



The Investigation of the Influence of 'Circle Time' on Increasing Mutual Respect and Respecting Class Regulations among Iranian Female Students

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ABSTRACT: The present research studies the Influence of 'Circle Time' on Increasing Mutual Respect and Respecting Class Regulations among Iranian Female Students. A researcher made questionnaire was used for measuring the student's Mutual Respect and their level of Respecting Class Regulations. The experiment Consisted of different group activities concerning recreational which were organized in 12 sessions. The result showed significant improvement of the experimental group over the control group with regard to their respect of Class regulations, But The result showed insignificant improvement of the Mutual Respect.

Key words: Circle Time, Mutual Respect, Respecting Class Regulations

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INTRODUCTION

Children in each society are the future-builders of that society and the future of a society depends on their function in adulthood. Developing the best kinds of social, scientific, economical and moral functions in the future depends on the type of today's educations especially those performed at schools. One cannot imagine a bright future based on scientific, social and moral development and progress for children if the educations are not based on high goals and appropriate content and methods and if the children's today needs are ignored.

Therefore, teaching students the right behaviors and decent communicative methods is of great importance and is a necessity which must be included in school education programs. In many countries, the methods formulated to enhance the student's interpersonal relations such as Mediation Method, Sheffield Project, Quality Circle and Circle Time emphasize on increasing intimacy among students, nurturing human emotions and developing social skills in the form of indirect educations. By increasing the level of awareness and sympathy, these kinds of programs reinforce some values in students such as being sensible, discipline, being open, risk-taking, sense of equality and respect to others (Bazargan, 2000).

Owleus, the Sweden researcher, on the basis of numerous researches about the phenomenon of annoying at schools, highlights the importance of compiling classroom and school regulations with cooperation of students to enhance the social atmosphere of schools and states that " By using the methods which influence the atmosphere of the whole school the violent behavior of students will be reduced remarkably " (Bazargan, 2000).

Making use of different approaches is of great importance to enhance the students' relationship in each period of children's development. Using these

approaches in adolescence is very important because at this time the adolescent keep aloof from their family and have a tendency towards their peers and are ready to accept different roles (Lotfabadi, 2002). Many theorists consider using group activities at schools, such as extra programs, a means for improving psychological and social health of the students (Qholizade & Amini, 2002).

Of the most important group activities at schools into whose formats one can teach students the appropriate communicative models are to perform entertaining activities and use different kinds of games. The common goals in games which are decision- making together, doing group work and cooperation, being accepted in the group, taking different roles and obtaining special social position are features which make using games a suitable way for teaching social concepts to the children and the adolescent. Nowadays, therefore, making use of games at schools has increased a lot to solve students' behavioral problems. Throughout the United States of America, the school counselors, especially at the primary and secondary stages, make use of game consulting in order to help students overcome learning obstacles. The main reason of this is the efficacy and capability of this kind of consulting. The game consulting is a fundamental mediation by which the trained counselor uses games to improve students' ability so that they could come near to the desired level at school. The counselors use game-based mediations in cases such as making relationship with students, helping them to develop a high variety of skills, improving compatibility at school and class environment, enhancing relationship with peers, preventing aggression and serious difficulties at school and eliminating behavioral and emotional obstacles of learning (Vanfilt, 2002).

The importance of using games for the all-sided development of children is to the extent that since long, people of distinction in education and teaching such as Plato, Aristotle, Rosou, Khaje Nasiroddin-e Tusi and Imam Mohammad-e Qhazzali have paid attention to it. The contemporary scientists such as Monte Suri, Feorabel, and Decrolli have referred more clearly to the importance of games and even some have emphasized the use of games as the most main means of educating children to learning different subjects (Mahjur, 2007).

One of the approaches formulated to solve conflicts between the students that deals with improving students' interaction and enhancing learning atmosphere on the basis of using group and entertaining activities is the approach of "circle time". Circle time is a method which in the developed countries allocates itself regularly up to two or three sessions of the weekly program. In similarity to sport time, math time etc, the circle time refers to the interval between two recesses during which by involving students in games and different activities in the classroom, the personal and interpersonal skills of them are increased and the spirit of cooperation and intimacy is developed in the group. This time is called circle time because in comparison to other shapes, circle is the symbol of equality and coordination and as such at this time children sit together in circle (Bazargan, 2007). The current activities at this time is in a way that the children can take risks, express their emotions, listen to and answer their friends' opinions and make their own assessment in a healthy social structure so as to believe that they are valuable people. In addition, some believe that in spite of performing entertaining activities, doing activities relevant to the course program is also possible in this circle (Doman, 2009). From activities which are commonplace at school at this time one can refer to the games for getting acquainted and talking friendly with others, games for reinforcing the skill of hearing and encouraging cooperation and feeling of being belonged to the group (Bazargan, 2007), games for letting out emotions and feelings and holding weekly celebrations for those who observed the regulations (Mosely, 2008).

This approach is applicable for all age groups, and even in different organizations and offices; but the use of it is more prevalent for the age groups under 15 (Do Mann, 2009). Investigating the advantages of the circle time, the researchers have referred to its influence on reducing work pressures in teachers and making possible the education of moral values to students (Muzli, 2008), helping students to develop personal discipline, reinforce self confidence, make positive relationships with each other and show respect for their own selves and the others;

encouraging group cooperation and encouraging brevity and confidence for their own beliefs and opinions (Lawrence, 1998), developing appropriate social and interpersonal atmosphere (Do Mann, 2009) and developing social skills (Do Mann, 2009; Hensi, 2007).

Since in our country using modern methods of nurturing some values at schools has not yet been paid sufficient attention, this study investigates the influence of one of the most modern methods formulated for improving the relationship of students with each other and with teachers. The approach used in this study is the circle ring and the examination of its effects is based on two hypotheses:

1. Performing the circle time activity increases the mutual respect among the secondary school female students in Tehran.
2. The circle time increases respect to the school regulations among the secondary school female students in Tehran.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Society, Statistical Method, Sample and the Way of Performing Research: The statistical society includes all secondary school female students of year two in one of the localities of Tehran Education Administration (1083 people) that among them the second year students of a school were selected by using stage method from various schools of the locality. Among two second year classes of the school which had 30 students one class, by using random method, was considered the control group and the other one the experimental group. The present study has been performed among the students of the sample group by using experimental performance of the circle time approach; that of course because of using the stage sampling method and lacking the possibility of allocating students randomly in the experimental and control groups which is the basis of experimental researches, the research method of this study is of quasi-experimental type.

Performing the circle time in the experimental group was accompanied by doing activities such as students' discussing and exchanging views about communicative problems with each other and with teachers, doing group entertaining activities which were accomplished only under the shadow of exchanging views, cooperation of all group members and observing rules, expressing the positive characteristics of the classmates to make an atmosphere of friendship and goodness of intention between students and also encouraging them to pay attention to their classmates which in fact is a kind of putting together the different formulated approaches in order to improve the class atmosphere and to teach

the basic life values. Finally, the data have been gathered and then examined by using covariance analysis.

Research Tool: In order to assess the amount of mutual respect and also the amount of respect to class regulations, a questionnaire made by the researcher has been used which was compiled with inspiration from Perception Questionnaire from Mental –Social Atmosphere by Comeau, Michaud and Goupil (1985). This questionnaire was provided by Comeau, Michaud and Goupil in 1985 which examines class atmosphere in the format of 6 parameters including mutual respect and observing school laws and regulations.

In order to determine the tool’s validity, the Cronbach’s alpha was used. To do this, the tool was performed on 120 people from the secondary school female students in Tehran. After analyzing the data the validity of 0.78 was obtained for the variant of mutual respect and the validity of 0/83 for the variant of respecting regulations.

RESULTS

According to the digits in the table 1, in each of the two variants of the post test it was observed an increase in scores of the experimental group. This increase in scores is, of course, more remarkable concerning respecting regulations.

Examination of the homogeneity of slope regression of the study indicates the lack of meaningful interaction between the random help variant (pre test) and the independent variant (circle time). The homogeneity of the regression coefficients has been confirmed from the examination of group influence on each of the variants (mutual respect and

respecting the regulation) which enables us to make use of covariance analysis in the course of analyzing the data.

The first hypothesis: performing the circle time activity results in the increase of mutual respect among the secondary school female students in Tehran.

The results of investigation of the research hypotheses are as follows:

Since the design of this research is quasi-experimental and is in the format of unequal two-group designing with pre test and post test, the analysis of covariance has been used for investigating and analyzing the data. First, to examine the hypotheses of covariance analysis, the homogeneity of regression slopes has been examined.

With regard that the F amount gained from the examination of group influence on the dependent variant (mutual respect among students) is not meaningful at the level of $P < 0/01$, the first research hypothesis is not approved. Therefore, one could say that performing the circle time approach has not been effective in the increase of mutual respect among students.

The second hypothesis: the circle time results in the increase of respecting Class regulations among the secondary school female students in Tehran.

According to the digits in the table 4 the amount of F from the examination of group influence on the dependent variant (observing regulations by students) is meaningful at the level of $p < 0/01$ and the second hypothesis of the research has been approved. Therefore, one could say with 99 percent of certainty that the performance of circle time approach has been effective in the increase of observing regulations by the students of the sample group.

Table1. Investigation of the mean scores of the two variants of mutual respect and respecting regulations in each separate group

Test	N	Mutual respect			Respecting class regulations		
		Experimental group	Control group	Difference of mean scores	Experimental group	Control group	Difference of mean scores
Pre test	30	21.11	20.13	0.98	22.73	24.12	-1.39
Post test	30	23.34	22.53	0.81	29.9	23.6	6.30

Table2. Homogeneity of regression coefficients of examination of the influence of group and pretest on mutual respect and respecting regulations

	Mutual respect			Respecting regulations		
	F amount	df	Sig	F amount	df	Sig
Group	1.42	1	0.23	0.66	1	0.41
Pre- Test	1.60	1	0.21	3.96	1	0.05
Group* Pre- Test	1.19	1	0.27	1.04	1	0.31

Table3. Covariance analysis of the examination of group influence on the amount of mutual respect

	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F amount	Sig
Group	2.50	1	2.50	1.67	0.20
Pre test	1.15	1	1.15	0.76	0.38
Error	86.3	57	1.51	-	-

Table4. Covariance analysis of the examination of group impact on respecting regulations

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean of squares	F amount	Sig
group	200.86	1	200.86	43.41	0.0001
Pre test	11.23	1	11.23	2.93	0.09
Error	218.43	57	3.83	-	-

DISCUSSION

With regard to the findings of the study, the experimental mediation in the examination of influences of circle time on the amount of mutual respect among students and respecting school regulations among the students participated in this program shows that this study has embraced the expected results of the second hypothesis; and from the assessment performed one could say that the circle time has been effective in the increase of observing school and class regulations while in the first hypothesis the circle time had no meaningful influence on the mutual respect among students.

In Iran, though there have been a lot of progress in different grounds of education such as public education, increasing educational facilities and atmospheres there has not been paid sufficient attention to behavioral and communicative affairs of students and this matter is ignored. Furthermore, most teachers and trainers do not believe in using game- based methods in the classroom and think that using these methods causes confusion and disorder in the classroom while the results of previous researches approve the efficacy of using games in different educational grounds- especially teaching social skills- and in curing the behavioral disorders of the children. Children show their unique feelings and emotions through games (Wikstrom, 2005). Examining the advantages of games for children one could refer to its positive influence on the bodily and emotional development of children (Sutterby et al, 2000), establishing desirable behaviors and putting away the undesirable behavior (Khodaii Khiavi, 2001), the influence of game therapy on improving the children's compatibility and coping skills (Bart, 1975), decreasing children's aggression and quarrelsomeness (Oland, 2002), developing social skills (Glendon, 2005) and the active participation of students in the classroom (Ekhvast et al, 2009).

The circle time is an approach in which the popular activities do not merely limit to games but every kind of group activities and especially solving students' problems and matters with their own help and their group participation are paid attention to in this approach. At entrusting the responsibility of solving students' problems and matters to themselves and increasing their participation in class activities the circle time has a lot of similarity to other similar approaches such as Sheffield Project and Mediation, but at the same time it does not have the limitation of

these approaches. As an example, in the mediation approach the responsibilities and conditions of all members are not in equal in solving conflicts and the head of the group (mediator) has much more power, while the main feature of the circle time is the equality of the conditions of all members in the ring.

Maybe many of teachers and trainers think when it comes to high- populated classrooms making use of modern methods to improve the atmosphere of classroom is a difficult task. But what is obvious is that the teachers can, by different strategies, compensate for the unfavorable effects of populated classes on the students. The studies performed by Ford & Martin (1999) indicates that some of these strategies- such as the exercises of grouping students in the classroom, using appropriate teaching methods, developing more deep relationship with students and correcting their behavior in the classroom- could help teachers in controlling such classes in correct way. These researchers believe that the qualitative features of teaching have much more influence on the students than that of the difference in population of classes (in Mohsenpur et al, 2005).

Many researchers believe that the circle time is a way to teach children and students the personal, social skills and personal duties in the group (Counter, 2001). Routine et al (1988) asserts that "the circle time covers four basic purposes of each kind of educational systems in the world which are developing happy morale in children, social nurturing, training movement skills and enhancing mental skills."

Since, on the basis of the results of present study, the circle time has been effective in increase of observing class regulations by students and with regard to importance of this approach in making pleasant the class atmosphere through games, group activities, and acquiring the needed skills for successful appearance in the society this approach could inspire the teachers and managers who are in the search of creative methods and ways to enhance the conditions of children's learning at schools.

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