

Effectiveness of Training Anger Management According to Cognitive Approach on the Impulsivity in Bully Male Students

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Introduction

Bullying represents one of the most harmful and aggressive forms of misconduct, prevalent in many school environments. This behavior can have lasting and detrimental effects on both the individual being bullied and the bully themselves, contributing to a range of psychological issues, emotional distress, and even physical harm. Within the school context, bullying is a persistent issue that significantly impacts students' lives, shaping their experiences and influencing their mental well-being and academic performance. Bullying can take on multiple forms, encompassing verbal and physical aggression, threats, ridicule, and coercion. It often includes direct harassment, verbal abuse, and hostile behaviors intended to intimidate, isolate, or demean others. This behavior can also manifest in subtler forms, such as threatening body language or expressions that convey contempt or hostility. Through these varied behaviors, bullying not only disrupts the victim's sense of safety and self-worth but can also affect the overall school climate, leading to a hostile environment that impacts all students. The significance of addressing bullying is critical, as unchecked bullying can lead to a cycle of aggression and retaliation that escalates the intensity of the misconduct over time. Research has shown that bullying not only leads to psychological harm in victims—such as anxiety, depression, and decreased self-esteem—but can also reinforce negative behaviors in bullies, increasing their likelihood of engaging in other forms of delinquent or antisocial behavior.

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In response to this pervasive issue, the current study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of anger management training based on cognitive approaches in reducing impulsivity among male bully students. By addressing impulsivity, a known predictor of aggressive and bullying behaviors, this intervention seeks to equip students with cognitive tools to recognize, regulate, and redirect their anger in healthier, less destructive ways. This approach focuses on helping bully students develop skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, and constructive communication, ultimately fostering a shift toward more prosocial behavior.

Method

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design, incorporating pretest, posttest, a control group, and a two-month follow-up to assess the effectiveness of cognitive-based anger management training on reducing impulsivity in male bully students. The statistical population included male bully students enrolled in the first year of high school in Bandar Abbas during the 2019-2020 academic year. Through purposive sampling, 30 male students exhibiting bullying behaviors were selected and then randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group, with each group initially containing 15 students.

The experimental group participated in eight intervention sessions, each lasting 75 minutes, over the course of one month. These sessions focused on anger management techniques based on the cognitive approach as outlined by Shokouhi Yekta and Kakabaraei (2017). However, during the study, 2 students from the experimental group and 3 from the control group discontinued participation, leaving a final sample of 25 students—13 in the experimental group and 12 in the control group.

The study employed two primary assessment tools: the Illinois Bullying Scale (IBS), developed by Espelage and Holt (2001), to measure bullying behavior, and the Barratt Impulsivity Scale (BIS), established by Barratt, Stanford, Kent, and Felthous (2004), to assess impulsivity levels. Data collected from these tools were analyzed using Mixed ANOVA in SPSS-23 software, a statistical method chosen due to the study's structure, which involved two groups (experimental and control) and three measurement points (pretest, posttest, and follow-up). This approach allowed for a comprehensive examination of the intervention's short- and long-term effects on impulsivity in bully students.

Results

The results demonstrated that cognitive-based anger management training had a significant impact on reducing impulsivity among male bully

students ($p < 0.001$). Descriptive findings further revealed a decrease in mean impulsivity scores and its specific dimensions among students who exhibited bullying behaviors. Importantly, these reductions were sustained during the two-month follow-up period, indicating that the intervention's effects persisted over time. Consequently, the bullying behaviors of these students did not revert to pre-intervention levels, suggesting that cognitive-based anger management may be an effective long-term strategy for mitigating impulsive tendencies and associated aggressive behaviors in bullying students.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that cognitive-behavioral anger management training is an effective method for reducing impulsivity in male students who engage in bullying behaviors. By focusing on key areas such as anger management skills, practical techniques, and cognitive self-instruction, this approach enables students to manage their anger more constructively. Specifically, cognitive-behavioral training helps bullying students recognize and understand the thoughts and emotions related to anger and bullying, increases their tolerance for anger-provoking situations, and raises their awareness of related physiological changes.

This training encourages students to improve social cognition through techniques like relaxation exercises, positive self-talk, and assertiveness skills. As a result, they experience a reduction in impulsive behaviors, which also decreases their tendency to engage in bullying. Moreover, cognitive-based anger management training equips students with alternative ways to express emotions, fostering more adaptive and non-aggressive forms of self-expression. This approach teaches effective coping strategies, students who undergo this training are less likely to exhibit anger, irritability, and impulsive aggression.

Keywords: Cognitive-based anger management training, impulsivity, male bully students

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