

Psychological Empowerment of Teachers in the Department of Education with an Emphasis on the Integration of Multi-Axial Pattern with Social Learning Theory

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the effectiveness of Psychological empowerment of teachers in education with an emphasis on the integration of multi-axial pattern with social learning theory. The statistical population were all primary school teachers of region 7 of Shiraz. Sampling was done with Clustering method. first, between 12 urban girls elementary school in area 7, six schools, and 12 rural girls elementary school in area 7 of Shiraz, six schools were randomly selected and questionnaires of psychological empowerment was conducted on their teachers, then between those which get the lower scores, in group of teachers in urban schools 20 person and in group of teachers in rural schools 20 person were selected and one of the group that have 20 persons selected randomly as a control group and the other group was selected as a experimental group. Experimental group received 8 sessions that every session was 1.5 hours education the results showed that vocational counseling based on the integration of two methods has a significant impact on psychological empowerment of women teachers and the results have been stable during the time.

Keywords: Psychological empowerment, multi axial pattern, social learning theory

1. Introduction

The Department of Education is a community organization whose main task is to raise children, adolescents, and young people and to prepare them for a happy life so that they could achieve a decent life in the future. Given the importance of education in the growth of the dimensions of human being's existence and providing the individual and social requirements, the organization has vastly expanded nowadays with multiple ministries and institutions involved in running its various affairs. Therefore, management of education has turned out to become one of the most important, effective and vital managements in any society. This type of management belongs to an organization whose objectives are humane and is administered by human beings. In one hand, this organization plays a role in the evolution of an immature human being to extraordinary, grown, evolving, balanced and perfect man and it also supplies human resources to other social institutions on the other. Therefore, if other organizations in the society fail to carry out their tasks and activities, or they fail to reach set targets, the group or organization involved would directly get the benefit. But if the Department of Education and its directors neglect the nature of their job, it's the society which will suffer the ethical, social, and economic result of their work, (Safi, 2010). Human resources have been recognized as the key element behind an organization's success or failure. Therefore, there is no doubt that the prosperity of any society lies in the promotion, development, and management of human resources. Employees of an organization are considered as its most valuable assets, so enterprises face the challenge of employing and preserving a skilled and efficient workforce (Dabbaghi, Taghva; Mina Shiri, Abdul Khalegh; 2013). Management scientists believe that organizations' successes are rooted in changes of human resource.

Managers could use employees' empowerment as a tool to this end. Empowerment is considered to be a modern method for the survival of the leading organizations in a competitive environment. The term empowerment has been widely common since 1980 and turned to become a prominent issue afterwards. It was widely propagated by theorists such as Conger and Kanungo, Thomas and Velthouse, Kent Blanchard, John P. Carlos and Randolph (Wood, 2004). Thomas and Velthouse consider psychological empowerment as a multi-dimensional concept and they have defined it as the process of increasing internal motivation for doing someone's responsibilities. The existence of a healthy and competent manpower is more sensitive especially in professions such as teaching that deals with human services, since it is considered to be one of the most important determinants of organizational success. As far as the nature of their job is concerned, teachers are faced by various types of stresses, but the problem becomes more complicated when their capabilities are not sufficient to satisfy the work environment's demand. Their incapability will eventually lead to dissatisfaction and their job burnout, therefore a necessary condition for achieving the goals of educational system would be the existence of a committed and capable manpower who enjoys special abilities and skills in his/her job. Therefore, the traditional chain of command between employees and managers should change in our country educational system by psychological empowerment of human resources as the main effective factor (Talaei et al., 2008, quoted from Khoshuei and Bahrami, 2014).

According to issues discussed it is clear that psychological empowerment of teachers will increase their job satisfaction and job satisfaction plays an important role in academic and behavioral performance of teachers. Academic and behavioral performance of teachers will also motivate students to attend school, do their homework and positively affect their learning. So in the current educational system it is necessary to pay attention to psychological characteristics of teachers as well as scientific issues. When it comes to changing job capabilities the role of work counseling should not be neglected in organizations. Therefore, it is better for education to take advantage of theories and patterns of career counseling to achieve psychological empowerment of teachers' goals. Naturally, in this context the use of local patterns appropriate to the culture and customs of the society enjoys a special place. Shafiabady's multi axial pattern is an indigenous vocational counseling pattern whose attitude to job selection is developmental. According to this pattern, advice and guidance in general and career counseling in particular take effect from the public opinion and the cultural foundations of the society. Based on this pattern, vocational choice is an objective and dynamic activity which occurs inside the lifestyle according to the type of self-concept, satisfying the needs, and the ability to make decisions. According to the principle of dynamics, in addition to searching for jobs people should strive to learn the job specifications and try continually to increase his/her knowledge and skills in order to succeed in the labor market. Targeted career choice also means that the human being wants to get rid of a feeling of dependence and humbleness and achieve a feeling of independence and priority and create and develop favorable social relations with the relatives. Self-concept could be defined as the imagination which people have about their capabilities. People who have a positive Self-concept live a successful life and on the other hand, negative self-concept leads to a sense of inferiority, helplessness, confusion and purposeless. As far as needs are concerned, satisfying the basic needs constitutes one of the effective factors in choosing a vocation and without any doubt one could consider how to satisfy the needs as an important factor in the transition from career selection growth path.

And finally the person should be placed in the path of growth to job career choice and select a job that is consistent with his/her self-concept and satisfy the needs. While choosing a job which is considered to be the most important decision of people in life, if he/she did not learn the process of decision-making well, and he/she could not make a timely decision based on social, economic, political and personal factors, his/her life would be in turmoil (Shafiabady, 2012). Therefore, it appears that this model could affect psychological empowerment due to the needs and the required targeted dynamics of human life and the emphasis on strengthening positive self-concept. Krumboltz is another theory which due to its fundamental concepts seems to be able to cause psychological empowerment. John Krumboltz who is considered to be one of the learning theorists, looks at job growth from the perspective of behavior treasures a person has learned, and from his view career choice and job growth has four major determinants including a genetic predisposition, environmental conditions and events, instrumental learning and getting familiar with the skills of task-based approach. It is also believed that job counselors should help people to learn skills of new fields to counter past fields by the past time's interests. And given the changing life conditions, one of the goals behind job counseling is to create job satisfaction in the work environment with the changes in life (Michel and Krumboltz, 1996 cited by Swanson & Foad, translated by Mousavi 2002).

In the Social Learning Theory, it is believed that humans are intelligent problem solvers who do their best to bring the environment under their control rather than being passively controlled by the environment. According to this model the objectives of counseling include facilitating the learning of skills, interests, wills and personal qualities that enable every client to be satisfied in the workplace and life (Abedi, 2002 quoted by Rezai, Sudani and Attari, 2013). But given that it seems each one the mentioned methods could help increase psychological empowerment due to their fundamental concepts and this is confirmed by some of the following researches, it could be concluded that possibly the combination of these two methods could increase the effectiveness of the training package in the short-term, because it is not possible to engage teachers in long-term training sessions due to their job responsibilities. Also the time is limited for practice and repetition in the short-term, therefore it is possible to be successful in the short-term if a comprehensive training method is applied. And although each of these two methods is considered as a strong and effective method alone due to their fundamental axes but they help complement each other as well. For example, when a person turns to self-concept if one of these models are used individually the person should try to examine his/her own conception about doing the job responsibilities or try to consider his/her natural capabilities to perform the job responsibility. But when the two methods are combined the person would both consider and boost his/her natural capabilities and his/her conception of the capabilities. Therefore, the issue would certainly help increase and promote the strength of self-concept with the issue holding true to other concepts of the two methods. But in spite of the importance of the job counseling methods, particularly the two mentioned ones for promoting psychological empowerment, checking the history of the researches shows this research is concerned with a new psychological empowerment and never done before.

For example, Meyerson & Kline (2008) called on 197 students of a university in Canada in a research entitled "Psychological and environmental empowerment" to respond to questionnaires of empowerment and job performance. The study was aimed at dividing empowerment to two aspects of psychological and environmental empowerment and their impact on job performance. The aspects of empowerment had a different impact on job performance. Environmental empowerment left a more powerful impact on job performance and the dimensions of psychological empowerment can predict the job performance and it could enhance job performance too. Tsung et al. (2009) carried out a study entitled "Psychological empowerment as the modern technology of work environment" on Taiwan's industrial firms. They tried to identify the impact of job redesign on two variations of empowerment and organizational commitment. They concluded that a job redesign enjoyed a positive and direct relationship with organizational commitment and strengthens psychological empowerment. Joo & Shim (2010) conducted a research entitled "Psychological empowerment and organizational commitment" on the state sector staff in South Korea. They concluded that organizations need to psychologically empower their employees since global competitions and rapid progresses of technology have led to the creation of hard and complex jobs. They also stressed the positive impact of psychological empowerment and the organizational learnable culture on organizational commitment. Baird and Wang (2010) conducted a study entitled "Assessment of the scale of employees' empowerment at two Australian manufacturing sectors", which was carried out among 250 manufacturing units in Sydney, 130 people were selected as sample. Structural equation model was used to analyze the data. The model showed that empowerment had a significant impact on job performance and factors such as training and receiving could also affect empowerment significantly and the factors could increase job performance.

The results of studies carried out by Sayyadi, Shafiabady & Karami (2010), Shafiabady & Fekri (2012), Arjmand (2012), Asadi (2012), Roshanzamir (2014), Hariri (2014) respectively show that Shafiabady's multi-axial pattern has affected psychological empowerment, entrepreneurial behavior of both male and female students. The results of studies conducted by Zare'ei (2014) and Fatahian (2014) respectively indicate that the Krumboltz theory had influenced the staff job performance and self-respect of primary schools' students. But a combination of these two theories has not been used except in the study carried out by Pouralifefat (2014), upon which the impact of an integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz has been evaluated on employed students' endurance and their vocational satisfaction. Therefore, given the various concepts embedded in the two models and the impact an integration of both appears to have and since the effectiveness of the combination of these two methods on psychological empowerment and also on the concerned community which is female teachers of primary schools has not been used, therefore the study aims to remove research shortfalls in this context to respond this question that whether an integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz social learning theory has a significant impact on teachers' psychological empowerment?

2. Research Method

The method of by which the study was carried out is a quasi-experimental pre-test – post-test type along with the control group. The statistical population of the study consisted of all female teachers of primary schools in the 7th district of the city of Shiraz. Sampling was carried out on a clustering method. Accordingly, 6 schools were randomly selected from among 12 schools of the 7th district's urban areas and 6 others were also randomly picked up from among 12 schools of the 7th district's rural region. The psychological empowerment questionnaire was administered on the teachers. Then a 20-person group of teachers was selected from among urban schools' teachers with lower scores and a 20-person group was selected from among rural schools' teachers whose scores were lower too. They were then randomly replaced in witness and experimental groups. (The reason why urban and rural schools were selected and they were replaced in witness and experimental groups was that the witness and experimental groups do not see each other during training sessions). The standard psychological empowerment questionnaire of Sayyadi, Shafiabady and Karami (2010) has been used in the study, which had been made based on joint theoretical principles of Shafiabady multi-axial pattern and Thomas & Velthouse cognitive model. The questions of the questionnaire consisted of 7 options including strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, moderate, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree and these options receive scores 7,6,5,4,3,2,1 from the left side respectively. The sum of the scores a person receives in all questions will be his/her final score. Thus the higher the individual's score, the higher would be his/her psychological empowerment. The minimum score in the questionnaire was of 55 and a maximum of 385 and the cut-off point was set at 220. The admissibility of the content of the test was confirmed by the experts. To determine its reliability, the questionnaire was individually performed on 48 counselors of the city of Shirvan. The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) obtained from the first run was 0.97. With an interval of three weeks, a retest was administered on the same group from which 39 questionnaires were collected in the first phase of the retest.

Correlation between the first and second run (retest) was 0.72. In the preliminary phase, 20 questions whose correlation was less than 0.25 were eliminated. The modified questionnaire (including 64 questions) was performed on 290 consultants in the cities of Mashhad, Ghoochan, Sanandaj and Rasht. Again, its reliability (internal consistency - Cronach's alpha) was calculated at 0.93 and 9 questions whose correlation was less than 0.3 were eliminated. Also, after doing a factor analysis it was determined that psychological empowerment is a single factor issue. Then the final questionnaire consisting of 55 questions was prepared. The reliability of the questionnaire was again calculated by Roshanzamir in 2014 in a study entitled "Effectiveness of Shafiabady multi-axis model on psychological empowerment of technical and professional trainers and the amount of 0.79 was obtained. In this study too, the researcher used Cronbach's alpha calculation method to estimate the reliability and a reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. The experimental group received 8 sessions of training lasting 1.5 hours based on a combination of Shafiabady's multi-axial pattern with Krumboltz 's social learning theory and no intervention was done in the witness group. Post-test was conducted and follow-up was done one month later. To analyze the data in this study, mean descriptive statistics and standard deviation and inferential statistics' analysis of covariance were used to check the effectiveness of the method and the t-dependent was used to assess the stability of the effectiveness.

3. Findings

As seen in Table 1, the null hypothesis of F Levine is confirmed i.e. the variances of the two groups in the scores are equal. Therefore, there is a precondition for the implementation of analysis of covariance test, and this test can be used to analyze the data. First hypothesis: the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz's social learning theory has a significant impact on teachers' psychological empowerment. As shown in Table 2, the significant level for (P=0/001) is smaller than the error 0/05. Therefore, one could say the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with the Krumboltz's social learning theory has affected psychological empowerment of teachers. The scale of the impact is 0.67, which indicates that the observed differences are due to differences between experimental and witness groups, which is caused by the intervention of the independent variable. The statistical power is 1 too. In other words, there is no risk of Type I error. The scale of the controlled effect of pre-test to post-test scores of experimental and control groups is 48 percent, which is lower than the scale of the effect of the independent variable (67%). The second hypothesis: the effectiveness of Shafiabady's multi-axial pattern combination with the Krumboltz's social learning theory on psychological empowerment of teachers is stable over time. As shown in Table 3 the calculated t is (t=1/83, df=19), which has not become significant based on a significant level (sig = 0/083) and the null hypothesis is confirmed by research.

In other words, the difference between the observed means between the two stages of the test (follow-up and post-test) has been accidental and the time variable could not affect the effectiveness of the independent variable (the implementation of the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz's social learning theory) and the effectiveness has been stable over time.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

First hypothesis: the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with the Krumboltz's social learning has a significant impact on teachers' psychological empowerment. According to the summary of calculations of the effects on between the examinees concerning the psychological empowerment's score and taking into account the margin of error (individual differences) a significant level achieved for ($P = 0/001$) is smaller than $0/05$. As a result it could be concluded that the implementation of the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with the Krumboltz's social learning has influenced teachers' psychological empowerment. The results of the study are consistent with the findings of Sayyadi, Shafiabady and Karami (2010) about compiling the program of psychological empowerment based on Shafiabady's multi axial pattern and comparing its effectiveness with cognitive model of Thomas and Velthouse between the consultants of high schools in Rasht, Shafiabady and Fekri (2013) about comparing the effectiveness of multi axial pattern with the Krumboltz's social learning theory on psychological empowerment of education advisers, Arjmand (2013) concerning the psychological empowerment of female workers of Ahura pharmaceutical factory in the city of Shiraz based on Shafiabady's multi axial pattern, Asadi (2013) about reviewing the effectiveness of career counseling based on Shafiabady's multi axial pattern on job empowerment among nurses working in the intensive care unit of Shohadaye Tajrish hospital in Tehran, and Pouralifasfat (2014) on the effectiveness of the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz's social learning on the resiliency and job satisfaction of employed students of Marvdasht.

In explaining the reason behind effectiveness, one should cite the basic concepts of both theories. Shafiabady's multi axial pattern includes 5 axis of dynamism, purposefulness, self-concept, needs and decision-making and the Krumboltz's social learning theory consists of 4 axis including talent, events and environmental conditions, learning experiences and skills to do work. The dynamism in the Shafiabady's multi axial pattern means mobility, creativity and happiness and a person who tries to be creative in his/her work environment and continually strives to increase his/her knowledge of the job he/she is doing in order not to stagnate, he/she achieves no job successes and feels positive about the job. Since empowerment means an increase of the people's intrinsic motivation to their responsibilities, therefore the individual feels a higher level of psychological empowerment following the dynamism. In addition, self-concept as one of the other axes of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern. The individual's inception of his/her capabilities and talent in Krumboltz's social learning theory means his/her natural capabilities. Therefore, when we helped people to achieve a concrete understanding of their natural capabilities through integrating the concept of Krumboltz's social learning theory talent with the self-imagination of multi axial pattern and an emphasis on the concept of talent, we changed the people's view of themselves and helped them to have a better conception of themselves i.e. they should have a positive self-imagination And this will increase a feeling of psychological empowerment and having a better feeling about the responsibilities. In addition to the above mentioned cases, when people are able to meet their needs through their work, it would be another factor which promotes motivation and a better feeling to performing the job responsibilities. Needs are considered as another axis of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern including physical, social-economic and mental-psychological. The needs are prioritized in people differently but what is clear is that the human being should provide for the needs in order to continue with life and survive. Skills are required to provide for the needs in the work environment. Skills are one of the concepts of Krumboltz's social learning theory. Therefore, when people were firstly helped to identify their job requirements through integrating the axis of the needs of multi-axis model with the skills of Krumboltz's social learning theory, they were aided to identify the skills required to achieve the needs and take steps to receive training to obtain the skills. Then they were helped to achieve a feeling of empowerment because they believed that they could meet their needs. In addition to providing for the needs, the human being wants to get free from inferiority and dependence and to reach superiority and independence, which is the same concept of purposefulness of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern. To get to this phase, human being needs to have a desirable interaction with the environment and society. Therefore, when we helped people by integrating the axis of purposefulness of multi-axis model with the environmental conditions of Krumboltz's social learning theory to empower them to resolve and affect the events and incidents in their job environment whatever unexpected, we helped their feeling of empowerment.

Ansbaker and Ansbaker (1965 quoted by Shafiabady, 2012) believe that objectives specified policy behavior, so when a person identifies their career goals he/she could also specify how to behave and encounter the environmental uncertainties related to his/her job. And through controlling and having an impact on them, the person would have a sense of security, effectiveness, usefulness and excellence and this would cause the person to feel motivated in pursuing his/her job responsibilities and have a better attitude toward his/her job. On the other hand, in the course of doing their jobs sometimes happens that a person is faced with a problem that should be resolved. And he/she needs to make a decision and choose a solution to the problem. Decision-making as another concept of multi-axis model is defined as a creative and purposeful action in order to solve a problem, which also requires the use of previous experiences. The experiences are one of the aspects of Krumboltz's social learning theory, which means using the past learning. Therefore, when we helped the people through the combination of these two axes for them to use past experiences of others when deciding to resolve problems, they feel psychologically empowered and get a positive incentive to do that job. The second hypothesis: the effect of integrating Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz's social learning theory on psychological empowerment of teachers is stable over time. Based on the calculated t the study's null hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, the difference between the observed means in between the two phases of the test (follow-up and post-test) is random, and the time variable could not affect the effectiveness of the independent variable (performing the integration of multi-axis models with Krumboltz's social learning theory) and this effectiveness has been stable over time. These findings are consistent with the results of the researches conducted by Roshanzamir (2014) on the stability of the effectiveness of S Shafiabady's multi axial pattern on psychological empowerment of vocational and professional trainers, Assadi (2013) on the stability of the effectiveness of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern on work empowerment of nurses, Shafiabady and Fekri (2013) on the stability of the effectiveness of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern and Krumboltz's social learning theory on psychological empowerment of counselors and Sayyadi, Shafiabady and Karami (2010) entitled the comparison of the effectiveness of multi-axis model with Thomas and Vulthouse empowerment which has measured the sustainability and it is significant.

The reason why the effectiveness of the combination of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with the Krumboltz's social learning theory on psychological empowerment of teachers is sustainable could be attributed to the nature of learning left by the integration of axes and fundamental concepts of the two theories (Five fundamental axes of Safiabady's multi axial pattern and four main concepts of Krumboltz's social learning theory). Learning is the relatively stable changes in behavior, which is not a product of growth. Therefore, sustainability could be described as one of the features of learning and learned behaviors would not rapidly disappear. The person who has obtained dynamism and tried to be creative and receive up-to-date knowledge and information about his job responsibilities would never stagnate again. He will seek more successes to get promoted in his job and he will feel a more positive feeling to his job. Since empowerment means the ability to increase the intrinsic motivation of man towards duties, therefore the individual's empowerment rises as a result of this dynamism and he/she launch an effort to achieve short-term and long-term goals, so such a person won't leave this kind of behavior soon. Moreover, the man's curiosity and the need to be aware of new and up-to-date information prevent him/her from returning to a passive life without any previous agenda.

Unless, he/she is faced with failure and do not know how to fight the defeat. A person who recognized his talents and thus a positive self-imagination has been reinforced inside him/her, he/she will achieve the sense of empowerment and satisfaction and won't lose it immediately afterward because their talents are innate capabilities which they had had from the beginning. The only reason why the self-imagination has been negative is that the individual did not know talents well or did not pay attention to them so far. Therefore this self-conception won't disappear easily since a concrete self-recognition has been made. The individual topics who has recognized his/her needs based on the needs and skills training, and learned some skills in order to provide them he/she cannot change rapidly because individual skills means the expertise to do the job responsibilities which are obtained through repetition and practice, so this type of learning is very stable and it will go even more internal with time and practice. It is like driving skills, when an individual learn the skills he/she first requires more carefulness to use them, but over time the individual would be driving easily without thinking about how he/she is driving. That is, the skill is increasingly reinforced by repetition and practice, unless a person does not practice a newly learned skill until a snuff occurs in the behavior. But as per the designed training package, people were called upon to practice the skills permanently after they learned them. Thus the skills do not change and the person won't return to his/her first position.

At the end an individual who has taken a step to increase learning experiences and bolster the power of decision-making in various situations through discussions in the group and among the colleagues, he/she would get a positive attitude towards his/her job duties and achieved psychological empowerment. The individual won't easily forget those experiences. Because having a ability to make correct decisions is a skill like those skills which were explained about earlier. When the person learns skills of decision-making and increased his/her experiences, he/she cannot return to the earlier behavior, but in any case will try to take advantage of the skills learned so it is natural that the results are sustainable. Some of the most important limitations of this study include: the need for caution in generalizing the results to other groups given that it was conducted on a group of primary school teachers in the 7th district of the city of Shiraz. And lack of the ability to control all effective variables on the lives of the examinees given the semi-experimental nature of research. Based on the results of this research which showed the effectiveness of the integration of Shafiabady's multi axial pattern with Krumboltz's social learning social learning theory on psychological empowerment of primary school teachers and the sustainability of the results over time, it is recommended that the respected education authorities use this consolidated model in workshops, in-service training and career counseling sessions to increase primary school teachers' psychological empowerment and deploy the trainings from the beginning of employing teachers to increase their psychological empowerment.

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Table 1: Levin's F test Results to Check the Equality of Variances

Psychological empowerment	Index
2/95	The F Levin scale
1	First degree of freedom
38	Second degree of freedom
0/09	Level of Significance

Table 2: Summary of the Calculation of between the Examinees' Impacts Concerning the Psychological Empowerment score

Statistical power	Eta	Level of significance	F-test statistics	Mean Square	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Source of changes	Dependent variable
0/99	0/48	0/001	28/23	544/4	1	544/4	Pre-test impact	Psychological empowerment
1	0/67	0/001	63/45	1223/61	1	1223/61	Post-test impact	
				19/28	30	578/47	Error	
					39	2834/4	The corrected total	

Table 3: Results of Dependent Groups' T-Tests to Evaluate the Difference in Mean Follow-up and Post-Test Psychological Empowerment in the Experimental Group

Level of significance	Degree of freedom	Scale of t	Mean differences	Standard deviation	mean	number		
0/083	19	1/83	0/30	7/57	225/5	20	Follow-up	Psychological empowerment
				7/49	224/75	20	Post-test	