

The Effects of the Training of Life Skills and Positive Psychological Capital through the Art of Storytelling on Subjective Well-Being of Children with Visual Impairment

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Received on 10.08.2016, Accepted on 17.08.2016

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Abstract

This study discovers the effects of training of life skills (LS) and positive psychological capital (PPC) on subjective well-being (SWB) of children with visual impairment. It was an experimental, intervention study with Solomon research design. The sample of the study consisted of 160 visually impaired children (95 Boys & 65 Girls), selected from special schools for visually impaired children in Jaipur (Rajasthan). For the training of life skills and positive psychological capital, stories of Panchtantra were used. Total 28 sessions of training (20 sessions for 10 LS & 8 sessions for 4 PPC) were given. The 'Subjective well-being test' developed by Nagpal & Sell in (1992) was administered before and after training to check the status of subjective well-being of these children. Post-test scores of subjective well-being were obtained after this intervention. The result of the study revealed that the training of life skills and positive psychological capital improved subjective well-being of these children significantly. It was concluded that the method of training of life skills and positive psychological capital through the art of storytelling proved to be effective and interesting for these children. This training equipped them with psycho-social skills and positive perspective towards self, people and work to face the tough challenges of life effectively, independently. Such training paves the way to success and happiness in work place and in personal life. This study has worldwide relevance.

Keywords: Life Skills Training; Positive Psychological Capital Training; Subjective Well-Being; Storytelling; Visual Impairment.

Introduction

There are approximately 15 million visually impaired people in India and of these 26% are visually impaired children [21]. These children have limited personal resources and access to learning opportunities and growth facilities. They have to make extra efforts in comparison of normal children to come to the mainstream.

In spite of extra efforts they do not perform well in academics and their behavioral skills do not grow. This makes their journey tough and trying. The ill effects of poor subjective well-being in these children are more intense than normal children because they are vulnerable group who may get de-motivated easily. Their disabilities and life experiences force them to face repeated failures and cause anger, frustration, disappointments, anxiety and depression [2]. Their self-efficacy goes down, become pessimist in their orientation and lose hope of bright future. Self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience helps to reduce stress, enhance positivity, improves mental health and that in turn gives a productive, meaningful and happy life [7, 8].

Just like normal children these children have the right to have their opinions, feelings, wishes and freedom to take decisions for their own lives. They also want to develop their skills to the best of their capacity and they also expect acceptance, love and care. They want to be physically comfortable, seek love,

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care and security and want to have opportunities for physical and mental growth. These children have the capacity to become productive citizens and contribute to national development. But, they have more and difficult challenges to face their life because of their delimiting liabilities. To face the challenges of life they need special and extra training of life skills and positive prospective [12] towards life. They are marginalized and have sufficient reasons for poor mental health and low self-esteem if their liabilities are not countered by special training of life skills and positive psychological resources.

Life skills and positive psychological capital are important skills and proficiencies that enable us to face the tough challenges of life effectively. Ten life skills,[24] are namely: Self-awareness, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, communication skills, interpersonal relationship, empathy, handling emotions and stress management and four positive psychological capitals by Luthans [24] are namely: Self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. With the help of the training of life skills (LS) and positive psychological capital (PPC) children with visual impairment can deal with hardships of their life by facing the reality, increasing level of hope, taking risks, handling them with creativity.

Studies have shown that the training of life skills enhanced their all developmental domains such as personal, social, academic and career in children with learning disability, training of life skills and self-efficacy helped in resolving their emotion and behavioral problems and improving their skills [20]. The training of life skills changed thinking, encouraged not only hopeful thoughts but also enhanced self-compassion or empathy, positive changes in personal inter-personal relationship, life satisfaction and reduced problems in communication [22]. Life skills training improved low mood, depression and anxiety [13, 23]. Studies showed that there was a positive relation between empathy (LS), optimism (PPC) and personal achievement (components of a positive personality) that helped in reducing stress (burnout) and improving inter-personal relationships of students [9]. The training of positive psychological capital enhanced optimism and reduced stress and pessimism in students [11]. A positive and strong relationship was found between level of resilience (PPC) and problem solving abilities [3]. Another study showed that life skills improved communication skills [15]. These studies produced scientific evidences that training of life skills and positive psychological capital counters the poor behavioral skills and alters low subjective well-being

(SWB) of children with visual impairment. Hence, this emphasizes the need of the training of life skills and positive psychological capital which counter the poor behavioral skills and low subjective well-being of visually impaired children. The intensive efforts were made by the researcher to find the relevant studies that influence visually impaired children, life skills, positive psychological capital, subjective well-being and storytelling. Only some studies were found to be available especially on disability and storytelling context. This is identified as major researchable gap. Therefore, this also indicates the value and importance of current research. Thus, the present study focused on studying the effect of the training of life skills and positive psychological capital on subjective well-being of visually impaired children.

Materials and Methods

There are schools exclusively for visually challenged children in Jaipur that are run by State Government. The samples of the study comprised of 160 visually impaired children from government schools of Jaipur (Rajasthan). The age of the children aged between 13-23 years. Standardized subjective well-being test (SWB) developed by Nagpal & Sell in 1992[17] was used. Subjective well-being was assessed by positive and negative affects where a high score in positive affect and a low score on negative affect projected an index of high subjective well-being. Hindi-English-Hindi translation by the language expert was done. A Solomon research design with extra confirmatory group was used.

Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test
SWB (1)	LS Training	SWB (2)
SWB (3)	PPC Training	SWB (4)
SWB (5)	LS + PPC Training	SWB (6)
SWB (7)	No Training	SWB (8)
_ (9)	LS Training	SWB (10)
_ (11)	PPC Training	SWB (12)
_ (13)	LS + PPC Training	SWB (14)
_ (15)	No Training	SWB (16)

Due to their visual liabilities the usual methods of learning and training are not very effective with these children because they have different abilities, limitations and challenges to face. They need special instructions of learning and specially designed pedagogy to teach. Therefore, present study used the art of storytelling using Panchtantra stories as a pedagogical method. Storytelling enhances not only social skills but also develop skills in children[4]. It is

an innovative and creative method of teaching that helps to develop language and improve pronunciation and vocabulary of children [6,11]. Story-telling is an art and a skillful teaching process and an effective aid for these children which develops their social and emotional understanding [14,18] Pre-test was done. The intervention of 14 sessions or the training of life skills and positive psychological capitals through the art of storytelling using Panchtantra for 6 months where around minimum 28 sessions covering 10 life skills and 4 positive psychological capitals (two for each LS and PPC) along with some group dynamic

activities were conducted.

Results

Table 1& Figure 1& 2 reveals that the mean scores of positive subjective well-being increased after life skills training (Intervention) in terms of post-test and the mean scores of negative subjective well-being decreased after life skills training (Intervention) in terms of post-test.

Table 1

LS Training	n	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	T	P
Experimental Group (Positive SWB)	20	40.80 (3.23)	47.65 (2.83)	-13.733	0.001*
Experimental Group (Negative SWB)		37.80 (1.67)	33.95 (1.95)	14.046	0.001*
Control Group No LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	40.10 (1.80)	40.00 (1.74)	.698	>.05
Control Group No LS Training (Negative SWB)		37.20 (1.70)	37.05 (1.66)	1.831	>.05
Post-test Only After LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	-	47.45 (3.08)	-21.442	0.001*
Post-test Only After LS Training (Negative SWB)		-	33.40 (1.35)	23.974	0.001*
Post-test Only No LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	-	40.25 (1.65)	-1.143	>.05
Post-test Only No LS Training (Negative SWB)		-	37.00 (1.62)	1.285	>.05

n = 80 (n = 40 ex. group & n = 40 con. group) *significant - 0.001, no significant ->.05

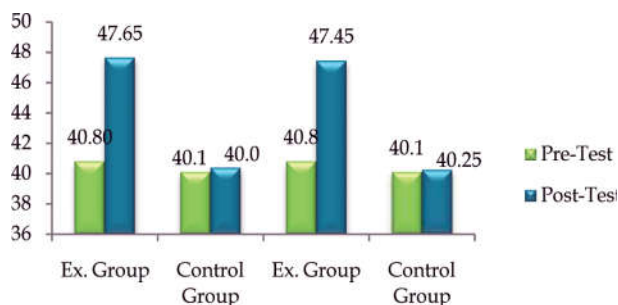


Fig. 1: Positive SWB

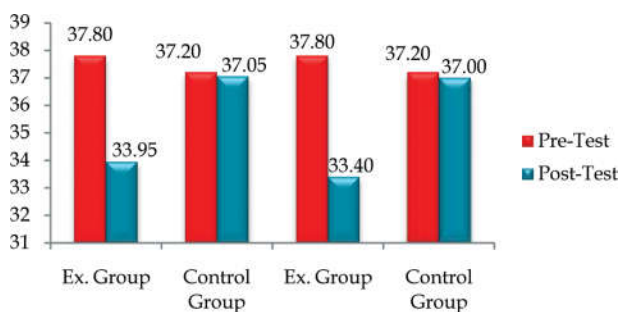


Fig. 2: Negative SWB

Table 2:

PPC Training	n	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	t	P
Experimental Group (Positive SWB)	20	40.25 (2.44)	45.85 (1.92)	-16.686	0.001*
Experimental Group (Negative SWB)		37.25 (2.19)	33.10 (2.31)	11.160	0.001*
Control Group No LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	40.10 (1.80)	40.00 (1.74)	.698	>.05
Control Group No LS Training (Negative SWB)		37.20 (1.70)	37.05 (1.66)	1.831	>.05
Post-test Only After LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	-	45.60 (2.18)	-21.962	0.001*
Post-test Only After LS Training (Negative SWB)		-	33.60 (1.50)	7.396	0.001*
Post-test Only No LS Training (Positive SWB)	20	-	45.25 (1.65)	-1.143	>.05
Post-test Only No LS Training (Negative SWB)		-	37.00 (1.62)	1.285	>.05

n = 80 (n = 40 ex. group & n = 40 con. group) *significant - 0.001, not significant ->.05

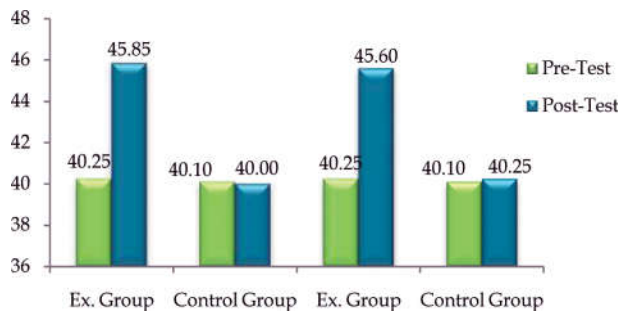


Fig. 3: Positive SWB

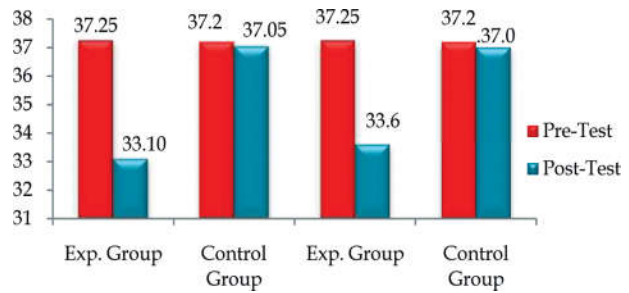


Fig. 4: Negative SWB

Table 2 & Figure 3 & 4 reveals that the mean scores of positive subjective well-being increased after positive psychological capital training in terms of post-test and the mean scores of negative subjective well-being decreased after positive psychological capital training in terms of post-test.

Figure 5 reveals that the training of life skills was more effective in enhancing positive subjective well-being whereas, there was no significant difference between life skill and positive psychological capital in reducing negative subjective well-being of children with visual impairment.

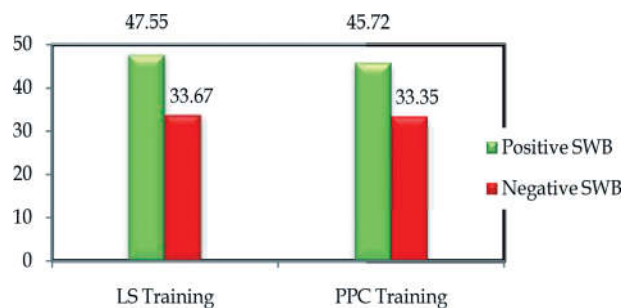


Fig. 5:

Figure 6 shows a positive and significant correlation between life skills and positive psychological capital with r and P values ($r = 0.549$ & $P 0.001^*$).

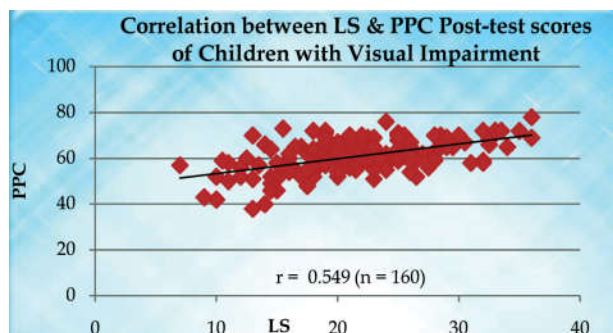


Fig 6: Correlation between Life Skills and Positive Psychological Capital Post-test scores of Children with Visual Impairment

Discussion

Children with visual impairment become very restricted in their mobility and personal resources on one hand and their exposure to the learning opportunities on the other. They are restricted in their social resources, are poorly managed, not sufficiently equipped with infrastructure and have access to limited number of special schools, learning material (books in Brail) and trained teachers. When these children confront their life with such poor facilities, they face negative experiences e.g. failures, anger, frustrations, disappointments etc. [19].

The training of life skills provides them the psychosocial weapons to face the challenges of life and fight against their self-doubts, uncertainties, in capabilities etc. As a result, they improve their subjective well-being. Using the similar intervention method and module for training of life skills on ADHD and CD children, a study reported similar results [1]. Life skills were found to be more efficient to face day to day challenges [16]. Subjective well-being is related to optimism, close-relationships, religion, spirituality, work, physical and mental health and life style [5].

The current research has shown that life skills training improves quality of life and enhances subjective well-being of children with visual impairment. Their impairment affects their efficiencies, their perception of themselves and their future adversely. This affects their mental health negatively. The training of life skills is an effective method for controlling anger that affects mental health as endorsed by Vatankhah et al. [23]. Present study findings are also in line with study by McClay et al. [13] that showed that life skills training improve low

mood, depression and anxiety. Because of absence of visual input, visually impaired children faced difficulty in expressing themselves to their family, friends and other people. Life skills education gives them the strength to express and handle their emotions, and improve inter-personal relationships. Through the training of life skills and stories of Panchtantra, children with visual impairment learned to cope with their anger and stress. They learned to regulate and handle their emotions. The training of life skills enhanced all developmental domains such as personal, social, academic and career in children with learning disability, [20] was effective in enhancing their happiness, quality of life, their life satisfaction and mental health, changed thinking, encouraged not only hopeful thoughts but also enhanced self-compassion or empathy, inculcated positive changes in personal life and inter-personal relationship, life satisfaction and reduced problems of communication, [22] The training of positive psychological capital enhanced optimism and reduced stress and pessimism in students [11]. Coskun et al. [3] showed a positive and strong relationship between level of resilience and problem solving abilities because a resilient child will absorb disturbance in his life, leap back or change and will easily recover or adjust from any situation. Norgaard et al. [15] reported that communication skills improved self-efficacy. Many of these studies in the reviews are on normal children and adolescents. When such training is so effective even in normal children, the impact of such training could be many folds. Such training not only improves the subjective well-being but enhance academic achievement, their employability and assimilation to the main stream also.

The result of study concluded that, the training of life skills and positive psychological capital through an art of storytelling improves and enhances subjective well-being of visually impaired children significantly ($t = -13.733$; $P < .001$). LS and PPC can counter their liabilities and limitations and make them efficient, successful and proactive in life. Such training also boosts their self-confidence; enrich happiness and quality of life with satisfaction. Due to their visual limitations, they need specially designed training techniques. Storytelling as a method imparting life skills and positive psychological capital proved beneficial for these children. Panchtantra stories are very appropriate for visually impaired children. Hence, it has proved that the training of LS and PPC through storytelling can bring significant and positive improvement in SWB of these children. It is recommended that training of life skills and positive psychological capital through art of storytelling should be incorporated as part of regular curriculum.

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