Designing and Validating a Social Responsibility-based Educational Program for at-risk Youth

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

A Positive Youth Development (PYD) approach is an approach to adolescents that, unlike the current approach, considers *youth* are essentially seen as resources to be developed, not problems that need to be managed. Based on the youth positive development, the best way to prevent problematic behaviors is to focus on the adolescents abilities, not their shortcomings, and promote positive change during the second decade of their life. The purpose of interventions based on PYD are promoting the positive development of developmental assets such as belonging, resilience, moral competence, spirituality, self-efficacy, clear and positive identity, belief in the future, opportunities for prosocial participation, and social responsibility.

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Social responsibility is a reflection of concerns that go beyond personal interests, needs, and wants. Various studies have shown the impact of adolescent social responsibility on high-risk behaviors. The aim of this study is to design and validate an educational program based on social responsibility for at-risk youth.

2. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The concept of social responsibility has not been elaborated precisely by theorists of sociology and psychology, so it is not possible to accurately name a theory called social responsibility. Therefore, in this research, more emphasis is placed on the different definitions of this concept and the dimensions and components that have been proposed for it.

Different definitions of social responsibility include a sense of civic commitment, awareness of social injustice and job allocation for social justice, attention to welfare, health, education and security of others and nature, as well as interest in society and addressing the interests of society, normative commitments, and commitment to participate in society.

Dimensions for social responsibility in various studies include economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities in Carrol (1991) and social, economic, and environmental responsibilities in Elkington (1997), Blackburn (2006). In Iranian context, Sobhaninejad (2000) discussed religious-social, cultural, political, economic, civic, and environmental responsibilities. Fathizadeh (2009) has discussed scientific, religious, social and cultural, political, moral and physical dimensions for social responsibility. Talebi and Khoshbin (2012) discussed the economic, societal, cultural, political and environmental dimensions for social responsibility.

3. Method

The research was done using Delphi method. First, the components of social responsibility were identified. Then, by designing researcher-made questionnaires in two stages, the opinion of experts was collected. The Kendall Coordination Coefficient was used to determine the consensus among the participating members were involved in the two rounds of Delphi method. After consensus on the components, the content of the social responsibility-based program was developed. Then, in order to validate the program, the content validity ratio (CVR) index was used.

The sample consists of ten people (6 psychologists and 4 sociologists) selected by the purposive sampling method. The input criteria for sampling were psychologists and sociologists who had clinical and research activities in the field of adolescence and related social-pathology.

4. Results and Discussion

Agreed components based on two stages of Delphi included civic responsibility, social responsibility, cultural responsibility, environmental responsibility, political responsibility, and economic responsibility, each of which included sub-components. Kendall's coordination coefficient for all components was 0.22, which was significant at the level of 0.05. Based on these components, the content of the sessions was set for ten 90-minute sessions.

The educational sessions content includes: empathy and sympathy with others, recognizing and respecting oneself and others' right, the importance of religious and cultural values such as truthfulness, justice, environmental protection, cultural tangible and intangible heritage matter, social rules and regulations, social responsibility and group interests versus personal gain, group work, social participation, and performing a service-based activity.

The validity of the educational program based on the Content Validity Ratio index was 0.92, which is high and acceptable.

The educational sessions content includes/included empathy and sympathy with others, recognizing and respecting oneself and others right, the importance of religious and cultural values such as truthfulness, justice, promises fulfillment/commitment , etc., the environmental protection importance, the Cultural tangible and intangible heritage matter, social rules and regulations, and overcoming social responsibility and group interests over personal gain, group work, and social participation, and performing a group service-based activity.

5. Conclusion

Results show that experts agreed on civic, social, cultural, environmental, political and economic components. The program was developed based on these components and its validity was obtained acceptable.

As responsibility is seen as one of properties of youth positive development, efforts were made to develop positive environmental characteristics in the designing of the program. Some of the characteristics include physical and mental security, proper structure, and positive social norms. A context is appropriate that provides opportunities to enjoy supportive relationships, a sense of belonging, building skills, and a sense of empowerment from the experience of efficiency and a sense of importance.

Common mechanisms for promoting social responsibility include role modeling of prosocial behaviors, communicating messages for value socialization, and providing opportunities to practice socially responsible behaviors (Wray-lake & Syvertsen, 2011). Therefore, in order to create opportunities for practicing prosocial behavior, service-based activities were also included in educational program. The service-based activity component is almost a constant part of youth

positive development programs. Participating in these services leads to increased efficiency and capability, self-esteem and confidence, increased prosocial behaviors, reduced deviant behaviors at school, wandering and disciplinary problems, increased emotional feelings and moral reasoning, and strong moral emotions such as empathy in adolescents. Various studies have also shown the impact of adolescents' social responsibility on high-risk behaviors and substance abuse.

Keywords: Youth, Educational Program, Social Responsibility

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