

The role of life skills training on happiness and entrepreneurship characteristics of incoming students in Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources University students

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ABSTRACT: According to the role of students in the comprehensive development, training students with the high mental, social abilities and entrepreneurship skills will accelerate the achievement of mental health and social welfare of the society. This study was conducted to explore the role of life skills training on happiness and entrepreneurship characteristics of students. Present studied population included all incoming students at the Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources University (SANRU) in 2014 that were participated in the life skills training course. In this study, due to low number of samples which was limited to one class (15 cases), purposive sampling technique was used. For experimental group the life skills training were presented weekly (10 weeks) with 90 minutes sessions. The experimental and control groups were evaluated through a questionnaire at the beginning of the course and before training, and once after 10 weeks (at the end of the sessions). For data analyzing the SPSS software, and also depend and independent t-test were used. Life skills training showed significant and positive effects on Clarity of thought, daydreaming, risk-taking except in happiness and activism characteristics of the students. According to the positive effects of life skills training on student entrepreneurship characteristics, therefore, use of this type of training may be a key factor and useful for strengthening entrepreneurship performance of the students in similar cases.

Keywords: life skills, happiness, entrepreneurship characteristics, students

INTRODUCTION

The success of modern organizations such as universities and higher education institutions depends on creativity, innovation, discovery and invention (Martins and Blanch, 2003). Nowadays, Students graduate from higher education institutions and enters into rapidly changing technological and innovational environment. Modern technology and related factors changed job opportunities and created new kind of jobs every day (Collins et al., 2004). These changes and transformations in circumstances and needs of the society, were leading changes and transformations of the higher education missions. So that the education which was their primary mission changes to research and after further developments it was shift to entrepreneurship (Sharifzadeh et al., 2009). After highlighting the role of entrepreneurs in economic development, psychologists proposing a theory based on personality traits and separation between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs executives, they began to study the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs (Karbasi et al., 2002). Also, based on psychological attitudes, they provide specific personality traits of each person for entrepreneurship. This entrepreneurship approach also called as humanitarian principles of entrepreneurs, knows entrepreneurs as special peoples with specific characteristics (Zabihi, 2006). Personality traits approach focus on specific characteristics, attitudes and values of the entrepreneurs which provides a driving force for distinct them from others (Gurol and Atsan, 2006). Backgrounds of Entrepreneurship Studies also indicate that entrepreneurs have special features (Matviuk, 2010). Approaches of personality traits Compared to other entrepreneurship approaches are more common (Kruzic and Pavic, 2001). For this reason, various studies have been done on the features entrepreneurs and psychologists are trying to determine effective abilities to being an entrepreneur person. Among the psychological characteristics of

entrepreneurs, creativity features is divided into three factors: first in field of imaginary (visionary daydreaming), second in field of intellectual (mental clearness) and practicality (activism) as the third field (Kurdenaeeji et al., 2007). Clarity of thought is meant to be many and varied collection of work on the issue (Rezaeyan, 1380) and his chief means of activism and the severe requirements of entrepreneurship (Ahmadi, 1387). Clarity of thought means to collect the many and varied topics about the issue (Rezayian, 2001) and activism was define as being your own boss which is one of the serious requirements of entrepreneurship (Ahmad, 2008). Another prominent feature of entrepreneur is the risk-taking. The risk may be financial, psychological, and social (Hisrich et al., 2008). However, unlike ordinary people, the entrepreneur isn't risk like a stakeholder, but rather, decides with a careful planning and precision by having knowledge about risk, then does maximum possible effort to achieve his goals (Shahhosseini, 2007). Risk-taking means is, accepting the moderate risk, which can be harnessed by personal effort (Ahmadpoor Dariani; Azizi, 2004).

On the other hand, happiness is one of the basic concepts and components of each person's life (especially of students), which has positive effects on lifestyle and educational success and increases the desire to do those behaviors associated with academic success. Many studies suggested that, happiness can lead attractive and producers' activities. Happiness as a positive affect can facilitate interpersonal relationships and also, has more positive outcomes on knowledge, social health and activities (Alipour, et al., 2009). Being happy is the driving force that causes motivation and movement. Despite the deep cultural changes and changes in lifestyle, but many people have not essential ability to deal with their life issues? Many studies have shown that many health problems and mental and emotional disorders have psychological and social origins (Taromyan, 2003). In other words, we living with the challenges and problems that every person answer to them by special ways. But if the people have the right skills can successfully confront these challenges. Successful learning life skills affected sense of learner about themselves and others and can be improved the psychosocial abilities. These capabilities can help the man to deal effectively and resolve conflicts of life and provide mental health (Taromyan, 2003). Learning and life skills training improve or changed attitudes, values and behavior, thus by creating a positive and healthy behavior the problems can be prevented (Alilou, 2007). Many researches have shown that the entrepreneurial characteristics which can train by humans are considered as an acquired talent, not an innate talent. Current approaches know creative as talent and ability that could train by learners and it resulted by interaction between knowledge, skills and motivation (Badali et al., 2013). Currently, Soleimani and Tabaniyan (2011) suggests that the lack of happiness had negative effects on thinking skills, intelligence and creativity (Karami and Aliabadi, 1391). Herzog (2001) reported that happiness had significant effects on Grows and flourishes of human; he was also confirmed a significant positive correlation between happiness, creativity and argument. Yadavari (2004) also suggested that life skills training had a high significant impact on public's health increasing, happiness and assertiveness. Also, Hamidi (2005) has revealed that life skills training significantly improve the Behavioral condition of young people. Verdi (2004) also showed that life skills training improved the assertiveness and self-esteem and responsibility of students. In addition, Suleimani and Abedi (2013) showed that life skills training can reduce anxiety and depression and increase happiness for all studied experimental groups. The present study seeks to answer the question that, Is the happiness and life skills training have any effects on entrepreneurial characteristics of students?

General hypothesis

Life skills trainings will be effective on happiness and entrepreneurial characteristics of students.

Sub- hypothesis

Life skills training increase the happiness of students.

Life Skills training increase the risk- taking of students.

Life Skills training increase the Clarity of thought.

Life Skills training increase the level of activism.

Life Skills training increase the increase the daydreaming.

METHOD

The quasi-experimental method was used in this study. In this method, the researcher is trying to control and monitor a number of factors. In the present study, participants in life skills training course are classified in the experimental group and the students who did not participate in this course, classified as a control group. Members of the experimental group all received the life skills trainings at the same time, place and during period. Present studied population included all incoming undergraduate students at the Sari Agricultural Sciences and Natural

Resources University (SANRU) in 2014 that were participated in the life skills course. In this study, due to low number of samples (15 cases), purposive sampling technique was used. In order to homogenizing the experimental group according to age, gender, degree and year of entry of the students who had not attended the course, 15 of them were selected and divided into a control group. For experimental group the life skills training were presented weekly (10 weeks) with 90 minutes sessions. In life skills training course numerous methods, such as group discussions, intellectual challenge, stories and parables were used. The experimental and control groups were evaluated through a questionnaire at the beginning of the workshop and before training, and once after 10 weeks (at the end of the sessions). For data analyzing the SPSS software was used and also dependent and independent t-test was used.

Measurement Instrument and Data Collection

Standardized questionnaires measuring of Iranian Entrepreneurs personality characteristics (Kordnayy et al., 2007): A Likert type multiple-choice (completely agree, rather agree, somewhat disagree or completely disagree options with values between 1 and 4) were used. For validity of Native Instruments Iranian entrepreneurs the Cronbach's alpha was used as usual.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ): the oxford happiness questionnaire is an improved version of the questionnaire that was developed by Hills and Argyle (2011). This instrument consist of 29 questions with 6 answer for each them and grading 1- 6. They reported reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha 91%. Also the reliability and validity of Iranian version of this questionnaire has been confirmed by Alipour and Noorbala (1999), Liaghatdar et al (2008) were reported the role of this questionnaire in Iranian subjects.

RESULTS

According to demographic results, among 30 students who were selected as the Statistical population, 73% (22 student) of them were female and 27% were male (8 student) and the average age of the subjects was 20 years old.

Table 1. Independent t test analysis of pretest and posttest in both experimental and control groups

	Variables	Pretest		Posttest		T	df	Significant levels
		Means	Standard deviation	Means	Standard deviation			
Experimental group	Happiness	102.6	16.04	100.73	22.05	0.527	14	0.606
	Clarity of thought	33.13	7.92	39.20	5.28	3.335	14	0.005
	Activism	28.73	3.63	28.67	2.44	0.059	14	0.954
	Daydreaming	18.6	3.29	25.13	3.54	5.640	14	0.000
	Risk-taking	41.33	7.78	47.60	6.51	2.176	14	0.047
Control group	Happiness	90.93	19.69	97.27	15.65	0.928	14	0.369
	Clarity of thought	29.33	6.53	32.07	6.25	0.959	14	0.354
	Activism	27.07	2.86	27.40	5.57	0.231	14	0.821
	Daydreaming	18.33	3.61	19.40	4.12	1.026	14	0.322
	Risk-taking	38.93	8.54	42.40	5.50	1.430	14	0.174

Life skills training increase the happiness of students (was rejected)

The results of data analysis (Table 1) showed that the happiness mean scores of the experimental group didn't have significantly difference between pretest and posttest (with t= 0.527 and p= 0.606) and also happiness pretest and posttest for control group (with t=0. 928 and p= 0.369) had not significantly different. The happiness of the experimental group did not change significantly in compare between pre-test (before training) and post-test (after training).

Life Skills training increase the risk- taking of students (has been accepted)

The mean scores of risk-taking showed significantly different among pretest and posttest (with t= 2.176 and p= 0.047) in experimental groups. Also, in term of control group between pretest and posttest significantly different was observed (with t= 1.43 and p= 0.174). Thus, the students' risk- taking ability was increased in experimental group in compare with control group (Table 1).

Life Skills training increase the Clarity of thought (has been accepted)

The mean scores of clarity of thought showed significantly different among pretest and posttest (with t= 3.335 and p= 0.005) in experimental groups. But the results indicated that, there was no significantly different (with

t= 0.595 and p= 0.354) between pretest students and posttest students in control group. So, the students' clarity of thought ability was increased in experimental group in compare with control group (Table 1).

Life Skills training increase the level of activism (was rejected)

The results of data analysis (Table 1) showed that the activism mean scores in experimental group didn't have significantly difference between pretest and posttest (with t= 0.059 and p= 0.954) and also in control group significantly different was not observed (with t=0. 231 and p= 0.821). In fact, the activism of students in the experimental group did not change significantly in compare with control.

Life Skills training increase the daydreaming (has been accepted)

The mean scores of daydreaming showed significantly different among pretest and posttest (with t= 3.54 and p= 0.000) in experimental groups. But, in term of control group between pretest and posttest no significantly different was observed (with t= 1.026 and p= 0.322). Thus, the students' daydreaming ability was increased in experimental group in compare with control group.

Table 2. Independent t test analysis of pretest in both experimental and control groups

	Variables	Pretest		Posttest		T	df	Significant levels
		Means	Standard deviation	Means	Standard deviation			
Pretest	Happiness	102.6	16.04	90.93	19.69	1.779	28	0.086
	Clarity of thought	33.13	7.92	29.33	6.53	1.433	28	0.163
	Activism	28.73	3.63	27.07	2.86	1.395	28	0.174
	Daydreaming	18.6	3.29	18.33	3.61	0.211	28	0.834
	Risk-taking	41.33	7.78	38.93	8.54	0.804	28	0.428

The results of pretest analysis in both experimental and control groups indicated that, mean scours of happiness, clarity of thought, activism, daydreaming and risk-taking in both groups were not significantly different. This result suggested that, before running the life skills training, both experimental and control groups students were similar in terms of mentioned variables.

Table 3. Independent t test analysis of posttest in both experimental and control groups

	Variables	Pretest		Posttest		T	df	Significant levels
		Means	Standard deviation	Means	Standard deviation			
posttest	Happiness	100.73	22.05	97.27	15.65	0.496	28	0.624
	Clarity of thought	39.2	5.28	32.07	6.25	3.370	28	0.002
	Activism	28.67	2.44	27.40	5.57	0.806	28	0.427
	Daydreaming	25.13	3.54	19.40	4.12	4.087	28	0.000
	Risk-taking	47.6	6.51	42.40	5.50	2.36	28	0.025

According to results (Table 3), after living skills training the clarity of thought, daydreaming and risk taking of students in experimental group were significantly increase in compare to control group. But some variable such as happiness and activism did not show any significant positive response to life skill training course.

DISCUSSION

Skilled manpower, professional and entrepreneur is one of the most important factors for developing, therefore universities and educational institutes as a grower and supplier of them can play their role properly, if having an appropriate educational plan. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate whether life skills training influence the happiness and entrepreneurial characteristics of students through the study of the control and experimental groups. Also the results showed that, life skills training had a significant positive effect on characteristics of student (clarity of thought, daydreaming and risk-taking) except for happiness and activism, on the other. No enhancement of happiness after life skills training did not comply with the results of Yadavari (2004), Hamidi (2005), Salimi Bajestani & Abedi (2013), thus further investigation seems necessary. However, due to the positive effect of this education on students entrepreneurial characteristics (such as clarity of thought, daydreaming and risk-taking), it can be argued that entrepreneurship could be used as a benefit training method, this was confirm by Kourilsky (1995), Briga (1996), Rashed (2000), Brown (2000), Arnolfo (2000) and Mardanshahi (2013). On the other hand, life skills training showed positive impact on the clarity of thought and daydreaming, which was known as the creativeness subdirectories. Usefulness of training is approved by Hosseini Moghaddam (2013),

Sarmad and Mazaheri (2011), Arasti et al (2011), Rezaei and Homayooni (2011), Baqhersad et al (2013). In other words, the life skills training on three studied field had significantly different effects, so that it was benefit in creativity field object such as clarity of thought and daydreaming, but among meditative field (activism) the expectations were not met. Videlicet, the current period of training methods was not suitable for growth and development of activism ability of students. Because of training program should be considered all aspects of growth and development.

With this interpretation and the importance of universities and students in the development of communities and considering to the high unemployment rate, unemployment rate for graduates, High rate of young population and increasing demand for higher education and the importance of the development of entrepreneurship education and effectiveness of life skills training on strengthening entrepreneurial characteristics a serious and modern educational planning will be more suitable.

Therefore it is suggested that due to lower average of incoming students number in this study, besides enjoying and continuity of life skills training during the educational period, training and workshops in schools, besides enjoying and continuity of life skills courses during the education, training and workshops in schools for high school students who are preparing for entrance to higher education system and furthermore they can using of the other effects of these courses and they will be further strengthened in those fields when entering to the university.

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