Schema Therapy and its effect on the Fear of success among University Students

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ABSTRACT: The present study attempts to study the effect of schema therapy on fear of success among university students. To this end, 80 students were randomly selected from among female students applying multi-stage cluster sampling. Administering a pre-test, the researcher chose only 32 qualified person divided to two experimental and control group. Based on Zuckerman and Allison Fear of Success Scale (1976), the qualified subjects are those suffering from this sense of fear who were to attend a 12-session course of schema therapy. To analyze the data, both inferential and descriptive analyses were used including variance, covariance and Kalmograph-Smirnov test for normality of the data in SPSS. The findings showed that the significance value is high enough (F=22.38, P<0.05) to reject the null hypothesis; i.e. the students in the experimental group significantly outperform the students in the control group (F= 91.75). This means that the schema therapy has had a significant effect on the fear of success.

Keywords: Schema Therapy; Fear among Students; Psychology

INTRODUCTION

The meaning of “Fear of Success” is not evident to every individual, but when its symptoms are described they will understand it completely. Many researchers say that this “Fear” emerges in childhood, among whom Zuckerman and Allison (1976) believed that fear of success is a hidden and constant state originated in childhood. T. Kanie (2011), hypnotism specialist in California, said that ‘fear of success is a specific state emerged in you when decide to make some changes’. We all are headed for the future and what we imagine for our future has considerable influence on us. Thus, if fear of success in future hinders our further attempts to achieve our goals and influences our motivation, our social and individual progress will be damaged. (1)

Fear of success indicates almost an unreasonable state in which once an individual overdoes the others feels doubt (for example when one feels embarrassed or sinful for his success). Thus, competition may make the individual to belittle his performance and even hide his conspicuous success (Hissrington, 1993) (2). As a result of these negative feelings emerged from fear of success, the motivation for achieving goals are influenced and progress-related mental stresses are restricted, while success implies a need for achieving advantage and attaining motivation for progress in each situation (Tick, 1995).

Kelly (1995) believed that personal structure, is an individual-specific and biased style in one’s attitude toward himself and others. Fear of success is one major cause of resistance mechanism against changes and is considered as a barrier to individual progress and consequently may be responsible for his lack of motivation for expressing his abilities. One primary human need is progress and motivation for progress and is considered as a key to individual progress (cited in Tavakoli, 2008).

In order to reach a constant change in achieving what exactly you want in your life you need to have a constant and fixed attitude towards the future. This attitude, may not only be an infinite source of motivation for you, but will help you with specifying the problems which have fallen you behind. These problems include fear of failure, like doubt about if you deserve that position, and fear of success in achieving what you wished to achieve. Kanie continues: “fear of success are expressed differently among people. In some cases the other people don’t notice the effects and only the person deals with it and based on the decision to be made in future controls his reactions. In this situation, some people lose their control and face physical, behavioral and cognitive problems. Hence, fear of success will affect their educational performance and may even account for their failure. This problem must be considered by researchers so that effective steps be taken. In many cases those students with the same high learning ability have different performances. Many students in universities all over the country, despite their good ability, may even drop out. Different factors are involved, one of which is
fear of success. The results of the current study show that stress resulted by fear of success may influence students’ educational performance and oppositely educational performance may cause fear of success among students. Thus, in the end the students’ desired result will not be met which in turn demotivation will afflict the person, his family and the society.

If students have intellectual and physical preparation they will learn easier, and organize and remember their learnt materials better. In this regard, attention and awareness of students’ mental state will facilitate implementation of training programs. Fear of success is one of main obstacles in enjoying benefit of reservoir and memorized data and is responsible for demotivation. Accordingly, the person cannot make use of his abilities in achieving his goals. Kanie believes that in order for confronting fear of success firstly one should recognize it in himself and relinquish it. If this is done incompletely the fear will overcome us. Another factors which necessitates research in this domain are mental stress resulted from drop in educational performance and failure due to fear of success and not using abilities. These factors affect mental health of students as well as his family. All human beings deal with different problems in their individual and social life. In fact, life is nothing but a repeated confrontation with problems an attempt for solving them.

Therefore, existence of problems in our daily life is natural and, like it or not, we are faced with variety of problems in our life. So instead of working passively and wish there were no problems our life, we’d better learn how to specify their reasons (through medical plan) and solve them. If you possess the ability for solving them successfully you will have more self-confidence and will feel worthy; otherwise you will face difficulty in compatibility with environment and surroundings and your mental health will be threatened. Learning the solving problem skill will help you to have a constructive confrontation with life problems.

Regarding what has been mentioned till now, the current research has been conducted in order to examine the effect of therapeutic intervention schemes on fear of student's positions. This is due to the fact that fear of success in students, impedes their progress and get them in trouble. This requires training and giving attention to these group of learners to resolve their problems, in order to achieve progress and create motivation which result in a healthy mental life. Fear of success and rising therapy issues, are among the subjects which little research has been done around it. Doing these kinds of researches has paved the way for further studies and also has been considered as keystone to identify educational achievement barriers.

Tavakoli has conducted a research entitled the correlation between fear of success and the need of improvements in economic affairs staff and the general administration of tax in Kerman at 1387(3). Fear of success has been considered as the main reason of resistance to change and also has played the role of an obstacle toward individual's progress and finally has reduced their motivation to display their merits. Meeting success or achievement motivation which is one of the keys to economic growth has been considered as a basic need. The reason is that those who are dead for progress, would be drastic and energetic entrepreneurs who are able to create progressive institutions which will be the best source of growing economy.

This research has been conducted by using statistical correlation among business staff in the finance and state tax administration of Kerman on 558 cases with a sample of 235 people. Data collection has been done by using 2 sealed questionaries including improvement's questionaries of Ranjbarian and Zukerman and Alison fear of success questionarie. Research results on the research's hypothesis indicates that fear of success is in a negative correlation with its components like (responsibility, hard working, goal orientation and competitiveness.)

Hosseini, has conducted a research on perfectionism and fear of success and achievement motivation on 130 male and female graduate students. The research results represents that there is no meaningful correlation between perfectionism and fear of success. (4)

Naimi, has conducted a research in order to show the meaningful correlation between fear of success, achievement motivation, fear of success and self esteem. During his research he also has showed no meaningful contrast between male and female student's motivation to achievement and also different fields of study and motivation related to graduate and undergraduate's Roodsar students. (5)

Tavakoli, has conducted a research entitled examining the relationship between fear of success and exam's anxiety in entrance examination of Roodsar during 78-79 years. (6) According to research's results, score's means related to female's candidates has been more than males, but the score distribution of female's candidates is more than males.

According to research findings in general female students have obtained higher scores than males on variables of anxiety, fear of success and exam anxiety. Basak Nezhad, Mehrabi Zade, Shahni yeylagh, Haqiq and Shekarkan have conducted a research on the relationship between fear of success, self esteem, perfectionism and fear of negative evaluation through imposter among Chamran university graduate students.

The primary sample consists of 300 male and female post graduate of Chamran university in Ahvaz. A sample consists of 200 students, have been applied in order to validate and evaluation of used tests. Both samples were selected by using simple random sampling. This test consists of five main hypothesis, which examines multiple relations between predictor variables (fear of success, perfectionism and fear of evaluation
and criterion variables (imposter) in a sample of male and female post graduate students. The results shows that some variables such as fear of success, perfectionism and fear of evaluation with imposter syndromes are in a positive correlation and a negative one with imposter syndrome.

In another study that has conducted by Kestitel, early maladaptive schemes have compared with ordinary people in a sample of 105 participants. Result shows that a scheme of emotional deprivation, lack of confidence, lack of self control, and social isolation is significantly different from ordinary people. (7) Morris (2006) investigated the initial schemas in a 173-teenager sample that were 12 to 15 years old. The results showed a direct relationship between hindering performance and those initial schemas. Also, there was a significant relationship between the schemas and some personal and psychological characteristics like anxiety, depression, bad habit of eating and addiction. (8)

Pinto, et. al. (2006) compared the beliefs among a experimental group of patients suffering from social phobia (N= 62) with those among the ones suffering from other anxiety disorders (N=41) and a control group (N= 55). The results revealed a positively significant difference between the schemas of those suffering from social phobias and the other two groups. (9)

As a matter of fact the present study is seeking for a gap amongst sheer volumes of the studies which have been done in fear of success that is focusing on the relationship between the academic achievement and their schema embedded in fear of success. The researchers hope that the study can pave the way for opening the vistas for the students to understand better such schema so that they can identify the schema involving to attain educational achievements. Also, Such understanding can help the students to overcome over their fears having negative impacts on their academic performances. (10)

**METHODOLOGY**

This study is a kind of quasi-experimental research done on students. To this end, 80 students were randomly selected from among female students applying multi-stage cluster sampling. Administering a pre-test, the researcher chose only 32 qualified person divided to two experimental (N=16) and control (N=16) group. Based on Zokerman and Alison’s test for fear of success (1987), the qualified subjects are those suffering from this sense of fear who were to attend a 12-session course of schema therapy. To analyze the data, both inferential and descriptive analyses were used including variance, covariance and Kalmograph-Smirnov test for normality of the data in SPSS.

**Sample**

The study is one-group pre test-post, test type of experimental design. The participants first fill in the Zuckerman and Allison Fear of Success Scale (1976) and those whose score is less than half was selected and put into two 16-member groups, one of these groups should attend a 12-session course while the other receive no treatment. The data were analyzed using SPSS.

**Instrumentation**

Zuckerman and Allison Fear of Success Scale (1976) and Young Short Form of Schema (1998) (11) were utilized to gather the data.

**Data Collection Tools**

The tool to collect the data was Zuckerman and Allison Fear of Success Scale (1976) to evaluate the fear of success level while employing Young’s maladaptive schemas (1998).

**DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS**

This tool examines the central beliefs or early maladaptive schemas. Young and Brown (1994) provided the original version of schema questionnaire for measurement of early maladaptive schemas. The short form was provided by Young in 1998 for measurement of fifteen early maladaptive schemas (Ahi, 2006). This tool is self-describing and contains 75 questions of six items. (12)

Subscales of this questionnaire include abandonment/instability/mistrust/abuse, deprivation, emotional, functional dependence/incompetence/vulnerability to harm and illness/undeveloped self/emneshment/defectiveness and shame/failure/subjugation/sacrifice/unrelenting standards/entitlement/magnanimity/insufficient self-restraint and self-discipline/excessive self-control and social isolation/alienation (Mir and Gilinis, 2004; Fairy and Mon). The exploratory function analysis of questions or Varimax rotation represented the fifteen main factors. The criteria for factor extraction was Scree curve slope or specific value more than one. (13)(14)

Kom index for 0.86 and Bartlett factor 12457 was significant at 0.001 level which represents the sufficiency of sampling of questions and correlation matrix.
The scoring of this questionnaire is from 1 (completely wrong about me) to 6 (completely true about me).

High scores in each one of mentioned beliefs indicate greater use of one's of beliefs and maladaptive schemas (Young, 2005). Reliability of the scale was measured by Cronbach's alpha and it was 0.964 for the total test and high for all scales (Waller and Mir Vahanyan, 2001). Te calculated alpha for this test was 0.75, which is compatible with Young, Richard Kelsko (2003). Internal consistency for 15 factors of the samples was obtained in the range of 0.62 to 0.90 by Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Cronbach's alpha for quantitative scale was 0.94 (Sadoughi, 2007). Sadoughi (2007) showed in a study, that was conducted to examine the appropriate relationship of sensory processing and schemas, the questionnaire has validity. Still we obtain the statistical norms for the Young schema questionnaire Research continues to achieving this goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Discussed Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First session</td>
<td>Introduce members to each other and express objectives of research and thanks of the cooperation of members of the Young Schema Questionnaire group (Short Form - 75 questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second session</td>
<td>Definition of schema, features of early adaptive schemas, developmental roots of schemas including: 1. The basic emotional needs 2. Early experiences of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third session</td>
<td>Expression of schemas' domain and early maladaptive schemas, full review of cut and exclusion areas including: 1- abandonment/inconsistency 2- mistrust/abuse 3- emotional deprivation 4- social isolation/ alienation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth session</td>
<td>Full review of self-control and dysfunction area including schemas of: 1- dependency/incompetence 2- vulnerability to harm and illness 3- undeveloped self/ enmeshment 4- failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth session</td>
<td>Full review of impaired limits area including schemas of: 1- entitlement/magnanimity 2- insufficient self-restraint and self-discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth session</td>
<td>Full review of other areas of orientation including the schemas of 1- subjugation 2- sacrifice 3- approval seeking/recognition seeking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh session</td>
<td>Full review of excessive submission to life and inhibition including the schemas of: 1- negativity/pessimism 2- emotional inhibition 3- unrelenting standards/ hypercritical 4- punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth session</td>
<td>1. Providing Schema identification techniques, practicing by group to learn how to perform the technique2- explaining the schematic processing techniques, practice by group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth session</td>
<td>Offering identification techniques of avoidance and compensation of schemes, practice this technique by group, offering incentive creating techniques for schemes, practice this technique by group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth session</td>
<td>Offering the activation of early memories that have led to the formation of schema and practicing it by group, Providing the technique of writing letters to whom have shaped the schema in the individual's mind, practicing by group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh session</td>
<td>Offering challenge technique with schema, practicing by group, offering the technique of study of life in the eyes of a more positive schema, practicing by group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth session</td>
<td>Offering challenge technique with the origin of a more positive schema in the mind of patient, practicing by group, the technique of formation of a more positive schema in the mind of patient, practicing by session groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing Means and Standard deviations of the scores in pretests

Table 2. measures of central tendency and distribution of fear schema of being successful in Control and Experimental Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Posttest SD</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>Pretest SD</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>Fear of being successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>21.13</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>21.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 1 demonstrates the mean scores of the participants in the experimental group are in pre-test is 32.40 and 22.26 in pretest and posttest, respectively; whereas, these are 21.86 and 21.13 for the control group. Thus there is no significant difference.
Hypothesis #1: Normality of dependent and control variables' scores

Since the significance level of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test is more than 0.05 for the scores (0.07) after data is normalized, H0 is confirmed at the confidence level %95. It suggests that the scores is normally distributed after normalization; i.e., there is no significant difference in the distribution of the scores.

It was hypothesized that the regression between covariates(pretest) and dependent (Experimental and control groups) variables are homogenous. The significance value is 0.05 and F value is 0.37 that is enough to verify the null hypothesis (P>0.05); i.e., homogeneity is observed regarding the scores of sense of fear of being successful

Hypothesis #2: Homogeneity of variances of errors in experimental and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>22.387</td>
<td>171.949</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>171.949</td>
<td>Covariates(Pretest)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>91.758</td>
<td>704.782</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>704.82</td>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>207.38</td>
<td>Err.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

as can be seen in table 2, the F-value (22.38) and P-value (0.000) are high enough to reject the null hypotheses. This means that pretest had a significant effect on the scores so that the F-value for the control group (to whom no pretest was administered, was 91.075) is, then, concluded that the treatment schema has the significant effect on the participants’ level of fear of being successful.

CONCLUSION

The current study aims at investigating the effectiveness of training treatment schema on the students' fear of being successful.

The question of the research: Is there any significant relationship between treatment schema interference and lowering the sense of fear of being successful amongst the students?

The result of the study revealed that the experimental group treated by the schema for the sense of fear of being successful has a significantly better performance. The F-value (22.38) and P-value (0.000) were high enough to reject the null hypotheses. This means that the interference had a significant effect on the scores so that the F-value for the control group, to whom no pretest was administered, was 91.075. It was, then, concluded that the treatment schema had the significant effect on the students’ level of fear of being successful.

As Kabinet cited, a sense of fear of being successful has had a preventive effect on educational performance so the student will be hindered to attain success owing to its negative consequences which they can gradually face.

Furthermore more fear of success is, the more anxiety of the person will be seen. Such fear and anxiety can have a negative effect on a person's performance to attain goals and achievements in a certain field.

The fear of success is also defined as the avoidance motive (Mednick & Puryear, 1976) and the concept of motive to escape success was posed to explain an unresolved problem in perceiving attainment incentive in the person; therefore, she or he is motivated to avoid success and also have a disposition to become anxious about achieving success because of expected negative consequences of social rejection (Goh & Mealiea, 1984).

According to Horner, fear of success originates from the contradiction which exists in the educational system (Moghadamipor, 2000). She believes that fear of success can be a personality structure which is a preventive factor in the individuals (Abdy, 2000).

REFERENCES


