

## Research Paper

# The Effect of Positive Psychology Intervention on the Psychological Well-Being of Adolescents



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## ABSTRACT

**Objectives** The purpose of this research was to determine the effect of positive psychological well-being of adolescents.

**Methods** The research method was quasi experimental. The statistical population of this study was all high school girl students in Serishabad of Kurdistan Province, Iran studying in the academic year of 1995-1996. The sample consisted of 30 high school female students who were randomly selected. Then they were randomly assigned to two groups: the experimental (n=15) and control (n=15) groups. The study tools used in this research was Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (RPWS). A pretest was administered to both the experimental and control groups. Then, the positive psychology intervention was administered to the experimental group, and the control group did not receive any intervention. At the end of the training, the post-test was taken for both groups.

**Results** The results of the Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) indicate that positive psychology significantly increased psychological well-being among the experimental group compared to the control group. The results also showed a significant difference between the mean scores of RPWS of psychological well-being in the experimental and the control group in the post-test ( $P < 0.001$ ). The positive psychology intervention method had a significant effect on autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance ( $P < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion** The interventional method of positive psychology can increase the psychological well-being of adolescents.

## Extended Abstract

### 1. Introduction

A

dolescence is a period of cognitive, biological, social, and emotional change [1]. It is also a critical period in cognitive, emotional, physical, and sexual cycle whose consequences can be seen in the future life of an

individual [2]. Since adult behavior is established in adolescence, the influence of adolescence on the life of human beings and society is very significant [4]. Moreover, most mental health problems are formed in adolescence.

The results of epidemiological studies in the last two decades indicate that the first symptoms in 2% to 8% of depressed patients appear at the age of 16. Other findings demonstrate that adolescents are more likely to develop severe depression,

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anxiety, social dysfunction, academic failure, and even suicidal tendencies in the coming years [5]. Therefore, paying attention to the psychological well-being of adolescents is one of the strategies that may prevent these disorders. In recent years, the positivist approach of psychology has focused on human talents and abilities instead of dealing with abnormalities and disorders.

The ultimate goal of this approach is to identify the structures and practices that result in human happiness and well-being. Therefore, the most fundamental structures under study in this approach are the factors that make people more adaptive to the needs and threats of life [15]. There has been no research evidence on the effectiveness of the interventional methodology of positive psychology on the psychological well-being of adolescent girls in Serishabad area, Kurdistan Province. Regarding the importance of this issue in solving the problems of adolescent girls, this research attempted to investigate the effectiveness of the interventional method of positive psychology on the psychological well-being of adolescents.

## 2. Method

The present study was conducted at one of the girls' high schools in Serishabad, Kurdistan. The statistical population of this study comprised all female high schools students (aged 14-18 years) in Serishabad, Kurdistan, in the academic year of 2015-2016. One of the high schools in this region was se-

lected using the available sampling method. Then, 30 samples were selected randomly among high school students who scored lower than the cut-off point in the test [22]. Then, they were randomly assigned to two groups of 15 subjects each.

The interventional method of positive psychology (based on the positive psychological intervention protocol on increasing the psychosocial well-being of young people from Jessica Sunshine University of South Florida, 2011) was performed on the experimental group [23]. The inclusion criteria were getting scores lower than the cut-off point in the Ryff's psychological well-being test, studying at secondary high school, being 14 to 18 years old, and not participating in other therapeutic programs. The exclusion criteria were being in the same grade twice or having a serious mental illness, a chronic medical condition, or organ failure.

Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scale (1989) was used as the study instrument. While the control group received no intervention, the positive-oriented psychology protocol, consisting of 10 sessions, each lasted one hour and a half (one session per week), was performed for the experimental group. At the end of the 10 sessions, the Ryff's psychological well-being questionnaire (the same as the pretest) was administered to the experimental and control groups.

## 3. Results

Tables 1 and 2 present the results of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) in the experimental and control groups

**Table 1.** Results of MANOVA

Sources	Wilks' Lambda	df	F	Sig.	Eta <sup>2</sup>	Statistical Power
Group	0.051	2	253.127	0.001	0.949	100

The difference between the two groups regarding the positive intervention psychological method

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**Table 2.** Summary of MANOVA on differences in terms of group membership in subscales of psychological well-being

Statistical Index of Variables	Total Squares	df	Sig.	F	Mean of Squares	Eta <sup>2</sup>	Statistical Power
Self-governing	19.544	1	0.001	245.858	19.544	0.898	1
Dominate the environment	15.821	1	0.001	80.581	15.821	0.742	1
Personal growth	16.875	1	0.001	49.327	16.875	0.638	1
Positive relationship with others	16.449	1	0.001	153.804	16.449	0.846	1
Having goals in life	13.621	1	0.001	32.240	13.621	0.535	1
Self-admission	15.002	1	0.001	113.546	15.002	0.802	1

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regarding the psychological well-being and its subscales. According to the obtained results, there is a significant difference between the two groups considering the psychological well-being and its subscales ( $P < 0.001$ ). The students in the experimental group had higher performance on psychological well-being factors in the post-test than the control group. Therefore, the research hypothesis was confirmed. The Eta square was 95%, i.e. 95% of the difference between the two groups is explained by the interventional method of positive-oriented psychology. The statistical significance of the test in the overall score and in all subscales is 1, which indicates the adequacy of the sample size.

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, the effectiveness of positive psychological intervention on adolescents' psychological well-being was studied. The data analysis indicated a difference between the adjusted post-test psychological well-being average scores in the experimental and control groups after the implementation of the positive psychological method. The results of this study showed the effectiveness of positive psychological approach for psychological well-being in adolescents. Furthermore, in this study, in order to control the potential biases, student sampling and placement in the control and experimental groups were carried out randomly. However, there were some limitations. First, the results can only be generalized to the females in the age range of 14-18 years and for other populations, the caution must be observed. Second, missing the long-term effect of this intervention is another limitation.

We suggest that the results of this research be used in medical institutions and secondary schools to help teenagers. Moreover, it is also recommended that organizations such as the Ministry of Education, the National Youth Organization, and the State Welfare Organization hold workshops for the development of mental health and positive behavior of the youth.

#### Ethical Considerations

##### Compliance with ethical guidelines

All ethical principles were considered in this article. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and its implementation stages; they were also assured about the confidentiality of their information; Moreover, They were allowed to leave the study whenever they wish, and if desired, the results of the research would be available to them.

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#### Authors contributions

Conceptualization, data duration, analysis and drafting: Bayan Nesaimoghadam; Writing and review, Resources, and Data Curation: Abolqasem Yaghoubi.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.