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A Comparative Study between Altruism and Social Self-efficacy in Normal and Gifted High School Students in Ahwaz, Iran

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to compare altruism and social self-efficacy personality characteristics in normal and gifted high school students in Ahwaz, Iran. To this end, a total of 320 gifted students were selected by convenience sampling method from Shahid Beheshti High School. Applying cluster, random sampling method, a total 345 normal high school students entered the study selected from normal high schools. Social Self-Efficacy Scale and Moral Judgment Inventory were administered as research tools. An Ex post facto study was performed. Multivariate analysis of variance was employed at 0.05 alpha. The results showed that a significant difference is found between social self-efficacy and moral judgment variables.

Key words: social self-efficacy, altruism, gifted.

INTRODUCTION

Unrecognized gifted child and inability to practically reach the potential are sorrowful for societies. Genius and gifted individuals are social resources and benefits, playing a major role in the growth and development of culture and civilization. The world requires gifted and worthy children. These children are highlighted during their life and they can apply their potentials in all fields. They are also able to show themselves in every corner of this vast world only if they have the opportunity to grow and develop. It is estimated that half of children who are born intelligent are not able to reach their possible intelligence growth and actualize their inherent talents due to lack of favorable training environments. Providing special facilities and equipment is essential in free society for the prosperity and development of talents. Some people believe that the observation of gifted children's few cases of success would make them capable of coping in any conditions. This might be true for some gifted children; however, it is not generally true. Special abilities and talents, in fact, do not automatically develop without motivation. Research proves that lack of appropriate conditions not only lead to feelings of insecurity and anxiety of some gifted children but also direct them to retardation, poor concentration, isolation, aggression and even extreme inactivity and passivity [1]. Some psychologists believe that giftedness is talent, learning, and educational progress. Other psychologists define it as change and flexibility in environmental compatibility. In Lesotho's opinion, gifted children are those whose their intellectual potential are greatly influenced by thoughts in terms of productive and assessment thinking. It is likely to assume that if gifted children are provided with appropriate educational experiences, they will be future problem solvers, cultural innovators and policy-makers [3]. Gifted children usually feel gratified and satisfied in their lives based on their social- psychological characteristics such as social philanthropy, perseverance and resistance, sensitivity, and interest in the works of art. Life satisfaction means one's attitudes and general assessment of the totality of his life or some aspect of life, including family life and educational experience [10]. Evidence shows that happy students are more creative. It also seems that they enjoy longer life span and are intelligent. Achieving happiness, however, seems simple and no successful man possesses the art of life satisfaction [8]. Students differ in many ways which are effective in education. They are different concerning learning, efficiency ability, and logical thinking ability and they apply various methods to cope with

challenges and problems. Some students are looking for something new and delightful, while others prefer formerly-tested issues. In other words, learners are different in terms of personality, attitudes, emotional reactions, and cognitive styles [3]. In Iran, some students are introduced as gifted through different exams and go to gifted schools. Therefore, identifying effective factors in their cognitive growth and paying attention to other personality dimensions are essential. Studying altruism and social self-efficacy in gifted students and comparing with normal students can significantly help to select the perfect platform for the two groups concerning the acquisition of social skills.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Statistical population, sample size, and methodology

The number of students in Shahid Beheshti Gifted High School is 320 (170 in the first grade one and 150 in the second grade). The number of students in Shahid Sayyad Shirazi High School is 345 (188 in the first grade and 227 in the second grade). Statistical population consisted of all students in Shahid Beheshti Gifted boy High School and Shahid Sayyad Shirazi boy High School. Cochran formula was employed. The sample size consisted of 92 first-grade and 127 second-grade students.

Research Tool

Social Self-Efficacy Scale

Adolescent Social Self-Efficacy Scale was devised by Kennelly in 1989 to evaluate the level of self-efficacy in teenagers. It is a self-report scale with 25 items. The items are scored in Likert scale on a seven- point rating scale (1= impossible to 7= very simple). The subject should determine the extent to which each statement represents his personality. It measures 5 subscales: social decisiveness (5 items), performance in social situations (5 items), participation in social groups (5 items), friendship and intimacy aspects (7 items), help and get help (3 items). The score ranges 25 to 175. Higher scores indicate higher level of social self-efficacy. Total Cronbach's alpha was reported as follows: first group (0.90), second group (0.92), and third group (0.95). Using retest, the reliability was 0.94 in the first group in a two-week interval. The reliability coefficients were reported 0.81 for male and 0.86 for female. The validity of adolescent social self-efficacy scale was proven through significant correlation with Self-Concept Scale and Adjustment Scale. A significant correlation was found between scores of adolescent social self-efficacy and physical self-perception Profile [6] in the first and second group. A significant correlation was also found between the scores of this scale and consistency scale to evaluate the high school students (Prints et al., 1978).

Findings

Table 1: the results of Levine test to study the Homogeneity of variances

Variable	Levine Index	Df1	Df2	P
Altruism	0.18	1	217	0.51
Social Self-efficacy	0.21	1	217	0.56

The results of table 1 show that the homogeneity of variances is fulfilled for altruism ($P=0.51$ and $F=0.18$) and social self-efficacy ($P=0.56$ and $F=0.21$). It means that, according to lack of significance for F , no significant difference is found between variances and variances are homogenous.

Table 2: ANOVA for Altruism to compare gifted and normal students

Source of change	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between groups	15068.480	1	15068.480	103.43	.000
Within subjects	28844.240	344	145.678		
Total	43912.720	345			

According to f value, degree of freedom, and significance level ($df= 344$, $Sig. = 0.001$, and $f=103.43$), a significant difference is found between gifted and normal students concerning altruism. According to the results of Table 2 and higher score of gifted children families, a significant difference is found in favor of gifted students. It means that the average of total performance is higher in families of gifted children than those of normal students.

Table 3: ANOVA for Social self-efficacy to compare gifted and normal students

Source of change	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between groups	1270.080	1	1270.08	79.715	.000
Within subjects	3154.700	344	15.93		
Total	4424.780	345			

According to *f* value, degree of freedom, and significance level (*df*= 344, *Sig.* = 0.001, and *f*=79.715), a significant difference is found between gifted and normal students concerning social self-efficacy. According to the results of Table 3 and higher score of gifted children families, a significant difference is found in favor of gifted students. It means that the average of total performance is higher in families of gifted children than those of normal students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Jean Piaget (1932) was among the first psychologists who studied the altruism and moral development. He states that Altruism and moral development, such as cognitive development, happen in different stages. The first stage, between the ages of 4 and 7, is originated from a wide range of disparate and conflicting moral thinking known as intuitive sub-stage. Individual assumes that moral rules are fixed and unchangeable. Such conflicting morals emerge in two sequential different forms. This stage, which follows the preoperational stage, occurs between the ages of 7 and 10 (preadolescence) years, and is characterized by the appropriate use of logic. During this stage, a child's thought processes become more mature and "adult like". They start solving problems in a more logical fashion. They still think that the rules are unchangeable. In the third stage, which starts at around age 10, children fully understand that the official rules of game can change with members' agreement. In this stage, children realize that they can alter common rules and regulations if they are willing to. The results of this study are consistent with those of Descioli (2009), Karimi (2006), Elson (2010), Kanjr (1979), Jean Piaget (1932), and Colberg (1995,1987,1986).

According to Bandura (1971), self-efficacy is one of self-concept elements which is one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. Bandura believes that one's sense of self-efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. It is also effective in the creation of appropriate motives. Self-efficacy has positive relationship with one's past success. According to Maddah (2010), perceived self-efficacy not only reduces fear and expected inhibition but also enhances one's level of effort through expecting possible success. Expected effectiveness determines how far one tries and resists against obstacles. Higher level of self-effectiveness leads to better behavior and effort. Those who engage in activities that are mentally threatening but are not in practice gain useful corrective experiences, leading to the elimination of defensive behaviors and strengthening the sense of effectiveness. People who withdraw while dealing with problems maintain their self-handicapping expectations for a long time. The results of this study are consistent with those of Costa and McCray (2013), Digman (1990), Mahmoudi *et al.* (2013), and Ahmadi *et al.* (2012). The results, however, are inconsistent with those of Rezaee *et al.* (2014) and Arefi *et al.* (2009). The results showed that a significant difference is found between normal and gifted students concerning social self-efficacy. Gifted students were higher than normal students in all cases.

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