

Original Article (Quantified)

The effectiveness of teaching based on choice theory in increasing students' attachment to school

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is the effectiveness of teaching based on choice theory in increasing school attachment in students. The method of the present study is experimental (pre-test-post-test design with control group) according to its objectives and hypotheses. The statistical population of the study includes junior high school students in District 1 of Ardabil city in 2024, selected by simple random sampling. 300 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the students and 40 of those who obtained low scores in this questionnaire were randomly replaced in two groups (20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group). Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire (Students' School Attachment (SBQ)). SPSS software and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) tests were used for data analysis. The results of the study showed that teaching based on choice theory has an effect on the dimensions of school attachment in students (attachment to the teacher, attachment to the school, attachment to school staff, participation in school, belief in school, and commitment to school). Also, from the results of the descriptive statistics of the variables, it can be concluded that teaching based on choice theory increases the dimensions of students' school attachment. As a result, it can be stated that teaching based on choice theory has a significant effect on improving the dimensions of increasing students' school attachment and can be considered as an effective educational program by psychologists and counselors in schools.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

After home, school is the most important place where children live and learn various social values and norms. Therefore, school plays an important role in children's socialization (Chen & Feng, 2019). At school, students get a good opportunity to communicate with teachers, assistants, principals, and peers that help them grow healthy (Damayanti et al., 2020). Schools are responsible for both teaching knowledge and skills and for creating social norms and values. Therefore, schools are faced with complex issues that have an undeniable impact on their functioning and are expected to provide students with a healthy and appropriate learning environment that can achieve both a desirable level of knowledge and skills and a desirable level of social norms and values (Sullivan et al., 2019). School attachment has a broad meaning and concept, and is used to describe the relationship between students and their school. The concept of school attachment includes the relationship between students' experiences with school, feeling of security in it, receiving respect from teachers, attachment to school, the level of participation and involvement in school, and commitment to school values and beliefs (Hashemi et al., 2016).

Bonyadi et al. (2024), showed that the choice theory educational package can have an impact on students' academic cohesion and continuity. Choice theory explains how we as humans choose to behave in order to achieve what we want. Choice theory, in a very simple definition, is about choices and how and why we make them. Choice theory is correct that we as humans choose to behave in order to achieve what we want. According to this theory, everything we do is a behavior and is motivated from within us (Mirhosseini et al., 2021).

School is the most important place where students spend their time after home and plays an important role in shaping the values, norms, and social opportunities of individuals. There is general agreement that schools are large social environments where learning occurs both inside and outside the classroom. Psychological interventions in the field of increasing student-school attachment seem essential; not only because it may increase student achievement, but also to reduce behavioral and psychological problems and improve the educational performance of schools. Therefore, the need for research on school attachment is increasingly clear. It seeks to answer this question: is teaching based on choice theory effective in increasing student attachment to school?

Theoretical Framework

School Attachment

School attachment refers to the quality of student communication with school, feeling cared for and perceived respect from the teacher, attachment to school, level of participation in school, and commitment to school values and beliefs (Oelsner et al., 2021).

Choice Theory

Choice theory is a psychology of internal control; it explains how and why we make the choices that determine our life course. Choice theory seeks to transform current conventional understanding into a new conventional understanding. By changing the qualitative and perceptual world of an individual, choice theory can disrupt short-term equilibrium and guide the individual towards choosing another effective behavior (Glasser, 1998).

Bonyadi et al. (2024) in a study titled Design and Investigation of the Effectiveness of Choice Theory Educational Package on the Academic Integrity of Male Students in Secondary School showed that educational packages based on Choice Theory were an effective tool for promoting the academic integrity of male secondary school students. Quantitative data indicated a statistically significant increase in academic performance and a decrease in

disruptive behavior among students. Qualitative data from focus group discussions supported these findings, and students reported a sense of personal responsibility and greater motivation to succeed in their academic endeavors. These findings have implications for educators and policymakers seeking to increase educational outcomes for male students by focusing on the principles of choice theory.

Gravandnia et al. (2024) in a study titled The Effectiveness of Choice Theory-Based Responsibility Education on Academic Retention and Quality of Learning Experiences of Experimental High School Students showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of academic retention and quality of learning experiences of experimental high school students; that is, choice theory-based responsibility education increases academic retention and quality of learning experiences. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the responsibility education package can have educational and practical implications for students in increasing academic retention and quality of learning experiences.

Research Methodology

The present research method is experimental (pre-test-post-test design with control group) according to its objectives and hypotheses. The statistical population of the study included first-year secondary school students in the first district of Ardabil city in 2024, selected by simple random sampling. 300 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the students, and 40 of them who scored low in this questionnaire were randomly assigned to two groups (20 in the experimental group and 20 in the control group). Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire (Students' School Bonding (SBQ)).

Research findings

SPSS software and multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) tests were used to analyze the data. The results of the study showed that teaching based on choice theory has an effect on the dimensions of school bonding in students (attachment to the teacher, attachment to the school, attachment to school staff, participation in school, belief in school, and commitment to school). Also, from the results of the descriptive statistics of the variables, it can be concluded that teaching based on choice theory increases the dimensions of students' school attachment. As a result, it can be stated that teaching based on choice theory has a significant effect on improving the dimensions of increasing students' school attachment and can be considered as an effective educational program by psychologists and counselors in schools.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the aim of the effectiveness of teaching based on choice theory in increasing school attachment in students. The results of this hypothesis are consistent with the findings of Gravand nia et al. (2024), Nemati et al. (2023), Manzari Tavakoli et al. (2022), Amiri et al. (2022), Charteris & Page (2021), Safari-Bidhendi et al. (2021), Dortaj et al. (2021), Mirhosseini et al. (2021), Arab Kalmari et al. (2020). In this regard, Safari-Bidhendi et al. (2021) showed that education based on choice theory has a significant effect on the academic resilience and mental vitality of secondary school students. In this way, this intervention has been able to increase academic resilience and mental vitality. The findings of the present study indicated that education based on choice theory, using techniques such as responsibility and responsible academic life, can be used as an efficient method to increase academic resilience and mental vitality of students.



Given that education based on teaching based on choice theory has an effect on increasing the bond with school in students, psychological intervention, including education based on teaching based on choice theory, is important to improve the bond with school in students (it is suggested that psychologists and experts in this field use the achievement of the present study).