

The effectiveness of a counseling program in developing social competence skills among a sample of abused adolescents (An experimental study at Abdelhamid Ben Badis Middle School, El Oued Province)

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Abstract:

The current study aimed to determine the effectiveness of a counseling program in developing social competence skills among a sample of abused adolescents. Using the experimental approach with a pre- and post-measurement design for two groups one control and one experimental a sample of 44 abused adolescents from second-year middle school students at Allama Abdel Hamid Ben Badis, El Oued, was selected. The sample was divided into two groups: an experimental group (22) and a control group (22). Data collection instruments included the Parental Abuse Scale (developed by the researcher) and the Social Skills Scale by Nada Nasr El Din Abdel Hamid. After applying the counseling program prepared by the researcher and using statistical tools, including the "T" test to indicate differences between means and Cohen's d to calculate effect size and program effectiveness, the following results were obtained:

- There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the social skills scale in the post-measurement, in favor of the experimental group.

Keywords: counseling program - social competence skills - abused adolescents.

Problem Statement:

Adolescence is considered one of the most important stages in a person's life due to its impact on shaping an individual's personality and determining healthy development. Both the Qur'an and the Sunnah have emphasized the importance of caring for adolescents, paying attention to all aspects of

their lives, and guiding their interactions while preserving their legal rights. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) encouraged gentleness in dealing with them, fairness, and avoidance of favoritism among children, as he said: "Fear Allah and be just among your children," and also, "Honor your children and teach them good manners."

Psychologists and educators have also increasingly focused on this stage, recognizing its influence on forming psychological, mental, and social characteristics. Adolescence is crucial for achieving psychological adjustment and social adaptation. Some parental behaviors, especially those involving excessive discipline or punishment, are notable issues. The problem of adolescent abuse is particularly significant, as it can severely affect their healthy development.

Research shows that different forms of abuse, neglect, and failure to meet adolescents' basic needs are major issues with hidden consequences. Abuse in adolescence is linked to psychological disorders that hinder social development, such as low self-esteem, withdrawal, and isolation, which can result in reduced social competence.

Social competence is essential for determining an individual's daily interactions with others in various aspects of life. Today's society needs socially competent individuals who are organized in their work. Social competence is also a measure of mental health, and its absence can lead to deviant behavior in adolescence and mental health problems later in life.

Given the adolescent's need for improved psychological and social adaptation, and the importance of social competence in achieving mental health, it became clear to the researcher that there is a need to develop a counseling program aimed at improving certain social competence skills (such as empathy, communication with others, cooperation, and academic skills) among abused adolescents. This leads to the following research question:

How effective is a counseling program in developing social competence skills among a sample of abused adolescents?

Study Hypotheses:

1. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale in the post-test.
2. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale for peer relationships in the post-test.
3. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale for self-management in the post-test.
4. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale for academic skills in the post-test.

5. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale for obedience in the post-test.
6. There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the social competence skills scale for assertiveness in the post-test.

7- Study Limitations:

- **Human Limitations:** This study was conducted on a sample of 22 male and female second-year middle school students, all of whom were adolescents subjected to parental abuse.
- **Geographical Limitations:** The fieldwork for this study was limited to Abdelhamid Ben Badis Middle School, El Oued Province.
- **Time Limitations:** The study tools were applied during the 2021/2022 academic year, with the implementation period spanning from January to February 2022.
- **Operational Definitions of Study Variables:**
 - **Effectiveness of the Counseling Program:** This refers to the positive impact of the counseling program in developing social competence skills. The effectiveness is evidenced by an increase in social competence skills among the experimental group, measured by comparing pre- and post-test results. The effect size of the program on developing these skills is also assessed.
 - **Social Competence Skills:** Defined by the researcher as an individual's ability to interact effectively and positively with others. The following dimensions are included under this definition: peer relationships, self-management, and academic skills.
 - **Parental Abuse:** Refers to the intentional use of violence to harm the adolescent, varying in severity, and including physical abuse, emotional abuse (psychological abuse), and neglect.
 - **Abused Adolescents:** Refers to adolescents who have experienced parental abuse, either by the father, mother, or both.
- **Study Methodology:** Since the aim of the current study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a counseling program in developing social competence skills among a sample of abused adolescents, the most suitable methodology is the experimental method. The study employed a pre-test/post-test experimental design with two groups: an experimental group and a control group.
- **Study Population:** The population consists of all second-year middle school students from Abdelhamid Ben Badis Middle School, El Oued Province, totaling 206 male and female students. The characteristics of the study population, in terms of gender, are shown in the following table 01.

Table 01: Characteristics of the Study Population by Gender

| Gender | Number of Students | Percentage (%) |
|--------|--------------------|----------------|
| Male | 104 | 50.48% |

| | | |
|--------|-----|--------|
| Female | 102 | 49.52% |
| Total | 206 | 100% |

It is clear from the following table that the number of individuals in the study population is 206 students, with 104 males representing 50.48%, and 102 females representing 49.52%.

- **Exploratory Study Sample:**

Table 02: Distribution of the Exploratory Study Sample for the Parental Abuse Scale by Gender

| Second Year Middle School | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Male | 24 | 26% |
| Female | 70 | 74% |
| Total | 94 | 100% |

It is clear from the following table that the exploratory study sample for the Parental Abuse Scale consists of 94 students, of which 24 are males, representing 26%, and 70 are females, representing 74%.

Table03 : Distribution of the Exploratory Study Sample for the Social Competence Skills Scale by Gender

- **Question:** Why did the number change? What are the criteria for interpreting the results?

| Second-Year Middle School Students. | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Male | 27 | 64% |
| Female | 15 | 36% |
| Total | 42 | 100% |

It is clear from the following table that the exploratory study sample for the Social Competence Skills Scale consists of 42 students, of which 27 are males, representing 64%, and 15 are females, representing 36%.

- **Main Study Sample:**

The Parental Abuse Scale was applied to all second-year middle school students at the institution. After analyzing the data, we identified the students who were found to suffer from severe parental abuse. The total number of these students was 102. The following table illustrates this:

Table04 : Sample of Second-Year Middle School Students Suffering from Severe Parental Abuse by Gender.

| Second-Year Middle School Students. | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Male | 59 | 58.06% |
| Female | 43 | 41.94% |
| Total | 102 | 100% |

It is clear from the table above that the number of students who suffer from severe parental abuse is 102 students.

- We applied the Social Competence Skills Scale to the students who suffer from severe parental abuse, and after analyzing the data, we found that the number of students with a low level on the Social Competence Skills Scale is 83 students. This is illustrated in the following table 05.

Table 05 : Number of students compared to the social competence skills scale

| Second-Year Middle School Students | Number | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Male | 44 | 53.02% |
| Female | 39 | 46.98% |
| Total | 83 | 100% |

It is clear from the above table that the number of students who suffer from severe parental abuse and have low social competence skills is 83 students, with 44 male students representing 53.02%, and 39 female students representing 46.98%.

- We selected the sample using the stratified random sampling method to better represent the study population (students with low social competence skills as shown in the previous table), especially in terms of gender. The following table illustrates this:

Table 06: Characteristics of the Study Sample by Gender

| Second-Year Middle School Students. | Number | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Male | 23 | 53.02% |
| Female | 21 | 46.98% |
| Total | 44 | 100% |

It is clear from the following table that the number of individuals in the study sample is 44 students, with 23 males representing 53.02%, and 21 females representing 46.98%.

We divided the sample into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. We ensured the equivalence in the number of individuals to better control for extraneous variables. The following table illustrates this:

Table 07: Distribution of the Study Sample into Control and Experimental Groups.

| Group | Number | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|--------|----------------|
| Control | 22 | 50% |
| Experimental | 22 | 50% |
| Total | 44 | 100% |

From **Table (07)**, it is clear that the number of individuals in both the control and experimental groups is 22 students, representing 50% for each group.

- **Controlling the Study Variables:**

The study included the following variables:

- **Independent variable:** A counseling program to develop social competence skills
- **Dependent variable:** Social competence skills

In this study, we attempted to control the variables that could affect the dependent variable in both groups to obtain accurate and reliable results attributed to the independent variable. The following variables were controlled:

- Father's educational level
- Mother's educational level
- Socioeconomic status

The sample was homogeneous in terms of:

- Similar average age
- Similar average academic scores
- Severe parental abuse
- Low social competence skills

1. Data Collection Tools and Their Psychometric Properties:

We relied on the following tools:

- **Parental Abuse Scale for Adolescents**, developed by the researcher
- **Social Competence Skills Scale for Adolescents**, developed by Nada Nasr El-Din Abdel Hamid
- **Counseling Program to Develop Social Competence Skills**, developed by the researcher

Parental Abuse Scale: The validity and reliability of the scale were calculated using the following procedures:

1. **Validity:** We ensured two types of validity: face validity and internal consistency validity.

- **1.1 Face Validity:** The scale was presented to a group of professors from various specializations. Most of the scale items were approved by the judges, with modifications to items (3, 5, 15, 16, 9, 24), and item (25) was deleted due to redundancy.
- **1.2 Internal Consistency Validity:** This was calculated as follows:
 - **For the Father Version:**
 - The correlations between the scale items and the dimensions they belong to were positive and statistically significant, with significance levels between $\alpha = (0.05, 0.01)$.
 - The correlations between the dimensions and the overall scale score were also statistically significant, ranging from (0.71 to 0.88).
 - **For the Mother Version:**
 - The correlations between the scale items and their dimensions were positive and statistically significant, with significance levels between $\alpha = (0.05, 0.01)$.
 - The correlations between the dimensions and the overall scale score were statistically significant, ranging from (0.65 to 0.81).

These results indicate that the Parental Abuse Scale is a valid measure.

1- Reliability:

To verify reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, as it is one of the most important measures of internal consistency. It was calculated for the dimensions and the overall scale. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the Parental Abuse Scale (Father version) and its dimensions ranged between (0.70-0.84), which are high values according to agreed-upon standards. For the Mother version, Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranged between (0.71-0.83), which are also high values, allowing us to rely on this scale.

- **Social Competence Skills Scale:**

1. **Validity:** There are several methods to assess validity. In this study, internal consistency was used, and we found the following:
 - The correlations between the item score and the dimension score it belongs to ranged from (0.31-0.78), with most being significant at the 0.01 significance level, and the rest at the 0.05 level.
 - The correlations between the dimension score and the overall scale score ranged from (0.42-0.70), which are significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a strong correlation between the dimensions and the overall scale score in terms of internal consistency.

This means the scale has an acceptable level of validity, as these correlations are high enough to be considered reliable, indicating the scale is valid.

- **The Counseling Program:** After constructing the counseling program, the initial version was presented to a group of (07) professors specializing in psychology and counseling to gather their opinions and suggestions on the following aspects:

- The appropriateness of the program's content for the study's objectives.
- The clarity of the session goals.
- The techniques used in the program, which include strategies and methods such as lectures, discussions, role-playing, and modeling (including classical conditioning).
- Reinforcement, the strategy of outcome anticipation, support, feedback, and homework.
- **Program Sessions:** The counseling program consists of 11 sessions, where techniques and methods were selected based on the session objectives. Each session lasts approximately 60 minutes, with two sessions held per week.
- **Statistical Methods Used in the Study:**
 - ✓ Pearson correlation coefficient.
 - ✓ Chi-square test (χ^2).
 - ✓ T-test.
 - ✓ Cronbach's alpha coefficient.
 - ✓ Spearman-Brown formula.
 - ✓ Guttman formula.
 - ✓ Cohen's coefficient.
- **Presentation and Analysis of Study Results:**

1.1 **Presentation and Analysis of the General Hypothesis Result:** To test the general hypothesis of the study, which states: "There are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the control group and the average scores of the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group," we calculated the T-test, as shown in the following table:

Table 08:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level | Cohen's d |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|--------|------|---------|--------------------|-----------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M | |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 50.63 | 5.05 | 22 | 156.76 | 3.99 | 20.03 | 0.01 | 0.87 |

The results shown in the following table indicate that the T-value is (20.33), which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale in the post-test. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences leaned toward the experimental group.

- To confirm the scientific significance of the result, Cohen's d test was used. As noted, the Cohen's d value for the effect size between the control and experimental groups in the post-test was 0.87, which is considered a large effect size according to Cohen (2013), being greater than 0.8. This means that the program contributed 87% to the development of social competence skills in the sample.

1-2 Presentation and Analysis of the First Sub-Hypothesis Result:

To test the first sub-hypothesis of the study, which states: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (peer relationships) in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group," we conducted a T-test, as shown in the following table:

Table 09:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|---------|--------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 35.86 | 7.52 | 22 | 49.68 | 4.50 | -4.78 | 0.01 |

The results shown in the table above indicate that the T-value is estimated at -4.78, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (peer relationships) in the post-test. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences leaned toward the experimental group.

1-3 Presentation and Analysis of the Second Sub-Hypothesis Result:

To test the second sub-hypothesis of the study, which states: "There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (self-management) in the post-test," we conducted a T-test, as shown in the following **table 10**:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|----|-------|---------|--------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 45.86 | 9.11 | 22 | 57 | 10.05 | -3.91 | 0.01 |

The results shown in Table (10) indicate that the T-value is estimated at -3.91, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. From this, we accept the hypothesis stating that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the mean scores of the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (Self-Management) in the post-measurement. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences leaned towards the experimental group.

1-4- Presentation and Analysis of the Result of the Third Sub-Hypothesis:

To address the third sub-hypothesis of the study, which states that "there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control

group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (Academic Skills) in the post-measurement," we conducted a T-test, as shown in the following **table 11**:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|---------|--------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 23.68 | 5.18 | 22 | 38.59 | 6.43 | -8.46 | 0.01 |

The results shown in Table: (11) indicate that the T-value is estimated at -8.46, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level. From this, we accept the hypothesis stating that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the mean scores of the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (Academic Skills) in the post-measurement. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences leaned towards the experimental group.

1-5- Presentation and Analysis of the Result of the Fourth Sub-Hypothesis:

To address the fourth sub-hypothesis of the study, which states that "there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the mean scores of the control group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (Compliance) in the post-measurement, in favor of the experimental group," we conducted a T-test, as shown in the following **table 12**:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|---------|--------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 35.86 | 7.52 | 22 | 49.68 | 4.50 | -4.78 | 0.01 |

The results shown in Table 12 indicate that the value of "T" is -4.78, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis stating that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (obedience) in the post-test. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences were directed toward the experimental group.

1-6- Presentation and analysis of the fifth sub-hypothesis result:

- To address the sixth sub-hypothesis of the study, which states that "there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (assertiveness) in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group," we conducted a T-test, as shown in the following **table 13**:

| Indicators Variables | Control | | | Experimental | | | T Value | Significance Level |
|----------------------|---------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|---------|--------------------|
| | N | M | SD | N | M | SD | N | M |
| Post-measurement | 22 | 32.56 | 5.04 | 22 | 40.13 | 4.32 | -13.04 | 0.01 |

The results shown in the following table indicate that the value of "T" is -13.04, which is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Therefore, we accept the hypothesis stating that there are statistically

significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale (assertiveness) in the post-test. Since the higher mean was in favor of the experimental group, the differences were directed toward the experimental group.

General Conclusion:

Based on the study problem, the theoretical framework, and the methodological procedures followed to verify its validity, the study concluded that:

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group on the Social Competence Skills Scale in the post-test, in favor of the experimental group, confirming the effectiveness and success of the guidance program. However, the results of this study cannot be generalized due to the varying nature of parental abuse and the distinct characteristics of the sample itself. Thus, the findings of our current study serve as a new starting point for further studies and as a complement to previous research on this topic.

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