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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECT OF AN ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING PROGRAM ON ASSERTIVENESS SKILLS AND MENTAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL WELLBEING OF MUSLIM ADOLESCENT GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

Assertiveness reflects people's expression of their genuine feelings, standing up for their legitimate rights, and refusing unreasonable requests. Assertiveness training helps individuals to cope assertively, be more confident and competent in handling difficult situations. The present study was undertaken with an aim to find out the effectiveness of an assertiveness training program on assertiveness skills and mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of Muslim adolescent girls. A total of 100 Muslim adolescent girls who were found to be situationally non assertive were selected by systematic random sampling method and assigned randomly to the test (n=50) and control group (n=50). The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule by Rathus (1973) was used to assess the assertiveness level of the selected Muslim adolescent girls. The mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of the selected girls was assessed by the Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Well-being Scale (MPS) developed by Vella- Brodrick and Allen (1995). Assertiveness training programme was planned and conducted for a period of five weeks held once weekly. Post test was done after a period of two months to assess the effectiveness of the intervention programme. The data obtained was subjected to statistical interpretation using SPSS (version 17). The findings of this research confirmed that the assertiveness training programme has been very effective in improving the assertiveness as well as the overall wellbeing of the adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion returns in Indian census provide a wonderful kaleidoscope of the country's rich social composition, as many religions have originated in the country. In India, Muslims account for 13.4 percent of the total population (Census of India, 2011). But, Muslim women in India constitute one of the most deprived groups who are unable to fully enjoy their equal rights. The problems of Muslim women are many-sided and closely related to the problems of the Muslim society as a whole. Hence the approach to bettering the lot of Muslim women depends mainly on the approach towards solving the problems of the Muslim society (Munjial and Kaushik, 2103). Empowerment of women can be attained only by making positive choices and developing self-awareness. Assertiveness is a social skill that can greatly help a woman to communicate her needs, wants and feelings clearly and comfortably.

Definitions of assertive behavior put an emphasis on individual rights (Eskin, 2003). Assertiveness is defined as the practice of behavior which enables individuals to act in their best interest or stand up for themselves without undue anxiety, or to express their rights without denying the rights of others (Alberti and Emmons, 1970). Being assertive helps the individual to identify how they might deal with negative attitudes in themselves and with others as well (Mary, 2012). Assertiveness is a skill that also helps women to maintain a good mental health. Yaacob *et al.* (2009) states that female adolescents were more likely to have mental health problems compared to males. Another important factor that contributes to wellbeing of women is spirituality and physical wellbeing. Fortunately assertiveness is a skill that can be learnt through proper training. Assertiveness training was found to be effective in improving the social coping skills of general populations of adolescents (Rotheram and Armstrong, 1980).

Aim of the study

The present investigation was carried out with an aim to find out the effectiveness of an assertiveness training program on

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assertiveness skills and mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of Muslim adolescent girls.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were

1. To compare the assertiveness skills and the Mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing (MPS) between experimental and control group before and after intervention.
2. To find out the impact of assertiveness training program on assertiveness skills and Mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing (MPS) of Muslim adolescent girls.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Selection of area: The selected location for the study was Chennai, the capital city of a southern state of India, namely Tamil Nadu.

Selection of sample: A total of 100 Muslim adolescent girls who were found to be situationally non assertive were selected by systematic random sampling method and they were assigned randomly to the test (n=50) and control group (n=50).

Selection of tool: The Rathus Assertiveness Schedule by Rathus (1973) was used to assess the assertiveness level of the selected Muslim adolescent girls. The mental, physical, and spiritual well-being of the selected girls was assessed by the Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Well-being Scale (MPS) developed by Vella- Brodrick and Allen (1995).

Table 1. Comparison of assertiveness between experimental and control group before and after intervention

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	Level of significance	
Assertiveness	Pretest	Experimental	50	8.58	6.021	0.106	NS
		Control	50	8.46	5.323		
	Post test	Experimental	50	22.00	6.571	25.696	p<0.01
		Control	50	8.30	5.132		

Table 2. Comparison of Mental, Physical and Spiritual wellbeing (MPS) between experimental and control group before and after intervention

Variable	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	't' value	Level of significance	
Mental wellbeing	Pretest	Experimental	50	27.34	5.32	0.60	NS
		Control	50	29.44	3.80		
	Post test	Experimental	50	32.10	4.80	3.75	p<0.01
		Control	50	29.58	3.75		
Physical wellbeing	Pretest	Experimental	50	25.84	4.09	1.40	NS
		Control	50	27.04	4.43		
	Post test	Experimental	50	26.82	4.82	0.06	NS
		Control	50	26.76	4.34		
Spiritual wellbeing	Pretest	Experimental	50	32.64	5.33	1.01	NS
		Control	50	33.82	6.29		
	Post test	Experimental	50	34.66	5.10	0.81	NS
		Control	50	33.74	6.10		
Overall wellbeing	Pretest	Experimental	50	90.46	11.31	0.02	NS
		Control	50	90.54	8.27		
	Post test	Experimental	50	95.46	11.19	3.50	p<0.01
		Control	50	90.42	7.95		

Table 3. Effect of intervention on assertiveness of the selected Muslim girls in the experimental group and control group

Variable	Group	Pretest		Post test		't' Value	Level of significance
		Mean	STD	Mean	STD		
Assertiveness	Experimental group	8.58	6.02	22.00	6.57	24.95	p<0.05
	Control Group	8.46	5.32	8.30	5.13	0.88	NS

Table 4. Effect of intervention on Mental, Physical and Spiritual wellbeing (MPS) of the selected Muslim girls in the experimental group and control group

Variable	Group	Pretest		Post test		't' Value	Level of significance
		Mean	STD	Mean	STD		
Mental wellbeing	Experimental group	27.34	5.32	30.10	4.80	7.74	p<0.01
	Control Group	29.44	3.80	29.58	3.75	1.02	NS
Physical wellbeing	Experimental group	25.84	4.09	26.82	4.82	3.47	p<0.01
	Control Group	27.04	4.43	26.76	4.34	1.08	NS
Spiritual wellbeing	Experimental group	32.64	5.33	34.66	5.10	7.12	p<0.01
	Control Group	33.82	6.29	33.74	6.10	0.56	NS
Overall wellbeing	Experimental group	85.58	11.31	90.46	11.19	8.84	p<0.01
	Control Group	90.54	8.27	90.42	7.95	0.36	NS

Conducting the study: An assertiveness training module was developed exclusively for the Muslim adolescent girls by the investigator with the help of a corporate Trainer and Master NLP practitioner who conducted the intervention programme for a period of five weeks held once weekly. The intervention programme involved lecture cum discussion, role plays, power point presentations, video clippings and games. This study consisted of a pretest and posttest program. Post test was done after a period of two months to assess the effectiveness of the intervention programme. Though the Intervention programme was conducted with a focus to improve the assertiveness of the selected Muslim girls its effect on mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing was also studied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of assertiveness between experimental and control group before and after intervention

The difference in assertiveness between experimental and control group before and after intervention is presented in Table-1

The results of the 't' test done to find out the difference between the assertiveness scores of the girls in the experimental group and control group before the intervention programme reveals no significant difference as the calculated 't' value is 0.106. But a significant difference was noted between the experimental group and control group after the intervention programme at 1% level of significance ($t=25.696$). The mean assertiveness scores for the experimental group was found to be 22.00 while for the control group it was 8.30 which clearly indicates that the assertiveness level of the girls has improved and that the intervention programme has been highly beneficial. This result is supported by the findings of a study conducted by Rezan and Zengel (2009) who investigated the effectiveness of an assertiveness training programme on adolescents' assertiveness level and found that the assertiveness training program was effective in improving the assertive skills of the adolescents.

Comparison of Mental, Physical and Spiritual wellbeing (MPS) between experimental and control group before and after intervention

The difference in Mental, Physical and Spiritual wellbeing (MPS) between experimental and control group before and after intervention is presented in Table 2.

No significant difference was noted in mental wellbeing scores of the experimental and control group before the intervention but after the intervention a significant difference was noted between the experimental and control group at 1% level of significance as the calculated 't' value was 3.75. Difference in the physical and spiritual wellbeing scores before the intervention as well as after the intervention between the experimental and control group is not significant. But a significant difference existed in the overall wellbeing score after the intervention between the experimental and control group at 1% level of significance as the 't' value was found to be 3.50. The mean values indicate that the experimental group

(95.46) had higher overall wellbeing score than the control group (90.42) after the intervention programme.

Effect of intervention on assertiveness

The results of the 't' test carried out to find out the effectiveness of the intervention programme on the assertiveness of the girls in the experimental and control group is presented in Table-3.

Table 3 shows the results of the 't' test computed to observe the effect of intervention programme on the assertiveness among the girls in the experimental and control group. The 't' value (24.95) proves that there is a significant effect of the intervention on the assertiveness among the selected Muslim girls in the experimental group at 5% level of significance. From the mean values it is understood that assertiveness has gradually increased during the course of intervention. No significant difference was observed in the control group.

Effect of intervention on Mental, Physical and Spiritual wellbeing (MPS)

The results of 't' test carried out to study the effect of intervention on Mental, Physical and Spiritual Wellbeing (MPS) among the selected Muslim girls is shown in Table 4.

The results of the 't' test presented in table-4 shows that a significant difference exists at 1% level between the pretest and post test mental, physical spiritual and overall wellbeing scores of the girls in the experimental group as the 't' values are 7.74, 3.47, 7.12, 8.84 respectively. The mean values clearly indicate that the mental, physical, spiritual and overall wellbeing scores of the girls in the experimental group has increased considerably proving the effectiveness of the intervention programme. No significant difference was noted in the mental, physical, spiritual and overall wellbeing scores of the girls in the control group. This result is in line with a study conducted by Makhija and Singh (2010) who investigated the effectiveness of assertiveness training programme on self esteem and academic achievement on 80 boys and 80 girls in the age group of 15 years. The experimental group was given the assertiveness training programme which consisted of 8 sessions. The result obtained clearly showed the superiority of the assertiveness training programme in enhancing the self esteem of students.

Conclusion

The results of the present investigation revealed no significant difference in assertiveness between the experimental and control before the intervention programme but a significant difference existed after the intervention programme where the girls in the experimental group scored higher on assertiveness. In relation to the wellbeing of the selected Muslim girls a significant difference was noted between the experimental and control group in mental and overall wellbeing after the intervention programme, where the experimental group scored higher in both these areas. Further a significant difference was observed between the pre test and post test assertiveness scores of the girls in the experimental group where the post test scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores. But no such

difference was noted in the control group. With regard to the well being of the girls it was again found that the post test scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores in all the dimensions of wellbeing namely, mental, physical, spiritual and overall wellbeing. The results of the present investigation clearly show that the assertiveness training programme has been very effective in improving the assertiveness as well as the overall wellbeing of the adolescents. Muslim women are far more backward than the other women in India. Hence, assertive training programme will be of great help to the Muslim adolescents girls to improve their assertive skills which in turn will allow them to stand up for their rights, boost their self confidence and self esteem and enhance their ability to deal with the challenges of everyday life.

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