

The Development of Game-based Group Therapy Program on Self-esteem and Peer relationship of Grandchildren Living with Rural Grandparents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the effects of self-esteem and peer relationship of rural grandchildren. The current research aims to perform game-based group therapy to those grandchildren in the lower grades of elementary school raised by grandparents in the rural area and identify the effect of the program on their self-esteem and peer relationship. The demographic characteristics and homogeneity between the experimental and the control groups were examined by nonparametric statistical methods, the Mann-Whitney U Test and the Wilcoxon Singed-Rank Test were conducted by SPSS. The results of this study are summarized as follows. A group program is effective in improving the self-esteem and peer relationship. Statistically significant differences were shown in experimental group and control group. This study has significance in terms that it proved the effects of a group program on the growth of grandchildren. This study proved the effects of a group program on the self-esteem and peer relationship of grandchildren living with rural grandparents, and the effects were confirmed by an experimental study.

Keywords: Group therapy program, Self-esteem, Peer relationship, Grandchildren, Grandparents, Rural area

INTRODUCTION

The obvious trend of smaller and nuclear families has continued to result in the decreased size and simplified structure of households, which might cause weakened caring and fostering in some families. Also, the enlarged value of individualism along with the diminished value of family might lead to the loosened family cohesion. Thus, family disorganization has increasingly changed modern society with the expanded permissiveness of divorce and the equal relation between genders

The grandparent-grandchildren family refers to the family in which grandparents raise grandchildren. In the past, such a type of family results from a child's becoming an orphan, but nowadays grandchildren would raise their grandchildren for many other reasons, even when their parents are alive(Joo et al., 2009). The increasing rate of divorce and double-income families might continue to lead to the increase in the number of grandparent-grandchild families in order for more stable raising of children(Calkins, 2010).

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Many grandchildren raised by grandparents would experience poverty, abuse and negligence before belong to the grandparent-grandchild family and often show serious behavioral problems resulting from sense of loss, fear, anxiety and anger(Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksma, 2010).

It was reported that more than a half of such type of families result from the parents' divorce and remarriage (53.2%), followed by the parents' runaway and disappearance(14.7%) and the parents' disease and death(11.4%), the parents' bankruptcy and unemployment(7.6%) and economic issues such as the parents' work for double-income(6.7%)(Jung , 2004).

The greatest difficult of the grandparent-grandchild family is 'financial difficulty' and 'the grandchildren's academic achievement and career. It should be natural to assume that such families' main difficulty would be financial problems and absence of parents.

Play is an intimate channel of communication that can help children express their emotions within a group and it is helpful even for those resistant to therapy (Hong , 2017). The game-based group play therapy can help children freely express their opinions within a group. The therapist would receive children as they are, let them understand that he or she fully sympathizes with their emotions, help them show their negative emotions such as anger and fear, and help them understand how they are different from others(Landreth, 1993).

The grandchildren raised by grandparents would experience trauma owing to the change in the family structure and, thus, definitely need immediate intervention. The ordinary need and desire for such children's social and emotional development should be touched and cared by practical intervention customized for those raised by grandparents living in the rural area(Jung, 2004). It is hopeful that the desirable peer relationship would provide them with role models and social support, which would have positive effect on their adaptation and growth. Then, the therapy programs would intervene with necessary social skills that can help them maintain desirable peer relationship and alleviate their emotional, behavioral and social problems.

Play is an intimate channel of communication that can help children express their emotions within a group and it is helpful even for those resistant to therapy(Landreth, 2012). The game-based group play therapy can help children freely express their opinions within a group. The therapist would receive children as they are, let them understand that he or she fully sympathizes with their emotions, help them show their negative emotions such as anger and fear, and help them understand how they are different from others(Honing & Wittmer, 1994). In short, this therapy program is an effective counseling method that can help children get away from self-centered behavior, learn how to self-control and enhance desirable adaptive behavior. And the therapy programs would intervene with necessary social skills that can help them maintain desirable peer relationship and alleviate their emotional, behavioral and social problems.

Thus, the current research aims to perform game-based group therapy to those grandchildren in the lower grades of elementary school raised by grandparents in the rural area and identify the effect of the program on their self-esteem and peer relationship.

METHODS

Subjects

The current research was conducted with a group of 12 first and second graders at S Elementary School who were raised by grandparents in the rural area in P City in Gyeonggi Province. The research started with a group of 14 children, however, 2 of them dropped for personal reasons and could not complete the therapy program. Thus, the finalized experimental group consisted of a group of 12 children, with the control group being the same size selected with the same criterion. In terms of gender, the two groups were slightly different: the experimental group with 6 male and female, in contrast to the control group with 5 male and 7 female.

Procedures

This research was conducted ever Wednesday from 11 am to 12 pm between January 9, 2019 and March 6, 2019. A total of 9 sessions, each being 60 minutes, was performed at the special care class of S Elementary School. A pretest and a posttest were given to the experimental group before and after the game-based group therapy program. 2 of the intial group of 14 subjects dropped during the therapy program for personal reasons. The control group were given the same tests before and after the program.

Tools

Self-esteem

To measure those grandchildren's self-esteem, this research adopted Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg(1965). In this scale, a higher score means a higher self-esteem. Cronbach's α was obtained at .79.

Peer relationship

Hudsons' tool was adopted to examine the subjects' peer relationship. In this scale also, a higher score means a higher level of peer relationship(Qi & Kaiser, 1994). Cronbach's α was obtained at .79.

Data processing and analysis

Since the number of cases in this study—12 in the experimental group and 12 in the control group—is hard to meet the assumption of regular distribution for measurements, a non-parametric statistical method, which requires no basic assumption of regular distribution, was used. SPSS version 20.0 for Windows was used for data analysis to verify the effects of the training program. Among nonparametric statistical methods, the Mann-Whitney U Test and the Wilcoxon Singed-Rank Test were conducted.

RESULTS

Homogeneity

Wilcoxsen signed rank test is more powerful than sign test when paired two group's difference verification.

$$Z = \frac{T - \frac{N(N+1)}{4}}{\sqrt{\frac{N(N+1)(2N+1)}{N-1}}} \quad (1)$$

Mann-Whitney U test is used because of simplification of test.

$$U_1 + U_2 = n_1 n_2 + n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_1(n_1+1)}{2} + \frac{n_2(n_2+1)}{2} - (\Sigma R_1 + \Sigma R_2) \quad (2)$$

$$n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_1(n_1+1)}{2} + \frac{n_2(n_2+1)}{2} = \Sigma R_1 + \Sigma R_2 = T \quad (3)$$

$$\text{so, } U_1 + U_2 = n_1 n_2 \quad (4)$$

Table 1. Homogeneity of self-esteem and peer relationship

Group	N	Mean rank	Sum of Order	Mann-Whitney U	z	p
Experimental	12	11.90	119.00	68.500	-203	.839
Control	12	9.10	91.00			

Peer relationship	Experimental	12	12.20	121.00	59.000	-.752	.452
	Control	12	8.80	89.00			

It was found, as shown in Table 1, that there existed no significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in their self-esteem, peer relationship. Thus, the homogeneity of the two groups was secured, since the members of the two groups showed a similar level of self-esteem and peer relationship before the therapy program proceeded.

Difference of Self-esteem

Table 2. Difference of self-esteem before and after program intervention

Experimental group (N=10)	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	z
negative rank ^b	0	.000	.000	
positive rank ^b	12	6.500	78.000	-3.07**
tie ^c	0			
total	12			

** p<.01

Table 2 shows that all the 12 subjects marked a plus value with no case being a minus value. It was also found that the pre- and the pos-tests of the peer relationship of the experimental group was statistically significant at the level of $p<.01$. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the game-based group play therapy exerted a positive impact on the self-esteem of the experimental group.

Difference of peer relationship by friend

Difference of peer relationship of rural grandchildren showed Table 3 was significantly different positive rank of peer relationship was 10. negative rank of peer relationship was 0. It was found that no case showed a minus value and all the 12 subjects marked a plus value. With the finding that the pre- and the pos-tests of the peer relationship of the experimental group was statistically significant at the level of $p<.01$. Thus, we can conclude that the game-based group play therapy exerted a positive impact on the peer relationship of the children belonging to the experimental group.

Table 3. Difference of peer relationship before and after program intervention by friend

Experimental group (N=10)	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	z
negative rank ^a	0	.000	.000	
Peer relationship positive rank ^b	10	5.500	55.000	-2.807**
tie ^c	0			
total	10			

** p<.01 a. posttest<pretest, b. posttest>pretest, c. posttest=pretest

Difference of peer relationship by teacher

Change between the two tests in the peer relationship of the experimental group, which was measured by teachers as shown in Table 4. To examine the difference, Wilcoxon signed rank Test was utilized.

Table 4. Difference of peer relationship before and after program intervention by teacher

Exp group(N=12)	N	mean rank	rank sum	z	p
peer relationship posttest - pretest	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00	
	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00	-3.059** .002
	tie ^c	0			
	total	12			
sociality posttest - pretest	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00	
	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00	-3.071** .002
	tie ^c	0			
	total	12			
leadership posttest - pretest	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00	
	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00	-3.064** .002
	tie ^c	0			
	total	12			
stability	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00	-3.068** .002

posttest - pretest	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00		
	tie ^c	0				
	total	12				
competence	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00		
	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00	-3.064**	.002
	tie ^c	0				
posttest - pretest	total	12				
	negative rank ^a	0	.00	.00		
	positive rank ^b	12	6.50	78.00	-3.064**	.002
cooperativeness	tie ^c	0				
	total	12				

** p<.01 a. posttest<pretest, b. posttest>pretest, c. pretest=posttest

As shown in Table 4, all the 12 subjects of the experimental group showed a positive change in their peer relationship, with no case being a minus value. It was found that the pretest and the posttest were statistically significant at the level of p<.01. Therefore, it can be concluded that the game-based group play therapy program exerted a positive influence on the children's peer relationship. As for the set of five factors of sociability, leadership, stability, competence and cooperativeness, the pretest and the posttest were statistically significant in all the five areas at the level of p<.01.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

First, in contrast to the school age children in the urban area, those grandchildren raised by grandparents in the rural area must have insufficient educational experiences and stimuli. Thus, such social and cultural differences should be taken into consideration in arranging strategic plans to support these children raised by grandparents.

Second, we propose that Wee Class, which contains a variety of programs for emotional care and development, be expanded to those grandchildren raised by grandparents, since such programs can be characterized by universality and constancy. Also, other customized programs should be developed in accordance with the development stages of these underprivileged children including children attending schools in rural communities, multicultural children, and grandchildren raised by grandparents.

Third, it seems necessary that help and support be also given to the grandparents as well as grandchildren raised by grandparents, and that such help should involve psychological and emotional support as well as financial support. The raising attitude of such grandparents should have a great effect on the emotional and psychological development of the grandchildren. Thus, these grandparents should be supported and educated in order to let them be able to support grandchildren and to understand the grandchildren's emotion and behavior.

Also, emotional divorce within a family should be minimized. Thus, programs and support should be arranged in order to help grandparents understand how to raise their grandchildren. Then, such support can strengthen the role of grandparents, which is raising their grandchildren in place of their parents. Related organizations including local welfare centers should cooperate with each other in order to provide proper service with such families and communities.

Finally, collaborative efforts among school teachers, social workers, and child psychology specialists and counselors should be made in order to understand the characteristics of the grandchildren raised by grandparents. Such cooperative understanding seems to be essential to develop, design and facilitate the programs for prevention and intervention that would eventually help and support their growth and development.

It should be admitted that the present research recognizes various limitation in terms of every aspect of research projects and, thus, it is not easy to generalize the findings to all such family types.

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