

Effectiveness of Self-monitoring Training by Islamic Contemplation Approach on Self-restraint among Female Students of Tehran University

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Abstract

Background and Objective: University students are the intellectual human resources of any society and they are the prospects of their country. Paying attention to their mental, spiritual, social, cultural and physical health will provide the ground for realization of a dynamic and healthy life in the future. The purpose of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of self-monitoring training using the Islamic contemplation approach on self-restraint among female students of Tehran University.

Methods: This study adopted a quasi-experimental pretest and posttest control group design. The statistical population consisted of all students of University of Tehran who were studying in the educational year 2017. A sample of 30 female students from Tehran University was selected using available sampling method. They were randomly assigned to two experimental (15) and a control group (15). Participants in the experimental group received an Islamic-contemplation self-monitoring training program in eight (one-and-a-half-hour) sessions. A self-restraint questionnaire Gatfordson and Hirschi was used to collect data. Data were analyzed using covariance analysis. In this study, all the ethical considerations have been observed and no conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Results: The results showed that the female students in the experimental group had significantly higher self-control scores than the control group on the post-test and the hypothesis of the study concerning the effectiveness of self-monitoring training by Islamic contemplation approach on self-restraint of Tehran University students was confirmed ($P > 0/01$).

Conclusion: Based on the findings, group religious-spiritual intervention had a positive effect on the internal and self-control power of female students, and this intervention could be used to improve the psychological resources in increasing students' self-restraint.

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Summary

Background and Objective

Self-control, from the Islamic point of view, is an internal and effective barrier that prevents human

beings from doing wrong things, using both negative and positive aspects and encourages them to do good deeds. Thus, it lays a solid foundation for human actions and behavior (1).

From a psychological perspective, the ability to choose the greater reward, which comes with

delay, over the smaller immediate award is referred to as self-control. According to Rutherford and Dawshen, self-control means that in determining one's behaviors or actions, instead of paying attention to immediate motivations, their results should be paid attention to and then acted upon (2). Hence, many of the moral and social deviations in the society are caused by self-control problems in individuals. By strengthening self-control, many social crimes and moral problems can be prevented.

There is a positive relationship between self-awareness and self-control. Recognizing one's capacities and abilities, focusing on successful business, and paying attention to values lead to self-control (3). It seems that the first step to self-control is the self-awareness to monitor yourself. Self-monitoring is a personality trait that refers to one's control ability behavior in social relationships. This concept includes the adaptation of one's behavior and the process of changing behavior that is not beneficial to oneself or others. Also, this personality trait is one of the primary and essential strategies of cognitive and behavioral interventions. Therapists often encourage people to self-monitor to help identify the connection between thoughts and emotions. These strategies include systematic observation and recording of targeted behaviors such as emotional responses to problematic behaviors, representation of practice and performance in mind, and self-assessment (4).

Monitoring is an introverted therapy that facilitates the change of consciousness and nature and the client's internal source goes through an integrated and healing process. The internal source process, or universalism, deals with the totality of the person, that is, his/her mind, body, and soul. Over the centuries, this inner source, the healing and natural source existing within each person, have been given many names, each of which shows a different treatment system and perspective. Some of these names have a more spiritual sense, such as superior existence; sometimes, dynamic-mind descriptive expressions such as super-conscious and collective unconscious are used.

Meditation can meet the needs of supervised care for a limited time (5). In this regard, studies on self-monitoring training have used various methods such as cognitive-behavioral, behavioral skills training, group therapy, selection, etc. However, no study has focused on self-monitoring training based on Islamic care. Considering the strong cultural, religious, and spiritual context in

Iran and the fact that half of the country's population includes women, many of whom are university students, this issue acquires great significance. Therefore, students' mental health and quality of life can be improved using appropriate and useful techniques. One of the most practical methods is meditation. Still, the first step in using this technique in medical and educational centers is to examine its effectiveness. So, the present study was aimed at investigating the effect of self-monitoring education with an Islamic care approach on the female students' self-control at the University of Tehran

Methods

Compliance with ethical guidelines: In the present study, all the ethical considerations related to confidentiality of the information, obtaining participants' consent and being free to get out of the study were observed. This was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-posttest control group design. The statistical population included all students of the University of Tehran studying in the academic year 1395 (2016) out of whom 30 female students were selected by available sampling method, and randomly divided into two experimental groups (no=15) and control (no=15). Participants in the experimental group received eight sessions (one and a half hours) of self-monitoring training with an Islamic care approach over eight weeks. A self-reported questionnaire (Gatfordson and Hirschi) was used to collect the data. The collected data was analyzed by covariance analysis statistical method.

Results

The results showed that the female students in the experimental group obtained significantly higher self-control scores than the control group on the posttest and the hypothesis of the research concerning the effectiveness of self-monitoring training with the Islamic contemplation approach on self-restraint of Tehran University students was confirmed ($P > 0/01$).

Conclusion

The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of Zumbaran, Scheithauer, Labuhn, Barbara, and Mason (6-10) in other independent variables except for self-control. The confirmed the effect of self-monitoring training on improving academic achievement, hyperactivity symptoms, increased motivation, increased accuracy, self-efficacy, and math disabilities. Besides, the study by Mousavi Moghaddam, Chegeni (11), Kazemi, and Nikmanesh (12) shows that there is a significant relationship between

spiritual health, religiosity, and self-control, which is in line with the findings of the present study. In line with the findings of Soltanifar (13), Holzel and Carmudi found that meditation in Western culture is a kind of practice to focus the mind on achieving peace of mind and spiritual development, and in mysticism it means purifying oneself to reach God (14).

According to studies, meditation can physically alter the structure of the brain, including the hippocampus and parts of the brainstem. Given the important function of these parts, having a positive performance in meditation can improve learning, mood disorders, and sleep. Based on cultural and religious factors specific to our country, the use of meditation can be useful in reducing the symptoms of some psychiatric disorders and improving people's mental health. As it was already mentioned, previous studies have been mainly focused on students and educational issues, and no studies have confirmed the effect of self-monitoring effectiveness on self-control.

Based on the findings, religious-spiritual intervention had a very positive effect on internal and self-control power of female students. Accordingly, this intervention can be used in reinforcing self-control capabilities of students.

With regard to the research limitations, selecting samples only from female students, using available sampling method, and using a single questionnaire to collect data can be mentioned.

Islamic care and self-monitoring are recommended to be used to achieve self-control. The present study is suggested to be replicated by controlling the variables of age, education, gender, and other dependent variables to be more generalizable.

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Ethical considerations

The Research Council of the University of Sciences and Research, Yazd Branch confirmed on 18/2/2017 that the ethical considerations have been followed in the present study.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

Authors' contributions

The contributions of the authors to the design, formulation of the treatment plan and drafting of the article: first and third authors. Intervention Implementation and Data Collection and Analysis: second author.

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