

Assessing a School-Based Universal Prevention Program's Effectiveness and Applicability in Enhancing Autonomous Self-Esteem among LowerGrade Elementary Students

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Abstract

Self-esteem can be classified into two types: autonomous and heteronomous. Autonomous self-esteem is considered healthy and adaptive, while heteronomous self-esteem is considered unhealthy and nonadaptive. School-based universal programs that foster autonomous self-esteem and reduce heteronomous self-esteem have been developed (e.g., Yamasaki et al., 2022). This study sought to conduct a preliminary efficacy assessment of a newly developed similar program for lower-grade elementary school students using self-reported questionnaires and determine the program's smooth implementation. Participants in the study included 167 1st-grade and 190 2ndgrade students from five public elementary schools in Japan. The program was conducted once a week for four consecutive weeks, with each session lasting 45 minutes. Questionnaires were used to assess three aspects: autonomous self-esteem, school enjoyment, and students' perceptions of the program. The questionnaires were administered both before and after the program's implementation. There was no control group in this study. Observations of students during the program and feedback from program implementers revealed that the program was smoothly implemented in lower-grade children without encountering any issues. Additionally, the results indicated that although there were no significant differences in the scores across all measures between the pre- and post-intervention periods, students who initially had lower scores experienced significant improvements in both autonomous self-esteem and school enjoyment. Furthermore, the students demonstrated a positive understanding and enjoyment of the program, expressing a desire to participate again. In conclusion, this study suggests that the school-based universal program is both applicable to lower-grade students and effective in enhancing autonomous self-esteem.

Keywords: autonomous self-esteem, school-based universal program, lower-grade elementary school students, efficacy, applicability