# The Effectiveness of Positive Thinking Skills Training on the Positive and Negative Affection and Perfectionism of High School Students in Fereydunkenar City

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*Abstract*

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching positive thinking skills on students' negative emotions and perfectionism. The present study was experimental. The statistical population of this study was all high school female students in the city of Fereydunkenar in the academic year of 2017-2018. The research sample consisted of 30 high-perfectional students who were randomly selected. These 30 subjects were divided into two experimental and control groups, which were considered for 13 sessions of 90 minutes for teaching positive thinking skills. Two questionnaires were used for data collection. The obtained data were used using covariance analysis. The results showed that teaching positive thinking skills was effective in reducing the negative emotion and perfectionism among female students (P <0.01). As a result, this approach can be used as a method in schools to improve the mental status of students.

*Keywords:* Positive thinking, Skills training, Negative affection, Positive affection, Perfectionism.

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, a group of mental health researchers based on positive psychology have adopted a different theoretical approach to studying this concept. They considered mental health as a positive psychological function and conceptualized it in terms of the term "psychological well-being." This group does not consider the disease to be sufficient for the sense of health, but they believe in the sense of life satisfaction, adequate progress, effective interaction with the world and the positive relationship with the community (Ryan, 2001; Caradas, 2007).

There are some problems in student's lives that prevent them to overcome their academic responsibility. One of the problems that limit the student's academic abilities is procrastination (Kandemir, 2014).

Procrastination is equivalent to negligence, indifference, and decisional postponing (Whol, 2010). In fact, the definition of procrastination is when a person wants to perform an action that might have some results for him in the future but postpones it unreasonably (Ellis, 2009). Procrastination is a pervasive and aversive behavior for most students, which always comes along with being uncomfortable as well as feeling of depression (Pala, 2011).

It is not only a timetable management problem but also a complicate process which consists of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components (Fee, 2000). However, the most common form is academic procrastination; Roth Bloom, Salomon, and Morcamey define this concept as the students' continual tendency to postpone the academic tasks (Kandemir, 2014). Reasons for procrastination are unknown. Specialists specified different causes for procrastination which are fear of success, fear of defeat, self-hurting behaviors, avoiding things that the individual doesn't like to do and having no motive to do an action, making stress for doing things in the last seconds, as well as lacking knowledge/skill (DuBrin, 2002).

Other factors include idealism, low tolerance level versus problems and complex inferiority feelings which are the main causes of procrastination (Ellis, 2002). There are two kinds of postponing behavior among students: one of these is meaningful scheduled delay and the other is unreasonable and damaging delay which is known as academic procrastination (Grunschel et al.,

2013). Many researches have reported procrastination with respect to negative emotions (Golestanibakht et al., 2013).

One of the psychological approaches which have a positive sight on individuals is positive psychology perspective. Positive psychology is a term which consists of positive emotions, positive personality characteristics, as well as a powerful organization (Seligman, 2005). Psychological phenomena such as happiness, optimism, hope, creativity, and wisdom which are resulted from the mind positive experiences are the main focuses of positive psychological studies (Carr, 2007). The aim of this psychology is to help individuals improve their skills and abilities. Investigations have shown that necessary skills can be taught to children and teenagers and can be prevented from many problems (Seligman, 2005).

Health and mental incompatibility in Singapore students showed that positive thinking had a positive correlation with mental health indicators (life and happiness satisfaction) and a negative correlation with mental incompatibly indicators (stress, anxiety, depression, and anger) (Glick et al., 2014). The results showed that procrastination had a positive correlation with anxiety and a negative correlation with mental flexibility. It is necessary to have students with positive thinking about themselves. Regarding the effectiveness of positive thinking skills on different academic problems, the current study purpose is to determine the effectiveness of positive thinking skills training on academic procrastination of high school students. Therefore, based on the above purpose, the following hypothesis is formed:

Positive training for thinking skills is effective on reducing academic procrastination of female students (getting ready for examination, home work, tasks as well as for final term articles).

The first step in every scientific effort is an accurate and specified definition of the given concepts. Like many other constructs in psychology, there are different definitions and theories regarding procrastination, which will be described further in the study. In the Latin language, procrastination is composed of two parts: "pre", which means ahead/forward, and "procrastination", which means tomorrow/postponing to another time. The cause of this phenomenon is unnecessary delaying or postponing (Steel, 2007).

It is a big mistake to consider procrastination as an action, due to the fact that in this state, the person has no tendency to do an action, which in procrastination, he frequently does.

Ferrari divides the procrastination concept into two classes, behavioral and decisional procrastination. Behavioral procrastination points to the inconsiderate individuals who postpone their tasks in order to protect their self-esteem, while decisional procrastination implies those individual who postpone their decisions to prevent the conflicts. Behavioral procrastination has a correct and explicit correlation with academic achievement (Wong, 2012).

Procrastination has some signs which are dawdle, merging in responsibility, feeling, being unable to achieve the important goals, doing the tasks fast in last minutes, utopianism, lacking a good program in life, and giving meaningless devices (Neenan, 2008).

The study has shown that positive emotions facilitate the behavior method and activity continuation. In this study, the researchers found that positive emotions and experiences motivate the individuals to be involved in their environment (Ferrari, 1994).

One approach is a very useful and positive mental health treatment (Kagan et al., 2010). In fact, positive thinking psychology is an approach that emphasizes the individuals' abilities and excellence and enables the individuals and communities to become successful. The purpose of these approaches is to recognize the constructs and methods that finally make the human life better.

According to the content of this research, it seeks to answer the question of whether the teaching of positive thinking skills affects students' negative emotions and perfectionism.


## 2. Research Methodology

The research method is semi-experimental with two experimental and control group. The statistical population of the present study included all female high school students in Fereydunkenar city which has 520 students. To select the sample, 220 individuals were selected for screening using a random sampling method and Morgan table. Subsequently, by filling out the questionnaires, students who scored below the cut-off point were selected as the prototype and

based on the tendency to participate in the research, 30 individuals were randomly selected and replaced in two groups

At the beginning, with the receipt of a letter from the university, I would refer to the Education Department and after coordination with the Directorate of Administration, after identifying the experimental and control groups and performing the pre-test for the two groups, the training program of positive thinking skills as a trial in 13 sessions of 90 minutes weekly to the experimental group while the control group continued to normal programs.

In order to collect information after obtaining the necessary permissions from education to girls' schools, after explaining about the goals and how to fill in the questionnaire, students were asked to answer the questionnaire with great accuracy and cooperate. To conduct the research, after receiving the letter from the university's research, a university education will be taken. After identifying the experimental and control groups and performing the pre-test for the two groups, the program of teaching positive thinking skills as an experimental or independent variable in 13 sessions of 90 minutes will be applied, while the control group will continue to do its normal work. Post-test will be done for both groups. The curriculum consists of three general areas: positive thinking towards oself, positive thinking towards others, and positive thinking towards life.

## 3. Information Processing
### 3.1. Perfectionism Questionnaire

In order to assess perfectionism in this study, the Perfectionism Questionnaire (APS), which was developed by Kayammaree and Najjarian (1997), was used which consists of 27 items whose primary materials are based on valid psychology texts, Related to MMPI scales, Spielberg's anxiety, Maudsley's obsessive-compulsive scales, and Jones's irrational thoughts, as well as through clinical interviews. This questionnaire does not have a specific component. The students respond to it (never, rarely, sometimes and often), and the score is from zero to three, the low scores indicate perfectionism in the person, the above research shows the lack of perfection in the person.

## 4. Data Analysis Method

Descriptive statistics including frequency table, graph, mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. To analyze the research hypotheses, covariance analysis was used. Data were analyzed by SPSS version 23 software.

### 4.1. Descriptive Findings

### 4.1.1. Descriptive Findings and Normality Study of Data

In Table 1, the descriptive indexes of the research variables in the pre-test and post-test, as well as the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test were categorized separately to verify the normality of the data.

Table 1. Descriptive indexes of research variables by groups and data normalization

| Variable | Condition | group | Average | Standard deviation | Shapiro-Wilk | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Negative affection | Pre-test | Experiment | 75 | 2.19 | 0.92 | 0.35 |
| | | Control | 71.28 | 1.99 | 0.82 | 0.50 |
| | Post-test | Experiment | 54.62 | 9.02 | 1.10 | 0.17 |
| | | Control | 71.05 | 3.04 | 0.71 | 0.69 |
| Positive affection | Pre-test | Experiment | 15.81 | 2.53 | 0.74 | 0.62 |
| | | Control | 16.85 | 2.53 | 0.89 | 0.40 |
| | Post-test | Experiment | 21.50 | 2.98 | 0.63 | 0.81 |
| | | Control | 16.92 | 2.70 | 0.79 | 0.55 |
| Perfectionism | Pre-test | Experiment | 8.20 | 2.35 | 0.96 | 0.30 |
| | | Control | 9.25 | 2.02 | 1.06 | 0.20 |
| | Post-test | Experiment | 21.56 | 11.393 | 0.101 | 0.10 |
| | | Control | 10.57 | 3.588 | 0.087 | 0.200 |

According to table 1, the values of Shapiro-Wilk's coefficient for all variables are not significant, which indicate that the distribution of research variables is normal in the groups. The mean of the aforementioned table shows that the mean of experimental groups has improved from pre-test to post-test. But the average of the control group did not change and in some cases it did not improve significantly.

### 4.2. Inferential Analysis

### 4.2.1. Findings Related to the Assumptions of the Covariance Analysis Test

In order to test the hypothesis of the research hypotheses, multivariate and

variable covariance analysis was used in the text of Mankwa. Before implementing covariance analysis, first, the assumptions about using the model were examined. For this purpose, firstly, the normal distribution of data using Shapiro-Wilk's distribution and testing indices (considering the number of samples less than 50 people) was first examined; then the homogeneity of the variables in the pre-test was examined to study the proposed linear relationship between the auxiliary random variable and post-test, as well as the equation of equality of variances.

**Table 2. Shapiro-Wilk test results and distribution indices to determine the normal distribution of data variables of research**

| Dependent variables | Group | Level | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Statistics | Significance level | Number |
| Negative affection | Experiment | Post-test | 0.958 | 0.663 | 15 |
| | Control | | 0.949 | 0.513 | 15 |
| Positive affection | Experiment | Post-test | 0.987 | 0.996 | 15 |
| | Control | | 0.866 | 0.298 | 15 |
| Perfectionism | Experiment | Post-test | 0.887 | 0.060 | 15 |
| | Control | | 0.947 | 0.477 | 15 |

As shown in Table 2, the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test analysis show that the statistical values obtained in the post-test of the two experimental and control groups for the three variables are greater than the critical value ($\alpha = 0.05$) Therefore, for all variables, the null hypothesis is based on the existence of a normal distribution, and the assumption of a non-normal distribution is rejected.

Main hypothesis: Teaching positive thinking skills affects students' negative emotions, positive emotions and perfectionism.

To test the general hypothesis of the research, the multivariate analysis of covariance is used and its results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Multivariate covariance analysis of group effect on the studied variables as a combination**

| Test | Test value | DF hypothesis | DF Error | F ratio | Sig. level | Effect size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wilks Lambda | 0.146 | 3 | 23 | 44.815 | 0.000 | 0.854 |

Table 3 shows the effect of teaching positive thinking skills on the dependent variable. As it is seen, the effect of teaching positive thinking skills on composite variables such as positive and negative emotions and perfectionism has been significant (Lambda wilks 0.146; F=44.815 and F). Results show that there is a significant difference between the post test scores of the two groups in terms of one of the dependent variables.

First hypothesis: Teaching positive thinking skills affects students' affective affinity. In order to investigate the first hypothesis, one variable of variance analysis was used in Mancoa text and its results were presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results of single-variable covariance analysis on positive affect**

| Test | Test value | DF hypothesis | DF Error | F ratio | Sig. level | Effect size (Eta) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-test group positive affection | 1946.504 | 1 | 1946.504 | 61.482 | 0.0001 | 0.711 |
| Error | 791.499 | 25 | 31.660 | - | - | - |

As shown in Table 4, the ratio form of the analysis of covariance shows that after removing the effects of auxiliary random variables (pre-test), there is a significant difference between the moderated scores in the experimental and control two-way post-test $F(1,25)= 61.482$; $p<0.0001$.

This means that the effect of teaching positive thinking skills on students' positive effects was significant. Also, the effect size of Eta =0.711 indicates that 71.1% of the increase in positive affection in the test group can be attributed to the effect of teaching positive thinking skills. According to the results, teaching positive thinking skills has increased the students' positive emotions.

Minor hypothesis: Teaching positive thinking skills affects students' negative emotions. In order to study the second hypothesis, a variance analysis of covariance was used in Mancoa text. The results were presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Results of single-variable covariance analysis on negative effect**

| Test | Test value | DF hypothesis | DF Error | F ratio | Sig. level | Effect size (Eta) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post-test group positive affection | 7947.021 | 1 | 7947.021 | 50.550 | 0.0001 | 0.669 |
| Error | 3930.311 | 25 | 157.212 | - | - | - |

As shown in Table 5, the f value obtained from the analysis of covariance shows that there is a significant difference between the scores modulated in the experimental and control groups after the removal of the effects of the auxiliary random variable (pre-test) $F(1,25)= 50.550$; $p<0.0001$.

This means that the effect of teaching positive thinking skills on students' negative emotions was significant. Also, the effect size of Eta=669.9 indicates that 66.9 percent of negative emotional loss in the experimental group can be attributed to the effect of teaching positive thinking skills. According to the results, teaching positive thinking skills has reduced students' negative emotions.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The research hypothesis of teaching positive thinking skills is effective in improving perfectionism in students. Post-test co-variance analysis of total perfectionism scores after pre-test adjustment, shows that by deleting the effect of pre-test scores, the effect of independent variable on post-test scores is significant.

In general explanation of these results, we can say that psychologists speak of two types of perfectionism: positive perfectionism and negative perfectionism. They believe that what many people call perfectionism is a perfectionism of a negative kind. In this type of perfectionism, the individual seeks perfection and completeness in all fields and is too concerned about the evaluation and negative judgments of others, and by ignoring his true self and radicalizing it in their own eyes and others; Different ways are under stress. Such an individual may be depressed with many psychological problems, such as anxiety, so those with negative perfectionism are less likely to be in a harsh, hard and hard-working situation, and believing in being superior is a

misconception and a lot of harm. This type of person reaches the person in his interpersonal relationship to less satisfaction. In the opposite pole of negative perfectionism, there is a positive perfectionism that one can formulate with positive idealization, based on his experiences, and gain positive emotions. Therefore, they achieve higher satisfaction in their interpersonal relationships (Attari et al., 2006).

Minor hypothesis: Teaching positive thinking skills is effective on the components of negative and positive emotions.

According to the F for the negative affective component (43.244), positive affective (19.085) is significant at the level of 0.001. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the two experimental and control groups in these components. Ferrman (2009) believes that the positive emotions of intellectual and behavioral characteristics change people to positive. Chan (2009) noted that positive people do not just enjoy the goal, but also enjoy the process. Positive people are able to approach complex goals by breaking down the big goals for smaller ones. A study by Seligman, Stein, Park, and Peterson (2005) showed that positive psychological interventions for depressed people increased their happiness for one week and eradicated their depression symptoms. Kerry and Snyder (2000) report that positive thinking and hope are clearly related to performance and progress, and people with higher hopes have better meanings and better athletic performance. Negative and desperate people tend to insist on the inefficient busy broker's thinking. They approach goals with negative emotional states have two-sided feelings and focus success instead on failures. Positive and negative emotions are among the factors that play an effective role in mental health, life satisfaction and, ultimately, person's efficiency. Emotions share the same amount of body and mind in history of life, experiences, deep understanding and human relationships. Emotions like energy enter the body systems and inspire the individual to ask who I am? This energy, as it is supposed, does not arise and does not disappear but flows into it. Negative emotions are like a kind of brake in life and positive emotions as a kind of gas in life that increases the speed of success. Positive affection is a state of active energy, high concentration and employment is a pleasure to work, and a reduction in affective affection is associated with sadness and

depression. Negative affection is a general aspect of inner thirst and lack of employment, which leads to avoidable mood states such as anger, humiliation, feelings of guilt, fear and anger, and decreasing negative emotions results in a relaxed mood. These two factors, the positive and negative emotions, represent the main dimensions of emotional states.

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