Effect of Assertiveness Skills Training on the Level of Aggression in High School First Grade Female Students in Qorveh City

Faranak Dehnavi  
MA Educational Psychology, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran  
Hamraz_54@yahoo.com

Dr. Mohammad Ismaeil Ebrahimi  
Assistant Professor, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran  
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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the effect of assertiveness skills training on aggression dimensions. The research method was the pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The population of the present study consisted of all high school first grade female students in Qorveh city who were enrolled in the academic years 2013-14. The sample consisted of 30 high school first grade female students who were selected through multi-stage random sampling. Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (1992) was used for the data collection, and univariate ANOVA was used for the data analysis. The results showed that assertiveness skills training are effective on reducing students’ physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. Therefore, it can be concluded that assertiveness skills training can be a useful and efficient method for reducing the aggression in female students. This information can be used for the treatment planning and clinical interventions in order to reduce the aggression in high school female students.

Keywords: assertiveness skills, aggression, female students.
Introduction
Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Teenage years are regarded as the critical stage of individuals’ social and psychological development. In this period, teenagers’ most important needs include emotional balance, self-awareness, healthy relationships with others, and necessary social skills to make friends. The changes in this period of development may cause particular problems (Pier, 2000). When teens cannot successfully overcome the crises and challenges, they will experience psychological distress and a substantial disorder will appear normal flow of daily life and emotional, social and cognitive aspects. As result, they will develop a disturbed character (Garber, Kelly and Martin, 2002). Therefore, one of the topics discussed in this period would be the aggression in this group.
Aggression refers to behavior that is aimed at inflicting hurt and pain. In other words, the behavior that is intended to hurt another person (Atkinson and et al., 1996, quoted by Baraheni et al., 1996). Aggression is a reaction that aims to remove barriers and eliminate the threat. Aggressive is also a behavioral means to achieve a goal i.e. hurting others (Khalatbary, and Shirudi, and Mablaghi 2010). Aggressive reactions and dissatisfaction may occur when a person is restrained from a situation which makes him satisfied or the desideratum which he expects. Aggression may be physical such as hitting, kicking, biting, or verbal such as shouting, offending, or infringe upon the rights of others (Khadivi Zand, 2006). Aggression is announced as a universal problem among teenagers and is not specific to a particular culture and society (Connolly & et al., 2010). What have caused researchers to pay attention to the aggressive behavior are its adverse effects on interpersonal behavior and also its undesirable effects on people's internal states. Aggressive adolescents often do not have the power to control their behavior and they violate the customs and morals of the society in which they live (Sadeghi, Ahmadi and Abedi, 1980).
The causes and conditions of human aggression have been considered in new theories. In the social-cognitive information processing model (Crick & Dodge, 1994), defect of one or more components of this process is the fundamental cause for the formation of aggressive behavior. Another model which has developed tools in addition to expanding the theoretical area of aggression is Buss and Perry’s Multidimensional Aggression Questionnaire (1992). Buss and Perry Aggression discusses the physical aggression (PH), verbal aggression (VA), anger (A), and hostility (H) scales.
Aggression is one of the main problems in childhood and adolescence. Many researchers in this field are trying to develop strategies for aggressive behavior intervention (Devine, Gilligan, Miczek, Shaikh, & Pfaff 2004). On the other hand, researches shows that teenagers can learn to manage anger and aggression reduction. In this context, several treatments such as medication and psychological interventions have been studied (Nicholson, 2003).
In the past three decades, researchers and practitioners efforts had led to introducing the various effective treatments such as social skills training, use of simulants, and operant conditioning methods. Although operant conditioning such as the use of reinforcements and punishments have been effective in the short term, they have not had stable long-term effects (Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman, 2002). In addition, short-term reduction in the aggressive behavior is not
necessarily accompanied by an increase in social behavior or peer acceptance. More stable behavioral improvements and peer acceptance through interventions based on social skills training has led to the increasing use of these methods in the treatment of aggressive children and adolescents. The aforementioned interventions are based on the assumption that some negative behaviors such as aggression are due to the lack of skills which are required for the appropriate and effective conversations with peers (Pellegrini, 2003). One of the skills for the treatment based on social skills training is assertiveness skills training is (Sukhodolsky, Kassinove & Gonman, 2004). Adolescents enter their peer groups through important assertiveness skills such as cooperation, compromise, communication and reciprocal friendship and form the basis of their social life (Stuart & Sundeen, 1995). Assertiveness is the heart of interpersonal behavior and the key to human relations (Landazabal, 2001). It also plays an effective role in flourishing students’ talents and growth of their creativity (Hekmati, 2002). Assertiveness training program is designed to improve individuals’ assertive beliefs and behaviors so that they can feel good about themselves, gain “self-esteem”, and show their personal emotions and thoughts appropriately and, as a result be able to develop more effective interpersonal relationships with others (Alberti and Emmons, 2001).

Assertiveness training is a multi-content method based on the theory of behavior therapy which includes guidance, role playing, feedback, modeling, practice and review of learned behavior (Ashouri, Malayeri, Fadaei, 2008). Assertiveness skills training is a method in which appropriate social behaviors are trained to individuals for expressing their feelings, attitudes, aspirations, views and interests so that they can show their reflect their beliefs, emotions, and feelings easily and without fear. An appropriate assertiveness training program is able to change individuals’ vision towards themselves. It can strengthen their confidence and improve their interpersonal relationships (Lin et al., 2004).

Aggression is one of the main problems of adolescence period and is known as a serious and growing problem among teenagers. It is also regarded as a social problem and one of the main mental health issues (Bonica & et al 2003). Problems related to the aggressiveness are among the important reasons for adolescents demand for counseling and psychotherapy (Sukhodolsky & et al, 2004). Hence, it is very important to study the issue of aggression among adolescents. On the other hand, according to conducted researches, social skills including assertiveness are known as one of the most effective methods in dealing with aggression. An individual with assertiveness skills can establish intimate relationships with others and keep himself away from being abused by others. He can also express a wide range of needs and positive and negative thoughts without feeling guilty and anxious, or harm the rights of others. Assertiveness skills are quite necessary in individuals’ social and behavioral health and generally in having a successful performance in life. This issue is much considered in cultures in which collectivism is dominant over individualism and methods of upbringing are usually based on punishment methods. There is also less emphasis on acceptance and support of child’s autonomy in theses cultures (Karagözoglu, 2008, quoted by the Jalali and Pourahmadi, 2010).
According to the World Health Organization (WHO) reports, it is predicted that after the year 2010, few will be able to have a satisfactory life without acquiring social skills and assertiveness. The effect of training these skills on the success in life is possible through manipulating individuals’ psychosocial capacity. Thus, training these skills increases individuals’ mental-social capacity and enables them to turn to tolerance and adaptive behavior through deliberation and analysis of situations (Mangrulkar, 2001, quoting the glory and pour Ahmadi, 1389). The necessity of this research is also considerable from this perspective.

Effectiveness of assertiveness skills training on aggression has been approved in similar studies. Examples include Hargie, Saunders & Dickson (1995); Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman (2000); Vahidi, Fat’hi Azar, Hosseini Nasab, Moghadam and Kiani (2007); Babakhani (2011); Akbari and Sadeghi (2012); Nisi and Shahn Yeilagh (2001); Naderi, Pasha and Makvandi (2007); Ashouri, Torkaman Malayeri, and Fadaei (2008); Khalatbari, Shiroudi and Mablaghi (2010); Rashidzadeh, Fat’hi Azar and Hashemi Nosratabadi (2011); and Ashrafi and Monzaji (2013). The above studies have been conducted in different cultures. The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of assertiveness training on reducing aggression considering the effective cultural and domestic factors on the assertiveness and aggression. According to the aforementioned provisions, the present study was to evaluate the effect of assertiveness skills training on aggression in high school first grade female students. Accordingly, the hypotheses of the study include:

1. Assertiveness skills training is effective on the physical aggression in high school first grade female students.
2. Assertiveness skills training is effective on the verbal aggression in high school first grade female students.
3. Assertiveness skills training is effective on the anger rate in high school first grade female students.
4. Assertiveness skills training is effective on the hostility rate in high school first grade female students.

**Methodology**

The present study is an applied research in terms of purpose and it is a quasi-experimental research in terms of data collection method. It is of a pretest-posttest design with control group in which there is a treatment group and a control group. A pre-test was given to both groups before the experimental intervention, and a post-test was given to them at the end of the sessions. The population of the present study consisted of all high school first grade female students in Qorveh city who were enrolled in the academic years 2013-14. A total number of 510 people formed the population. For the purpose of sampling, first 226 individuals were randomly selected from the mentioned population (510 high school first grade female students in Qorveh city), based on Krejcie and Morgan table and the aggression test was performed on them. Then, 30 individuals who gained higher scores on the aggression variable when compared to others were considered
as subjects of the study. Thus, 30 high school first grade female students were selected through random sampling. Then, 15 individuals were placed in the treatment group and 15 individuals were placed in the control group randomly.

After samples selection and placing them in the control and treatment groups, they were given pre-tests. The treatment group members participated in 8 group sessions of 120 minutes per session for assertiveness skills training. Both groups were given a post-test after completing assertiveness training sessions. It is worth noting that during the study, the control group did not receive any experimental interventions or any training.

The study included an independent variable i.e. assertiveness skills training, and a dependent variable i.e. aggression. The theoretical framework of the independent variable, namely assertiveness skills training, is based upon the theory of behavioral therapy. Buss-Perry Aggression model (1992) is theoretical framework for the dependent variable. Therapy sessions which were arranged according to a predetermined program (a program that was prepared before the training sessions) using the theoretical and therapeutic foundations of behavioral therapy, were presented to the students in the treatment group in 8 sessions (one session per week for 120 minutes) by the researcher. Assertiveness skills training sessions are summarized in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Training content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Definition of assertive and non-assertive behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Presenting passive, aggressive, and assertive communication styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Role-playing communication, anger control and calm behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Importance of assertive behavior and its outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My rights (the right of self-assertion, freedom, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ability to say no, appropriate response to criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Special techniques for difficult situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Increasing assertiveness, summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (1992) was used for data collection in this study. This 29-item questionnaire measures four dimensions of physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. It also measures the overall level of aggression. This questionnaire has been designed for adolescents and young adults from 18 to 22 years old (Buss and Perry, 1992). Out of 29 questions, 5 questions measure the verbal aggression, 9 questions measure the physical aggression, 7 question measure the anger, and finally 8 questions measure the hostility. Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire 52 questions has been extracted from a 52-item source in which many of the items were selected from the hostile inventory using principal component factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (1992) has a very high internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales of physical
aggression, verbal, anger and hostility were respectively 85/0, 72/0, 83/0, 77/0, and the alpha coefficient for the total scores was 89/0. Retest correlations after a period of 9 weeks were 80/0, 76/0, 72/0, 72/0 and it was 80/0 for the total scores (Leonard, 2005). The results of the pilot implementation on the immigrant and non-immigrant students in high school first grade in Bojnoord city indicated that the alpha coefficients for the subscales of physical aggression, verbal, anger and hostility were, respectively, 73/0, 58/0, 76/0 and 64/0 and the alpha coefficient for the total scores was 70/0. Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire scores had a constant validity together. Buss and Perry have reported that the reliability of the test was 72/0 to 80/0 in the test-retest and the total score as for internal consistency of the four factors was 72/0 to 89/0 in regard to its validity (Langari, 1999). This questionnaire is scored based on a five-degree scale from “It doesn’t fully describe me” to “It fully describe it”. In the present study, the questionnaire reliability was equal to 77/0 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

The descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were used for the descriptive data analysis. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to evaluate the research hypotheses as for the inferential statistics. Before using ANCOVA, first its pre-suppositions were examined including normality, homogeneity of regression slopes, and equality of variances. In regard to the use of ANCOVA for evaluating the hypotheses of this study, it could be said that many researchers and resources have mentioned ANCOVA as the best statistical method for researches that have a pre-test. Thus, based on this statistical test, the researcher figures out the effect of pre-test scores based on the post-test scores and also consider the primary differences between the groups. As a result, the power of statistical test increases (Delavar, 2012). All analyses were done using SPSS software.

**Results**
The descriptive findings: In this section, mean and standard deviation of aggression in control and treatment group subjects in pre-test and post-test are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Index Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Treatment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/81</td>
<td>37/53</td>
<td>0/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/76</td>
<td>23/20</td>
<td>0/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/47</td>
<td>27/96</td>
<td>1/52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/23</td>
<td>36/83</td>
<td>0/88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/04</td>
<td>125/53</td>
<td>1/76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation of aggression in the pre-test
As can be seen in Table 2, the mean scores of aggression in control and treatment group subjects in all dimensions of aggression and also aggression total scores are close to each other in the pretest. The mean scores of aggression in control and treatment group subjects in all dimensions of aggression are not equal in the post-test. So that the mean scores of the treatment group in all dimensions, as well as aggression total score is less than control group mean.

Inferential results: In this section, the research hypotheses are examined. AVACOVA was used to evaluate the hypotheses of this study. Before ANACOVA, first its prerequisites and presuppositions are presented.

1. Normality: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has been used to examine this assumption. The results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the normality analysis are shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>Kolmogorov – Smirnov statistic value</th>
<th>Physical aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>0/240</td>
<td>1/030</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility</td>
<td>0/140</td>
<td>1/15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/178</td>
<td>1/10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0/125</td>
<td>1/17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation and comparison of significance levels in Table 4 show that is normally of aggression dimensions are of normal distribution (P>05/0).

2. Homogeneity of Variances: The assumption of homogeneity of variance test was used to assess Levine. The results are presented in Table 4.
As the results in Table 4, the F value is not significant for all dimensions of aggression (P>05/0). This insignificance signifies the homogeneity of variances. Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is confirmed in all variables.

3. Homogeneity of regression slopes: This assumption examines the lack of interaction between groups and pre-test scores. If there is no interaction, the regression slope is the same. The results are presented in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/255</td>
<td>1/35</td>
<td>Physical aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/384</td>
<td>0/781</td>
<td>Verbal aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/255</td>
<td>1/35</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0/380</td>
<td>0/796</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 5 shows the calculated F value for the dimensions of aggression is not significant (P>05/0). Therefore, the regression slope is the same and there is no interaction between groups and pre-test scores. After examining the prerequisites and presuppositions of covariance, and their verification, the research hypotheses are examined using ANACOVA.

Table 6. Results of ANACOVA of the effect of assertiveness skills training on aggression dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eta coefficient</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Mean of squares</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/84</td>
<td>0/000</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>/80 542</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>/80 542</td>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Physical aggression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After controlling the pre-test impact, the effect of assertiveness training on the post-test scores of the two treatment and control groups on the dimensions of aggression including physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility in high school first grade female students was investigated for the research hypotheses from 1 to 4. As the data in Table 6 show, there is a significant difference between the two groups mean in all dimensions of aggression. So, the research hypotheses, i.e. 1 to 4 are confirmed. This result means that assertiveness skills training reduce the aggression in high school first grade female students. Thus, the impact factor (0/84) of group differences in physical aggression scores at post-test, (0/80) in the verbal aggression score, (0/54) in the anger score, and (0/81) in the hostility score is related to assertiveness skills training.

**Discussion and conclusions**

The results of ANACOVA in examining the first hypothesis of the study revealed that physical aggression scores in post-test scores had a significant decrease when compared with pre-test. This decrease reflects the effectiveness of assertiveness training on subjects’ physical aggression. This outcome is consistent with the findings of studies by Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman (2000); Yaghoubi (1998) quoted by Rahimi & et al., (2006); Nisi & Shahni Yeilagh (2001); Naderi, Pasha and Makvandi (2007); Ashouri, Torkaman Malayeri, & Fadaei (2008); Rashidzadeh, Fat’hi Azar and Hashemi Nosratabadi (2011); Ashrafi and Monzaji (2013); Vahidi, Fat’hi Azar, Hosseini Nasab, Moghadam & Kiani (2007); Babakhani (2011); Akbari & Sadeghi (2012) is consistent.
As for the explanation of this finding, it can be declared that the aggressive behavior is the stubborn resistance for claiming the rights and expressing ideas and emotions in ways that are usually inappropriate and violate the rights of others. Considerable features of this style of communication include selfishness, indifference to the rights and needs of others, superiority complex, hurting others in order to prevent being hurt, and labeling others (Mohammad Khani, 2004). The main objective of physical aggression is hurting others (Mohammad Khani, 2006). On the other hand, aggressiveness means insisting on their rights and expressing their thoughts and feelings directly and honesty while respecting the rights of others. The main characteristics of assertive people include respecting the rights of others, recognizing and valuing the ideas, beliefs, and feelings of others, expressing feelings and opinions, accepting responsibility for their actions and decisions, considering their needs, having high self-confidence and a positive self-concept, not relying on others while responding to their support, and having a trustful and confident public behavior (Mohammad Khani, 2004).

Assertiveness training program improves individuals’ assertive beliefs and behaviors so that they can feel better about themselves and reflect their ideas and emotions appropriately, and consequently have more effective interpersonal relationships with others (Lanazable, 2001). In assertiveness training, individuals are taught how to behave assertively and courageously. They learn suitable techniques based on assertiveness to express their demands through trying to discover and define the problem, following the desired objectives (constantly along with assertive behavior), role-playing repetition, role revocation, and gradual and successive performing of desirable behaviors (Rahimi & et al., 2006). Therefore, it is expected that the treatment group who received assertiveness training have a better performance in interpersonal communications through creating and enriching assertiveness skills and do not show characteristics mentioned on the aggressive behavior. Accordingly, the effectiveness of assertiveness skills training on physical aggression in the treatment group members is not beyond expectations.

The results of ANACOVA in examining the second hypothesis of the study revealed that verbal aggression scores in post-test scores had a significant decrease when compared with pre-test. This decrease reflects the effectiveness of assertiveness training on subjects’ verbal aggression. This outcome is consistent with the findings of studies by Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman (2000); Yaghoubi (1998) quoted by Rahimi & et al., (2006); Nisi & Shahni Yeilagh (2001); Naderi, Pasha and Mavandi (2007); Ashouri, Torkaman Malayeri, & Fadaei (2008); Rashidzadeh, Fat’hi Azar and Hashemi Nosratabadi (2011); Ashrafi and Monzaji (2013); Vahidi, Fat’hi Azar, Hosseini Nasab, Moghadam & Kiani (2007); Babakhani (2011); Akbari & Sadeghi (2012).

As for the explanation of this finding, it can be declared that like physical aggression, the main objective of verbal aggression is hurting others (Mohammad Khani, 2006). In verbal aggression, the hurting and attacking factors are the words including reviling and insulting others (Frankon, 2009; Abolmaali & Mousavizadeh, 2012). The assertive behavior means expressing their thoughts and feelings directly and honesty without violating the rights of others (Mohammad Khani, 2004; Wolpe, 2013 quoted by Bahri, 2009).
Assertiveness training program can improve knowledge, beliefs and self-esteem, self-efficacy, public health, and assertiveness behaviors so that they can change their views and establish proper interpersonal relationships (Lin & et al., 2004). Assertiveness or assertiveness training is an educational approach which is specified by emphasis on gaining expression skills through practice. Assertiveness skills enable individuals to stand up for their beliefs and rights (Khalatbari, 2011). In the assertiveness training, the therapist uses behavioral exercises in order to allow individuals to express their opinions and thoughts confidently or do their own desired actions (Khalatbari & et al., 2010). Therefore, it is expected that individuals receiving assertiveness skills training take action for their rights, or behave appropriately in interpersonal interactions and also do not show aforementioned signs of verbal aggression. Thus, the effectiveness of assertiveness skills training on verbal aggression in the treatment group members is not beyond expectations.

The results of ANACOVA in examining the third hypothesis of the study showed that the anger rate in post-test had a significant decrease when compared with pre-test. This decrease indicates the effectiveness of assertiveness training on subjects’ anger rate. This outcome is consistent with the findings of studies by Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman (2000); Yaghoubi (1998) quoted by Rahimi & et al., (2006); Nisi & Shahni Yeilagh (2001); Naderi, Pasha and Makvandi (2007); Ashouri, Torkaman Malayeri, & Fadaei (2008); Rashizadeh, Fat’hi Azar and Hashemi Nosratabadi (2011); Ashrafi and Monzaji (2013); Vahidi, Fat’hi Azar, Hosseini Nasab, Moghadam & Kiani (2007); Babakhani (2011); Akbari & Sadeghi (2012).

As for the explanation of this finding, it can be said that anger prepares internal factors and conditions of the organism for physiological and emotional excitation and is responsible for the task of aggressive behavior preparation (Mohammad Khani, 2006). On the other hand, assertive behavior is identifying the interests, acting based upon them and claiming the right without violating the rights of others. An individual with such a characteristic performs successfully in everyday activities and does not satisfy their wants by anger (Mohammad Khani, 2004). Assertiveness skills training is a method in which appropriate social behaviors are trained to individuals for expressing their feelings, attitudes, aspirations, views and interests so that they can show their reflect their beliefs, emotions, and feelings easily and without fear (Sadeghi, Ahmadi & Abedi, 2000). Therefore, creating such skills and capabilities among students makes them to have a positive interpersonal performance and in case of getting angry, they can have a proper problem solving and more control. As a result, they will perform better. Thus, by creating such skills, students are expected to take more control of their anger and eventually decrease it.

The results of ANACOVA in examining the fourth hypothesis of the study showed that the hostility rate in post-test had a significant decrease when compared with pre-test. This decrease indicates the effectiveness of assertiveness training on subjects’ hostility rate. This outcome is in accordance with the findings of studies by Nangle, Erdley, Carpenter & Newman (2000); Yaghoubi (1998) quoted by Rahimi & et al., (2006); Nisi & Shahni Yeilagh (2001); Naderi, Pasha and Makvandi (2007); Ashouri, Torkaman Malayeri, & Fadaei (2008); Rashizadeh,
Fat’hi Azar and Hashemi Nosratabadi (2011); Ashrafi and Monzaji (2013); Vahidi, Fat’hi Azar, Hosseini Nasab, Moghadam & Kiani (2007); Babakhani (2011); Akbari & Sadeghi (2012).

As for the explanation of this finding, it can be declared that hostility causes feelings of prejudice, hatred and malice toward others (Mohammad Khani, 2006). On the other hand, an assertive individual is able to establish intimate relationships with others and keep himself away from being abused by others. He can also express a wide range of needs and positive and negative thoughts without feeling guilty and anxious, or harm the rights of others (Rahimi, Haghighi, Mehrabizadeh, Honarmand, & Bashlideh, 2006). Assertiveness training is a multi-content method based on the theory of behavior therapy which includes guidance, role playing, feedback, modeling, practice and review of learned behavior (Ashouri, Malayeri, Fadaei, 2008).

Assertiveness skills training is a method in which appropriate social behaviors are trained to individuals for expressing their feelings, attitudes, aspirations, views and interests so that they can show their reflect their beliefs, emotions, and feelings easily and without fear. An appropriate assertiveness training program is able to change individuals’ vision towards themselves. It can strengthen their confidence and improve their interpersonal relationships (Lin et al., 2004). Thus, it is expected that assertiveness skills training help students to reduce hostility. Thereupon, the effectiveness of assertiveness skills training on hostility reduction in the treatment group members is not beyond expectations.

Overall, findings of this study on the assertiveness skills training in reducing aggression dimensions in female students indicated that assertiveness skills training could decrease subjects’ mean scores on the dimensions of physical and verbal aggression, anger and hostility. The results of this research offers suggestions on the practical and research level. According to the findings, it is suggested that counselors and psychologists who offer counseling services in schools, and also counselors and psychologists in counseling centers in the education take advantage of this approach to reduce the aggression in high school students. Also, it is suggested that these skills be taught to students during the school year in the form of individual or group counseling sessions or as training workshops. On the theoretical level, it is proposed that similar researches on the subject of current research be conducted in other provinces for the purpose of comparing the results. Moreover, in further researches, it is suggested that subjects in the treatment and control groups participate in a follow-up meeting one month after taking the pre-test and take a test again in order to determine whether the treatment group have exceeded their training in the therapy sessions or not? Also, a stronger evaluation must be performed on the effect of the independent variable. It is proposed that subsequent researches examine the effects of assertiveness training on aggression reduction among male so that the possibility be provided for the comparison with respect to gender. The present study investigated the effect of assertiveness skills training on reducing aggression in high school first grade female students. Therefore, it is suggested that further researches be conducted on the impact of assertiveness skills training on reducing aggression in high school male and female students of others grades.
References


