate interpersonal relationships, the incidence of many behavioral disorders will be prevented. In sum, results of this research in despite of its weaknesses and limitations indicate the effectiveness of life skills training programs in enhancement of students' emotional adjustment, social adjustment and social development.

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