The Effectiveness of a counseling Program in the Development of Social Skills for Children with Autism in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to develop some social skills among a sample of autistic children in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia through the implementation of a counselling program, where the researcher used the experimental design methodology. The study sample of autistic children consisted of (22) children who were divided into two groups: the experimental group (11) children: (6) males, (5) females), and the control group (11) children: (6) males, (5) females. The researcher developed the Social Skills Scale for Autistic Children and a counselling program for the development of social skills for autistic children. The psychometric properties of the study tools were tested on a pilot study. The results of the study were as follows:

1. The experimental and control groups were tested to ensure homogeneity before the implementation of the program. It was found that there were no significant differences between the two groups on all dimensions of the Social Skills Scale.

2. There were statistically significant differences between the mean rank scores of experimental group and those of the control group, on post-test of Social Skills Scale for Autistic Children (cooperation, verbal communication and non-verbal, play, and flexibility of response) in favour of the experimental group.

3. There were statistically significant differences in the mean rank scores of the experimental group between the pre-test and post-test of Social Skills Scale of Autistic Children (cooperation, and communication verbal and nonverbal communication, play, and flexibility of response) in favour of the post test.

4. There were no significant differences in the mean rank scores of the control group between the pre-test and post of Social Skills Scale (cooperation, communication, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, play, and flexibility of response).

5. There were no significant differences in the mean rank scores of the experimental group between the post-test and the follow- up test of the Social Skills Scale of Autistic Children (cooperation, communication verbal communication, non-verbal communication, play, and flexibility of response).

In the light of the findings of the study, the researcher suggested some recommendations.