

Effectiveness of social cognitive therapy and coaching on self awareness in girl adolescents

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Abstract

Introduction: Coaching, which is focused on problem solving, results-oriented and a systematic process, can make an effective contribution to educational environments and is a powerful tool to support the learning and development of learners. The present study conducted to compare the effectiveness of social cognitive therapy & coaching on self awareness in girl adolescents.

Reserch methods: Research method was quasi-experimental with pre-test, post- test, three-month follow-up with control group. The statistical population consist of girl adolescents of high/secondary school resident in second district of Tehran city in 1400 years. Sampling method was Convenience Sampling. 45 available adolescents selected (fifteen in each experimental group) and replaced randomly in experimental group 1 (social cognitive therapy) and experimental group 2 (coaching). Fifteen other studente placed in control group and did not receive any therapy. The self awareness Inventory was administered pre-test, post-test and follow-up. The therapy packages were social cognitive therapy package and coaching package. Social cognitive therapy and coaching applied on experimental groups (ninety minutes each session) weekly and the control group did not receive any therapy.

Results: Results showed that both of Social cognitive therapy and coaching were affected the same on increasing to self awareness in girl adolescents of high/secondary school. Three-month follow-up confirmed these results. Then by use to Social cognitive therapy & coaching (especially Social cognitive therapy) can to increase to self awareness in girl adolescents.

Conclusion: Social cognitive therapy & coaching (especially Social cognitive) affective to raise the self awareness students and is necessary for using from these methods to improve education of these girl adolescents.

Keywords: adolescents, coaching training, self awareness, social cognitive

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Introduction:

Adolescence is a stage of life where the foundations of physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social maturity are formed. Adolescent health is considered as one of the basic components of society's health all over the world. In adolescent girls, psycho-emotional needs are among the most obvious needs that have attracted the attention of governments, organizations and social institutions. Adolescent girls consider their psychological needs more important due to psychological, emotional and value changes affected by this period. Since the ratio of young people to the total population has increased more than ever before, paying attention to the health of adolescents has become especially important. Given the characteristics of the middle school period, when the self-awareness of adolescents gradually increases with the increase of cognitive capacities, the importance of self-awareness is highlighted (1).

Self-awareness means what perception a person has about himself or herself and how he or she feels based on this perception. Our type of self-awareness predicts our satisfaction with ourselves and life (Blakemore & Agllias, 2019). Self-awareness guarantees the strength of a person's existence during adulthood and fosters interpersonal and academic relationships in facing problems and solving them properly. By strengthening the self-awareness of students, it is possible to inform them all the positive and negative points they have, because self-awareness is the ability to know oneself and to be aware of one's characteristics, weaknesses and strengths, desires, fears and disgusts. For most of us, describing our moral and behavioral characteristics to others is a difficult task (2). Self-awareness is the strongest predictor for the mental health of adolescent girls. It means that adolescents will have higher self-esteem by knowing more about their strengths and weaknesses and their desires (3). People can show the correct reaction to events when they know their abilities well and have awareness about them. Awareness of abilities is introduced as the first step towards changing emotions and regulating emotions, and weakness in self-awareness is associated with psychological, social, occupational and educational vulnerability. Also, people who have weak self-awareness show weakness in regulating correct and moral behavior (4). In this regard, social cognitive therapy has emphasized the role of environmental factors in the formation of behavior. Bandura believes that the person, the environment and the behavior individually cannot determine the behavior. Social cognitive theory includes nine constructs: environment, behavioral ability, outcome expectation, outcome value, self-control, observational learning, reinforcement, self-efficacy and emotional compatibility (5). A large part of human learning is done by observing and imitating the behavior of others. Observational learning is learning by observing others and imitating their behavior. Learning is the basic life skills through observation (Hayden, 2019). This approach tries to find the mechanisms of social cognition underlying self-awareness. Based on the results of the study conducted by Talebi, Arab Ameri and Sotoudeh (2018), adolescence is a good time for education through observational learning (6). Another intervention in this regard is coaching.

Coaching is another intervention method that results in improving students' self-awareness and improving their skills, and has been officially accepted and approved as an empowerment skill. Coaching uses cognitive-behavioral techniques and solutions to help adolescents achieve their goals. It emphasizes equality in relationships where the learner's independence and decision-making by him or her is the final result of the work (7). This intervention is a process that can

improve self-confidence and self-efficacy. A new insight is gained through it and it has been shown that coaching is effective in learning and developing key skills. With teamwork, motivation and targeting, it does not focus on weak or incorrect behaviors, but it focuses on individual strengths and abilities. In fact, the interventionist provides the guidance and activities needed to develop the skills and abilities of the individuals in the best way. He acts while guiding and motivating the adolescents to achieve the goals of the program and plan. Also, substitution learning theory focuses on the aspects of learning and knowledge that lead to meaningfulness in life through awareness of values, thoughts and expectations. Like most service professions, coaching has its foundations derived from fields such as psychology, human development, philosophy and education (8). Given the importance of adolescence period and since previous studies have given high importance to emotional self-awareness in this period, and since social cognitive intervention is applied during formal education but schools are not the only social institutions responsible for education, coaching, which is focused on problem solving and is a systematic process, can play an effective role in educational environments and has a strong tool to support learning and development of learners. In the present study, the researcher seeks to answer this question: Is there a difference between the effectiveness of cognitive behavioral intervention and coaching on the self-awareness of adolescent girls?

Research Methods:

The present study was a quasi-experimental study with pre-test-post-test design with a control group with follow-up. The statistical population of this study included all female adolescents studying in the second-grade high schools in the district 2 of Tehran in the academic year of 2020-2021. The sample of study was 45 people (15 people for each group). It means that 15 people were included in the experimental group 1, 15 people in the experimental group 2 and 15 people in the control group. They were selected using a convenience sampling method. Inclusion criteria for the experimental group included 1- Absence of major stressful events such as divorce or death of loved ones in the past six months, 2- subjects' willingness to participate and 3- Absence of severe physical and mental problems. The exclusion criteria for the experimental group included 1- Being absent in more than two training sessions, 2- Lack of willingness to continue attending training sessions, 3- Suffering from a severe psychiatric illness or disorder that requires immediate treatment, and 4- Change of school and migration of students. Tools:

Self-awareness questionnaire: Emotional self-awareness questionnaire was prepared by Cooper in 1997. This questionnaire has 25 items scored on a Likert scale from 0 to 3. Cooper (1997) reported the validity of the questionnaire using appropriate construct validity and reported its reliability at 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha method. In Iran, after the translation of the questionnaire by Azizi (1377), the reliability of the self-awareness questionnaire was calculated using the test-retest method on 52 students of Tuyserkan city. After the implementation of the first stage, the second stage was implemented again two weeks later with the same self-awareness questions on the students, and the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire in this study was estimated at 0.74 and 0.84, respectively, using Pearson's

correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha method. The construct validity of the test was also reported at favorable level. In the studies conducted in this regard, the reliability of the questionnaire was obtained at 0.74 using Cronbach's alpha method. In the present study, the reliability of this tool was obtained at 0.82 using Cronbach's alpha (9).

Table 1. Protocol of coaching sessions (10)

Session	Goals
1	Helping clients to identify their goals and priorities in life: introducing and explaining the details of the intervention and setting goals by completing the questionnaire. The goals were as specific, measurable and attainable as possible.
2	Preparing a perspective for the client's personal, social or professional life with his or her participation: starting the problem-solving process for one of the set goals and also presenting the problem-solving process print sheet. In this session, the student specified that he or she would perform at least two different behaviours regarding the desired goal during the next week.
3	Helping the clients to prepare a plan to move forward: examining the first goal and starting the next goals (one to two behaviours for each goal)
4	Determining the barriers of clients in realizing their main goals and examining the progress in all goals
5	Creating motivation to take practical steps to achieve goals and examining progress in all goals
6	Helping to obtain tangible and measurable results and examining progress in all goals
7	Acknowledging and appreciating clients' small successes, examining goals and paving the way for terminating the intervention sessions
8	Planning and moving towards the next goals and making decisions about the goals that were not achieved and the terminating the intervention by completing the questionnaires again.

Table 2. Social cognitive intervention protocol (11)

Session	Educational content	Goals
1	Greeting, providing an explanation about the meeting process and implementing pre-test Education about the role of peers in the life of adolescents Using the technique of fighting with peers, explaining the process of the meetings and implementing the pre-test	1-Knowing the reasons for friends' arguments 2-Acquiring the necessary skills to deal with friendship problems

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| 2 | Although adolescents have the ability to think abstractly, most of them still cannot think abstractly. By using the technique of sensible relationships, adolescents are taught in this field. | 1- Acquiring the necessary skills for rational thinking
2- Using the necessary skills to think rationally in solving relationship problems |
| 3 | Adolescents in this period are looking for social acceptance and peer pressure is evident in many relationships. Peer pressure is taught to them in this field. | 1- Considering the positive and negative aspects of peer pressure
2-Considering the consequences of resistance to peer pressure |
| 4 | Friends play a major role in the lives of adolescents; adolescents need to learn the skills to give and receive feedback correctly. Using the technique of friends' feedback | 1- Familiarity with different styles of giving and receiving feedback
2-Developing skills in giving and receiving feedback
Understanding how thoughts affect feelings and actions |
| 5 | If adolescents understand the relationship between thoughts, feelings and actions better, they can better respond to situational and developmental pressures. Using the technique of thinking, feeling and acting | |
| 6 | Adolescents usually consider the consequences of their decisions. Many of them ignore the consequences due to carelessness or on purpose. | 1-Evaluating decisions and determining consequences
2- Learning ways to change negative behaviour |
| 7 | Adolescents usually make problems worse because they have their own assumptions about how people will react, they don't consider the risks and they don't care what will happen to them. The technique of problem-solving skills helps adolescents. | Learning effective problem-solving skills |
| 8 | Adolescents are usually not realistic in assessing situations. This lack of realism affects their reactions. Therefore, with the technique of realistic reasoning, they can be taught to correct their thinking errors that lead to their unsuccessful behaviour. | 1-To become skilled in the field of realistic assessment of situations
2- To become skilled at good reasoning |
| 9 | Summarizing and reviewing the contents of the pre-test and post-test sessions | |
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The research implementation method was as follows. In the present study, to collect information after obtaining the relevant research permissions from the General Directorate of Education in Tehran and after presenting the research objectives, a self-awareness questionnaire was administered to adolescent girls taking into account the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected students were studying in the second-grade high schools in District 2 of Tehran (all

three experimental groups and one control group). First, the written consent of the participants to enter the research process was taken and they were also assured about the confidentiality of the information. To implement social cognitive therapy and coaching, a 45-minute briefing session was held for the members of the experimental and control groups separately, and the general principles, rules and goals of the group were discussed in general. After the pre-test, the participants of the first experimental group underwent 9 weekly sessions of 45 minutes of social cognitive intervention and the second group underwent 8 weekly sessions of 45 minutes of coaching. The training sessions were implemented during two months and were evaluated again after a 60-day follow-up. To compare the results of the three experimental and control groups, mixed analysis of variance and Bonferroni post hoc test were used while observing the research assumptions (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Levene's test and homogeneity of regression slopes).

Results:

The mean age of the participants in this study is 16.11 and its standard deviation is 1.29. The range of changes in age was from 15 to 19 years. Ten people (23%) were studying in the first grade, 11 people (24%) in the second grade, 11 people (24%) in the third grade, and 12 people (27%) in the pre-university grade. In the Shapiro-Wilk test, the significance level was greater than the significance level of 0.05, so the distribution of the scores of the three groups was normal. Also, with Levene's test, the variances of the three groups were equal and homogeneous. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was fulfilled for this variable. Also, the significance level of the interaction between the two groups was greater than $p < 0.01$ and the interaction was not significant. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slopes was fulfilled. In the pre-test stage, there was no significant difference between the three groups. In the post-test and follow-up stage, the mean self-awareness of the social cognitive group and the coaching group was significantly higher than the control group, and these two types of intervention increased self-awareness.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of scores of subjects based on groups

group	pretest		posttest		Follow-up	
	mean	SD	mean	SD	mean	SD
social cognitive	40.23	6.13	45.18	6.40	46.04	5.11
Coaching	39.36	5.48	43.09	7.12	43.55	4.43
Control	40.11	7.30	39.79	6.92	38.50	7.86

Table 2 presents the results of mixed analysis of variance test to examine the effect of group factor and time factor on self-awareness scores. Based on the results of the table above, two social cognitive methods and coaching had a significant effect on self-awareness scores in the post-test ($F(2, 42) = 16.28, P < 0.003$). Also, the effect of time factor on self-awareness scores in the follow-up stage was significant ($F(2, 39) = 41.26, P < 0.001$). Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a difference between the self-awareness scores in the three stages of pre-test, post-test and follow-up regardless of the group. Also, the interaction effect

between group and time was significant ($F(2,39) = 36.73, P < 0.001$). Therefore, it can be concluded that the effect of the group was different according to the measurement time levels.

Table 2: Results of mixed analysis of variance to compare effectiveness of interventions on self-awareness

Between-subjects changes	SS	df	MS	F	sig	Eta	power
Group	15621.16	2	6381.53	16.28	0.001	0.31	0.78
Error	8729.06	42	3739.17				
Within-subjects							
Time	3920.27	2	1904.84	41.26	0.00	0.42	1
Time and group	14639.37	4	4826.94	36.73	0.001	0.39	1
Error	2530.15	39	64.39				

Also, by considering the squared Eta value of 0.31, it can be concluded that the intervention led to changes in the experimental group, and 0.31 of the total changes were caused by the experimental procedure. Thus, treatment affects self-awareness. Then, to investigate the interaction between the group and the measurement time on the self-awareness scores by keeping the time factor constant, the mean self-awareness of the groups was compared using Bonferroni post hoc test. As seen in Table 3, the difference between the means of both experimental groups is negative and significant compared to the control group. Thus, regarding the hypotheses related to the effectiveness of these two trainings in increasing the self-awareness of adolescents, the null hypothesis is rejected and the researcher's hypothesis is confirmed.

It means that both experimental approaches (social cognitive and coaching) have been effective in increasing the self-awareness of adolescents. In comparing the effectiveness of the two experimental groups with each other, the difference in the means is significant at the 99% confidence level, so the hypothesis of the difference between the effects of the two treatment methods is also confirmed. Considering the positive value in mean differences and the fact that the mean of the social cognitive group was higher than the coaching group, the social cognitive method was more effective in increasing the self-awareness of adolescents compared to coaching method.

Table 3: Results of Bonferroni post hoc test to compare the mean scores of self-awareness in three groups

Levels of independent variables	Group	Mean of differences	SD	sig	Lower bound	Upper bound
Social cognitive	Coaching	4.26	4.01	0.001	-5	14
	Control	13.35	4.01	0.01	1	24
Coaching	Control	8.27	4.01	0.01	-2	19

Discussion and Conclusion:

The present study aimed to evaluate difference between the effects of social cognitive therapy and coaching on emotional self-awareness in adolescent girls. The results showed that there was a difference between the effects of social cognitive therapy and coaching on emotional self-awareness in adolescent girls. Also, the social cognitive method was more effective than coaching in increasing adolescents' self-awareness. This result was consistent with the results of similar studies (12, 13, 9, 14 and 15). In explaining this result, it can be said that both intervention methods have characteristics that cover a part of self-awareness skills. Coaching plays a major role in improving a person's self-awareness by communicating the learner with other people and reminding him or her to his or her weaknesses and strengths from the point of view of other people. By providing extensive information in a limited time and teaching different methods of acquiring self-awareness skill, emotional cognitive method provides basic information for people.

These characteristics have also made these two methods effective in learning self-awareness skills. However, since the learning space in the coaching method is interactive and adolescents receive feedback from each other about their characteristics and gain more information and insight about themselves from this path, it is more effective (16). Due to their differences in nature, each of these two methods focuses on different dimensions of self-awareness. Social cognitive therapy increases that dimension of self-awareness, which is called the social self, and coaching can strengthen the personal and even hidden aspects of a person. It can be argued that in the coaching method, by asking various questions about the desired topic, the person deals with the deeper processing of the topic and its connection with his or her background while he or she pays more attention and focusing on the topic, resulting in strengthening the cognitive structure.

The ideas learned about the previously presented materials are retained for a longer period of time compared to the materials learned in a scattered manner and without connection with each other. In this method, through the more serious engagement of the learners, a more suitable condition is provided for self-understanding and greater awareness of aspects of the dimensions remained unknown to him or her but others are aware of them and it results in improved self-awareness. However, both methods improved the self-awareness scores of adolescents. Its

reason can be traced in characteristics of these methods (17). Social cognitive method emphasizes on teaching topics to the clients by modeling and makes full use of the available educational time to facilitate the learning activities of adolescents. It facilitates learning. Coaching is done by carefully selecting the appropriate assignments, providing clear information related to the course and problem solving methods, continuously diagnosing the learning progress and learning problems of the adolescents, and providing effective help through compensatory training. Also, the materials are presented in an organized manner. This type of presentation is considered a great help for the learning of people who are weak in using cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Another reason for being effective in this research is the use of homework, which means learning through experience. By using these techniques, an opportunity is provided to adolescents to think about themselves or increase their self-awareness by using self-awareness techniques that require working alone (8).

Self-awareness as a prerequisite component of emotional intelligence can be improved through treatment. Accordingly, the training group creates a reality for simulating behavior for the person and can be effective in making the person aware of the emotions of himself or herself and others. By being self-aware of emotions, which is considered one of the most important prerequisites for emotion regulation, adolescents can be guided to control and regulate emotions and accordingly show adaptive behavior. Verbal expression of emotions can play a major role in objectifying the differentiation of emotions in the form of words and thus recognizing the difference between emotions. Familiarity with social cognitive basics increases their self-awareness. This increase in self-awareness motivates them to apply more control over their own behavior because they realize that merely external stimuli, such as the words or sarcasm of others do not initiates problems in them, but the type of perception and view they have about themselves can also be involved in the occurrence of emotional reactions (18).

Coaching skills also teach a person to perceive the evaluation of others positively, so that it does not lead to their confusion. Emotion can be controlled and moderated by people by increasing awareness of it and teaching effective methods and strategies. Therefore, this group of people learns the required skills by participating in coaching training programs, enriching their behavioral treasury, and show more adaptive reactions in various situations. It also teaches people effective ways to deal with mental pressure, such as body relaxation method, which is an effective tool in creating balance in one's body during physical and emotional arousal, or self-expression, which teaches people the correct way of asking others or rejecting inappropriate requests. Also, problem solving helps people to search for correct ways to solve their problems instead of worrying about disturbing thoughts. It also teaches techniques that help a person to consider the intention of others with a broad vision instead of being pessimistic or guessing the thoughts and intentions of others, increase social skills, trust others as much as possible (19). The limitations of present study included the non-use of the random sampling method and the research population was limited to second-grade girl high schools in the District 2 of Tehran.

According to the results, it is recommended to conduct similar studies in other provinces, regions and populations with different cultures to increase the generalizability of the results. It

is also recommended to use random sampling method to control disturbing factors. Also, the social cognitive method and coaching should be taught to psychologists and school counselors during a specialized workshop, so that a practical step can be taken to improve the self-awareness of adolescents by applying these trainings for coaching.

Ethical considerations:

The subjects participated in this study after the initial interviews with the participants and filling the informed consent form. Finally, a gift was given to both the experimental groups and the control group to gratitude them. Also, the permission to conduct the research was obtained from the parents of the students and the researcher did not consider any danger for the participants.

Conflict of interest:

The authors declared no conflict of interest in this article. This article was derived from a doctoral dissertation. The present study was conducted with the personal expense of the authors. The first author was the main researcher and the second author was responsible for the guidance and direction of the research, and the third and fourth authors cooperated in the training and implementation of the protocols.

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