

The Effect of Storytelling on behavioral problems (aggression-withdrawal) of preschoolers' in Ahvaz

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to investigate the effect of storytelling on behavioral problems (aggression-withdrawal) of 5 to 6 years old Preschoolers in Ahvaz. The research sample consisted of 28 children (14 in test group and 14 in witness group) which were selected through multi stage random sampling method. Research plan was based on pre-test, post-test compared with control group. Research tools were Shahim questionnaires (teacher form) for pre-school students. After the groups selected, the pre-test was taken from both groups. Then the test group was exposed to independent variable (storytelling) for 12 sessions, each session 45 minutes, while the control group received no intervention. At the end, post-test was taken from both groups. There was a follow up, after one month. The multivariate analysis of covariance (Mankova) was used, for data analysis. The analysis results showed that storytelling was effective on preschoolers' behavioral problems (aggression-withdrawal) of the test group students compared to control group and this impact was still stable after one month.

KEY WORDS: storytelling, behavioral problems, aggression, withdrawal, preschoolers

1- INTRODUCTION

Today, it is proved that the roots of many behavioral problems return to childhood. Behavioral problems can be the product of the interaction of a range of biological, psychological and social variables which act as accelerate and maintenance factors. However, it seems that despite of the importance of biological factors, adverse family environment factors such as dysfunctional parenting styles, and impaired social behavior, has a crucial role in the development, extension, continuation and intensification of symptoms [1]. In principle, emotional and behavioral problems of children are divided in the two groups, i.e. the internalizing and externalizing problems. Externalizing behavior problems are related to external matters and include issues such as outflow, militancy, aggression, disobedience which associated with problems with others, and internalizing problems are related to internal matters and include issues such as withdrawal (isolation), depression, and anxiety. Moreover, children sometime show behaviors that are not related to any of these areas [2]. They have an aggression, warrior mode, temperament and mistrust toward other people and also show disobedience and violence toward authorities. The reasons of this aggression are different. This problem is partly related to children physical and cognitive abilities as well as environmental and social issues.

If we can increase the child understanding of this behavior and its consequences, it can help them to reduce their aggression. For increasing children's understanding of self and social realities, the story is one of the known tools that can present behavioral patterns in the form of characters for the children [3]. Children substantiation with story characters deal with a better understanding of his character and understanding favorable or unfavorable behavior and its consequences. This approach occurs based on the process of internalization, externalization and seeking balance; it causes changes and modifying behavior. With the help of a good story with good characterization and appropriate theme that related to the child's difficulties and mental background, aggressive child can questioned its negative attitude and refrain from repeating it [4].

Literally withdrawal is loneliness, solitary, sitting alone and avoiding others. Withdrawal becomes disease when a person hates and scared of mixing with the crowd and fellows. Loner child shows strong resistance, when imposed to some behaviors. He/ She may conflict with the family and does not defend his/her right and also prefers to resignation than attempt [5].

Aggression and withdrawal is one of two fundamental problems in schools. According to the teachers report, 15% of children, are victimized of aggression and bullying, and according to the students report, 50% of children are victimized of this type of behavior [6]. Withdrawal is one of mental disorders in children and

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adolescents that accompany with behavioral and anxiety disorders. Bruinsma and Venn has reported that between 1 to 3 percent of the students are loners [7]. Some believe that social withdrawal in childhood is due to lack of social motivation [8] and others believe that withdrawal is associated with psychological maladjustment [9]. Aggression and withdrawal show extreme beyond control and under strict control behavioral and emotional reactions to social situations. Considering its picture and emotional content of children through storytelling related to it, is non-threatening and has great significance in understanding problems of aggressive and withdrawn children who are not able to express it. Some researchers emphasizing on early treatment of this problems at an early age, which is a form of prevention, have shown that if these problems were recognized and cured at pre-school ages, greatly reduced and improve the performance of children in various fields [10].

Parker (1990) explains three stages in children treatment through the stories, in this way: A) Replication stage: The child replicates with characters and story events whether they are real or fake, B) emotional drain stage: the child is emotionally involved in the story and is able to release hidden emotions in safe environment, C) Insight stage: a child recognizes itself and other important figures in his life in story and gains insight into importance of similarities. By reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, and increasing self-awareness and self-understanding, a child has more courage deal with its problems [11].

In the study entitled impact of storytelling on social skills of pre-school children, Daemi [12] has concluded that storytelling increases social skills and social competence. SonSosti and Powel-Smith [13] used social stories to teach social skills to children with Asperger syndrome and reported that this intervention is effective on two of three children's social behavior. Radbakhsh and et al. [14] conducted the study with the aim considering play and storytelling impact on the student's creativity. The results showed Playing and storytelling have been effective in increasing student's creativity and definite that play and storytelling can significantly increase creativity of people especially children. Yahya Mahmoudi et al. [15] investigated the group effectiveness of social skills based on storytelling, on children's externalizing behavior problems and the results showed that aggressive and law-breaking behavior declined significantly at the end of period. Nasirzadeh [16] studied the impact of storytelling on aggression in 6 to 8 years old boys. Teachers and parents reported that storytelling can reduce the signs of aggression in children. This decrease during three months follow-up was stable. Parirokh [17] had studied with the aim of the effects of good fiction books with the biblio therapy approach on children aggression in the A-age group. In this study, 5 to 6 years old children which were selected for test, Storybooks were read during 10 half-our sessions for children. The observations and data obtained showed that reduced aggressive behavior extremely. Tahmasian [18] examined using story in teaching social skills to children that was carried out with the aim of impact of story therapy on increasing positive behavior, results showed that progress were reported in 90% of the pre-school and 80% primary grades.

Considering the results of previous researches, the aim of this study was the effect of storytelling on behavioral problems (aggression, withdrawal) of preschoolers, in Ahvaz.

2. THE RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. The Society, sample, and sampling method

Experimental research design was based on pretest-posttest followed with control group. The population of this study included all 5 to 6 years old, preschool children who have behavioral problems in kindergartens under the Behzisti of Ahvaz in 2013-2014, and sample group selected in multi-stage randomly. Four kindergartens are randomly selected and preschool children who were given highest score in Shahim questionnaires were selected as the final sample. The 14 patients were in the experimental group and 14 patients were in the control, randomly. With the cooperation of parents and kindergarten administrators, children of experimental group were presented to storytelling program. In the next step, using a behavioral problems questionnaire for Shahim Preschool children [19] both group children were pretested. Then the intervention group was participated at 12 meeting of storytelling. Control group received no pretest, and this group was only attended in kindergarten normal activities. After completion Intervention, both groups were taken past-test, to determine the effect of the independent variable, storytelling, on the variable associated behavioral problems (aggression, withdrawal), after one month was repeated follow-up test again.

2-2. Implementation Method

In this study, stories were selected, among the types of stories, considering the criteria of reducing behavioral problems and its components (aggression, withdrawal) appropriate to the age group of 5 to 6 years old, with limited functionality of main characters and simplicity understandable and interesting stories with beautiful images. Because the experiences show that children pay attention to pictures of books and this pictures are interesting to them and after each session children were asked to tell the story to two people.

Storytelling with positive emotionally words: The Storyteller by the use of words, concepts and phenomena which are emotionally positive, has already selected the stories and each session tell the story for children. Then they discussed the various aspects of stories and in this discussion, they concentrates on positive aspects related to issues and used effective solutions in story.

Storytelling using metaphors: the heroes of these stories have problems similar to the students' problems and they have used the skills and confrontation techniques to overcome the difficulties. The end of all stories is always positive and full of success and instead of frustrations and disappointments, emphasizes on hope and solutions.

2-3. The number of sessions of storytelling

Session 1: First, a group play is conducted to increase communication among group members, create familiarity between storyteller and children, the **Played with the fingers** story; Mustafa Rahmandoust (Author) is happy and attractive story for children.

Session 2: The **funny face** story, (writer: Nikolas May; Translated by Noshin Akhlaghi), mime performances and evolve emoticons by storyteller and children to show favorable and unfavorable, happy look, surprised, sad, angry, evil, fear, panic.

Session 3: The **snob anger** Story; Author (Miri del Anseh; translated by Mehdi Shojaei), the message of the story: the disadvantages of anger and harm to family and belongings, Consequence of story: Overcoming anger and aggression.

Session 4: The **angry sheep** story, (writer, Joseph Teobald; Translated by Ansarian), story message: aggressive behavior, Consequence of story: friendship and generosity, Interaction.

Session 5: The **owl and woodpecker** story, (writer, Brian Wilde Smith; Translated by Majid Amigh) message of the story: aggressive behavior, the outcome of the story: practicing other ways for making friends and maintaining friendships.

Session 6: The **rainbow fish** story, (writer, Fyster, Marcus; Translated by Mehdi Shojaei), the message of the story: arrogance, aggression and withdrawal, the outcome of the story: acceptance of self and others and other ways of happy living

Session 7: The **crow and donkey** story (the author, Asadollah Shabani) message of the story: bullying, arrogance, breking the low and aggression, the outcome of the story: Socially desirable behavior and discipline.

Session 8: The **What a good idea** story, (writer, Hun Shun Tao; translated by Amir Morad Hasel), the message of the story: solitary, non-cooperation and aggression, the outcome of the story: consultation, peaceful behavior

Session 9: The **Why you are disputing** story (the author, Bridget Veninger; translated by Bahman Rostam-Abadi). Message of story: aggression, withdrawal, the outcome of the story: Friendship, harmonious, peaceful behavior.

Session 10: The **sheep that was too small** Story; (Author, Rob Lewis; Translated by Hoshang Azadivar). The message of story: isolation, the outcome of the story: the Sociability, happiness, satisfaction

Session 11: The best bread for the best animal story, (author, Behrooz FarajAllah) outcome of story: friendship, kindness, generosity, affection.

Session 12: Review of previous sessions and conclusion

2.3. Measuring tool

The Shahim behavioral problems questionnaire for pre-school children. This questionnaire is a behavior rating scale that its earliest form, is prepared to assess behavioral problems in children, in Iran in 1375. Base on this goal, a questionnaire provides that is consist of 28 three scores scaled questions, which has 3 factors that 2 factors are used in this research. In order to scoring this 28-item scale, three options were considered for each question; mostly, rarely and never; that values (1,2,3) is included, respectively. Therefore, the children who their scores are above average, have high behavioral problems. The stability coefficient for the whole questionnaire is 0.70, which is meaningful in all cases and is desirable for reliability questionnaire. The alpha coefficient was calculated for all factors; aggression factor, 0.89 and withdrawal and anxiety factors, 0.70, is indicating good internal stability questionnaire. The stability coefficient for the Nasirzadeh research [16], 0.73, that is obtained through Cronbach's alpha was satisfactory and according to the satisfactory results can be trusted. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of behavior problems questionnaire that was equal to 0.75 in aggression and 0.65 in withdrawal for the entire questionnaire that indicates acceptable reliability coefficients of the mentioned questionnaire.

3. RESULTS

The mean and standard deviation variables is reported in table 1.

Table1: Mean and standard deviation of the research descriptive variables

Variable	Stage	Statistical index. Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Behavioral Problems	Pre-test	Test (Experiment)	65	3.18
		Witness	65.07	4.02
	Post-test	Test (Experiment)	57.93	2.70
		Witness	64.86	3.97
	Following (consistency)	Test (Experiment)	57.21	2.69
		Witness	64.93	3.05
Aggression	Pre-test	Test (Experiment)	34.36	1.73
		Witness	33.36	1.86
	Post-test	Test (Experiment)	30.14	1.35
		Witness	33.07	1.90
	Following (consistency)	Test (Experiment)	29.64	1.39
		Witness	34.14	1.23
Withdrawal	Pre-test	Test (Experiment)	13.93	2.40
		Witness	14.57	2.40
	Post-test	Test (Experiment)	12.93	1.90
		Witness	14.93	2.58
	Following (consistency)	Test (Experiment)	12.64	1.69
		Witness	14.64	2.43

Table2: Results of the multivariate analysis of covariance (Mankova) on post-test average grades components of behavioral problems in children experimental and control groups with pre-test control

Test name	Value	DF hypothesis	DF Error	F	Meaningful level (p)
pilaei test effectiveness	0.910	3	21	71.19	0.0001
Wilks Lambda test	0.090	3	21	71.19	0.0001
Hoteling test effectiveness	10.17	3	21	71.19	0.0001
Largest Root test	10.17	3	21	71.19	0.0001

As shown in Table 2, a meaningful difference has been seen among preschoolers experimental and control groups at least in terms of one component. The one-way analysis of covariance in the text Mankva was used to understand this difference, that its results shown in Table3.

Table 3- the results of one-way analysis of covariance in the Mankva on the test scores of the components of behavioral problems in preschool children with test group and witness group and pre-test controlling

Variable	Source changes	Total squares	Freedom level	Average squares	F	Meaningful level p
Aggression	Pre-test	50.62	1	50.62	66.99	0.0001
	Group	87.52	1	87.52	115.82	0.0001
	Mistake	17.38	23	0.756		
Withdrawal	Pre-test	79.40	1	79.40	44.34	0.0001
	Group	19.42	1	19.42	10.84	0.003
	Mistake	41.19	23	1.79		

As shown in Table 3, with control pre-test between experimental and control groups in terms of behavior problems in preschool children, there were significant differences in aggression and withdrawal.

4. Conclusion

The results of research showed that storytelling has a significant impact on Ahwaz preschool children behavioral problems and its components (aggression, withdrawal). And reduces children behavioral problems and its components (aggression, withdrawal). Therefore, the results of this research have alignment with the results of most previous studies. Daemi [12], Sansoseti and pawl – Smith[13], Radbakhsh and et al[14], Yahya Mahmoudi[15], Nasirzadeh [16], Tahmasian[18], Parirokh M. Naseri Z [17].

To clarifying this result, we can say that the story is a good practice to create change, modify and balance of distorted in appropriate and inaccurate assumptions. Children see themselves in the others mirror and put in place the elements of your story to learn ways to behave. Some researchers (Such as Aria and Tabrizi, 2003, Amin Dehghan and parirokh,[17]) have a same idea in the story efficiency on cognitive, emotional and behavioral growing and they introduce story as an effective tool that accelerate the development of children's intellectual evolution. Because they cannot simply identifies and express their thoughts and feelings. Storytelling for children, as Freud said; Makes children replicate with story characters and events and emotionally become discharged and children recognize themselves and other life important character in story and to gain insight, inaccurate assumption are corrected and social interest is increased, anxiety and behavioral problems are reduced and also children acceptance and satisfaction are increased. Review of the literature regarding children's aggression and withdrawal is essential for achieving the best treatment options. Children

through the story observe frustration of aggression victims their suffering and withdrawal and its results, motivates them to reduce abusing victims and make interaction with others. By showing aggressive behavior and its consequences, in terms of character or personality pattern for children, they increase or decrease their behavioral patterns. Discuss the content of the stories and also remind them while it is necessary to avoid selfishness, acquire the needed knowledge, feel behavior and achieve balance. Function of storytelling becomes more prominent, especially for children, because they cannot easily identify and express their thoughts and feelings that is why storytelling is one of the excellent methods of psychotherapy and counseling children. When children listen to the story, they go toward their conflicts. They may borrow skills and solution that story characters are used, for confrontation with their problems. This causes them to be able to overcome their past failures and find their future meaningful.

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