

# **The Comparison of Educational Intervention Effect Using BASNEF and Classic Models on Improving Assertion Skill Level**

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## **Abstract**

**Background:** To compare the effectiveness of BASNEF and Classic educational models to improve the assertion skill level of high school boy students.

**Methods:** The 60 high school male students from Shiraz City, Fars Province Iran, were participated in this study. They were randomly divided in two groups (groups A and B). The group A attended in designed educational planning based on BASNEF model and group B attended in classic educational program. The both groups had participated in six session educational activity (2 hours each session) during the four weeks. The data collected using questionnaire before and after one-month intervention.

**Results:** The mean score of knowledge, attitude, enabling factors, social norms, and Rathus Assertion Test were not significant statistically between two groups before and after intervention. However, the mean scores of all mentioned variables in group A and only knowledge and assertion variables in group B changed significantly after intervention. In addition, the comparison of the mean scores and the means of scores difference of all variables changed significantly between two groups after intervention.

**Discussion:** Performing BASNEF educational model, in accordance with its main parts (knowledge, attitude, social norms, and enabling factors) is more effective than performing classic educational model to improve high school boy students' assertion.

**Keywords:** *BASNEF Model, Assertion Skills, High School, Adolescence*

## **Introduction**

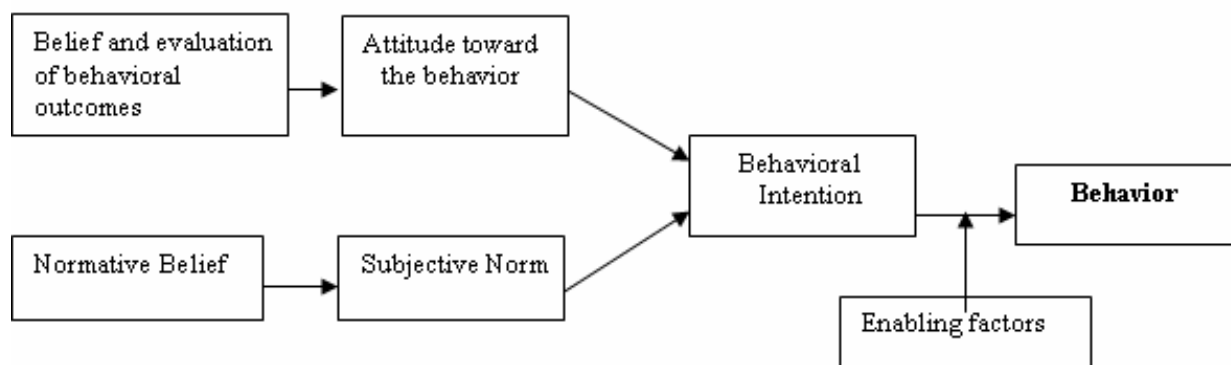
Adolescence is a critical period of life that physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes are happen (1). The most important changes occur in social relations aspect that the individuals gradually achieves abstract thinking and revolutionizes into a social maturity, as well as in maturation and deep changes in their attitudes and life style. This mainly happens during high school period ages in the adolescents. Therefore, they must be trained to practice and experience social skills for promoting social dimension of their personality. Social skills are a series and necessary for bases of behavior, related to each other,

and relevant to situation being able to be learned and controlled by the individual (2) as the foundation of successful relationships with others by learning and practicing them (3). Furthermore, one of the main parts of social skills is assertion skill, i.e. acting in individual own best interests by expressing his/her thoughts and feelings directly and honestly. In other word, Assertion skill is to achieve owns rights, stating ones beliefs, and emotions directly, suitably and honestly, so that enable the individual to stand on his own appropriate feeling. Essentially, assertiveness involves standing up for own rights when someone else is about to infringe on

them. To be assertive is to speak out openly rather than your punches. Assertive behavior includes no such intention to inflict harm, but it does involve defending your right (4). Therefore, this skill leads to improve individual's self-respect and self-esteem (5), they need to learn how to practice the skill efficiently through a planned assertion skill training program. It is notable that the key to achieving assertive behavior is to practice it and work toward gradual improvement.

Unfortunately, the high school teachers have different opinions about the importance of assertion skills or its influence for success. Yet, assertions skills are not perceived as critical role for the students' success (6) as well as purely situation-specific approach to assertion training and research (7). In addition, the upper elementary educators place significantly less emphasis on assertion skills than on cooperation and self-control skills (8). Therefore, Assertion skill training is one of the social skills trainings, which enable the individuals to react, and state his/her own beliefs suitably in different social situation. In this study, the assertion skill is perceived as a healthy behavior that the students need to be educated for modifying and improving their assertion behavior. On the other hand, there are various models to train assertion skills (9). Classic model is one of them in which the focus is on training verbal and non-verbal behaviors on the basis of desensitization and use of cognitive reconstruction so that the individual knows the identity of these skill, being edited and performs it practically (4, 10). Therefore, it makes the background to

use assertion skill in his daily life. However, there are some educational models in health education field, which can be used to get more effectiveness in assertion training. The value of health education programs depends on designing appropriate the educational framework program based on the use of theories and models. In principle, support that is more theoretical and basic health need leads to accomplish more effectiveness of the programs (11). The Beliefs, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Enabling Factors (BASNEF) Model (Fig. 1) is one of the health education models (12, 13), used to train assertion in addition to classic model in this study. Based on BASNEF Model main parts are the knowledge and attitude of the cases about assertion skill and its importance must be brought about as well as important groups of people interfering in forming cases assertion behaviors participate in training them and the cases perceiving how this skill is important for their social norms. Finally, intention to conduct assertive behaviors establishes in the cases and enabling factors, which enable them to learn and practice assertion leads to take assertive behaviors more than before. Since, adolescents are affected by different social groups in taking their behaviors and using factors enabling them to learn and practice this skill is very significant (1), BASNEF Model chosen as a conceptual frame work of the educational program to achieve the aim of this study on the basis of model's principles and the results compared with using Classic model to improve students' assertion skills.



**Fig. 1:** BASNEF Model. After Hubley J., 1988

## Materials and Methods

Sixty high school male students from the Shiraz City, Fars Province Iran, participated in this quasi-experimental study in the year 2005. The high school was organized in two shift (morning and afternoon) work staff system. The students were selected from second grade that one class from the morning shift (mathematic major) and another from afternoon shift (experimental sciences major). These two classes randomly were divided in two groups. One group assigned in the BASNEF educational model program (BASNEF group) and the other class in the classic educational program (Classic group). The BASNEF group trained based on the BASNEF model and classic group trained based on the routinely school setting educational program without applying any particular educational model or theory.

A total of 85 question items were include, among which four were demographics, 15 were about assertive definition, causes, and benefits knowledge, 13 assertion apply attitude, 7 social norms influence behave assertiveness, 16 enabling factors facilitate acting as assertive person and 30 Rathus Assertion Test for measuring level of students assertion skills (14) (Appendix A). The knowledge questions were in True and Fuels format, while the attitude scale consisted of four Likert type (very agree, agree, disagree, very disagree) items. The social norm and

enabling factors questions were in Yes and No format, while the Rathus Assertion Test consisted of six Likert type (very agree, agree, less agree, less disagree, disagree, very disagree) items.

Internal consistency of the questionnaire was calculated by using test retest (1-week after) techniques among similar the subjects. The overall reliability coefficient (correlation coefficient) for the questionnaire was 0.87.

The questionnaire were applied the prior of intervention and recollected one month later after intervention. Also, the questionnaires completed by the cases in the both groups. The educational intervention planning (see Appendix B, C and D) consisted a series of six sessions of 2 hour class room setting during the 4 weeks in every group. The educational goal and objective designed based on educational BASNEF models and classic teaching session.

During educational sessions, educational methods such as role playing, group discussion, and question and answer were used among BASNEF group. Moreover, one training session arranged separately, in turn, for parents and teachers of students in BASNEF group as a main part of students' social norms in the program according to the BASNEF model.

T-paired test and *t*-independent test used to compare, the means score in every group, between the two groups, before and after inter-

vention for knowledge, attitude, enabling factors, and assertion skill. In addition, McNemar test used to compare social norms in every group before and after intervention.

### Results

There was no any significant relationship between the variables such as knowledge, attitude, social norms, enabling factors and assertion) and demographic characteristics such as family size, birth turn, parent's educational levels and social skills training history among the groups before and after intervention.

The results also demonstrated that mean scores of all BASNEF components like knowledge, attitude, social norms, enabling factors, and assertiveness level were not different significantly between two groups before the intervention. Whereas, the mean scores of all the variables in BASNEF group changed significantly after the educational intervention, but the only scores of knowledge and assertion skill changed significantly in Classic group (Table 1, 2). On the other hand, *t*-independent test showed that the mean scores of all the variables changed significantly between two groups after educational intervention.

**Table 1:** Comparing the mean knowledge, attitude, enabling factors, and assertion skill scores before and after intervention among the groups

Studied	Groups	Before intervention		After intervention		T- Paired test result
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Knowledge	NASNEF	9.7	2.1	13.6	1.1	P<0.000
	Classic	10.9	1.7	12	2.4	P<0.004
	T-test result	P=0.18		P<0.000		
Attitude	NASNEF	38.9	3.7	44.8	4.1	P<0.000
	Classic	38.4	3.6	39.6	4	P<0.081
	T-test result	P=0.579		P<0.000		
Enabling factors	NASNEF	5.1	2	13.1	2.6	P<0.001
	Classic	5.4	1.4	5.9	1.5	P<0.138
	T-test result	P=0.5		P<0.000		
Assertion Skill	NASNEF	121	18.6	151	19.3	P<0.000
	Classic	121	23.1	132	20.9	P<0.006
	T-test result	P=0.884		P<0.000		

**Table 2:** Comparing of frequency and percentages of social norms before and after intervention among the groups

Groups	Interfering Norms in learning and practicing assertion skill	Before intervention		After intervention		McNemar test results
		n	%	n	%	
BASNEF group	Family members	12	40	28	93.3	$P < 0.001$
	Friends and classmates	10	33.3	24	80	$P < 0.001$
	High school officials (Teachers etc )	8	26.6	14	46.6	$P = 0.045$
Classic group	Family members	13	43.3	17	56.6	$P = 0.14$
	<i>Friends &amp; classmates</i>	11	36.6	15	50	$P = 0.15$
	High school officials (Teachers etc)	9	30	11	36.7	$P = 0.29$

**Discussion**

Since there was no any significant relationship between demographic characteristics and BASNEF components before and after intervention between both groups, it is indicated that the variables do not have any interference in promoting assertion of the students. Significant changes in knowledge of both groups after intervention indicated that educational sessions were affected to improve the students' assertion knowledge. At the same time, the results implied that promoting knowledge was significantly highly in BASNEF group, which is shown more qualification of BASNEF model to increase knowledge rather than classic group. In other words, using social

norms pressure and enabling factors may interfere for improving knowledge in BASNEF group rather than Classic group. This consisted with other studies by using BASNEF model improved the effectiveness of this model to promote knowledge. (15, 16) The attitude of behavioral intention for assertion taking behaviors of students in BASNEF group promoted significantly after intervention, whereas in Group Classic did not consequently. The promotion of the BASNEF group attitude might be related to use students' subjective norms and enabling factors interference in the intervention program. In other words, did not considering subjective norms and enabling factors in training program of classic group may lead

unchanged students' attitude significantly after intervention. This evidence consisted with other study that the enabling factors affect the attitude changes (15). As expected, the enabling factors, which are one of the main components of the BASNEF educational model in training BASNEF group cases, were significant statistically improved after intervention in contrast with classic group cases. These factors provide information, skill-training, counseling opportunity or any other aspect, which let individual's behavioral intention lead to take assertive behavior action. In contrast, the factors were not interfered in classic group education during this study and subsequently it did not expect to change significantly may explain that why the changes did not occur among this group. Use of interpersonal skills as a kind of enabling factor got significantly after intervention and promoted the cases' action in some study conducted by using BASNEF model (16). Also, use of enabling factors have improved mothers preventive behaviors two times more than control group as well as lead to improve preventive behavior subsequently (17). All these studies demonstrated that enabling factors have a unique role in changing behavioral intention into taking aimed behavior based on BASNEF model planning and implementing educational program.

Social norms or subjective norms had the important role to affect BASNEF group cases assertion behavior. The social norms divided into three agents in the study (family, friends and classmates, and school officials like teachers). These groups of agents have critical role on facilitating students to take assertive behaviors (2). Whereas, there was no significant differences in classic group students' social norms before and after intervention related to taking assertive behaviors. Since, classic group cases trained by Classic Model, therefore, it is not expected to find any significant change in so-

cial norms interference among this group. Some studies determined social norms in their studied before intervention in order to recognizing the influence target group's subjective norm for designing educational action and training the subjects without evaluating the level of effectiveness after intervention or their interference to take the aimed behaviors was not measured after intervention. (15-17). In this study, the subjective norms interference measured after the intervention in order to determine the program intervention and applying the role of the subjective norm on the students' behavior.

Assertion skill level improvement was the main goal of this study, so that two different models used to do so. As the results showed, despite both models were significantly effective to promote assertion level of the students in both groups; but the promotion was highly significant among BASNEF group rather than classic group after the intervention (18). This difference may be related to performed models. While classic model aims to increase knowledge and attitude of the cases and practices assertive behavior during educational sessions, BASNEF model intends to improve knowledge and attitude and makes opportunity to participate social norms during training course. When the behavioral intention created, the enabling factors let the cases to take the assertive behaviors more effective (19). Since enabling factors affect attitude editing because of previous studies (15, 17), when they are not used in Classic group, attitude editing was not indicated efficiently.

In this matter, the studies showed that the classic assertion education was effective for improving university students' assertion (20-22) as well as high school students (23). However, there has been no any study performed by BASNEF model to improve assertion skill yet.

In conclusion, this study supporting using educational program based on BASNEF model (knowledge, attitude, social norms, enabling factors) to improve high school students assertion behavioral skills rather than using classic model (knowledge, attitude).

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#### Appendix A

##### Rathus Assertion Test Items (14)

I am as assertive as other people.

When I am asked to do something, I try to find its reason.

I do not accept others opinions very easily.

When I go to restaurant and do not like their meal, I state my dissatisfaction to restaurant manager.

I do not hesitate to accept a party invitation.

I do not upset myself emotionally for preventing disturbance of other people feelings.

I can give something back, which I buy even if I know the shopkeeper gets angry.

Making decision is not difficult for me.

I do not feel to be oppressed by others.

I feel well when it comes to being acquainted to new people.

It is not difficult for me to speak in front of a great deal of people.

If a shopkeeper tries to sell me something, it is easy for me to say "No".

I do not often hesitate to call up governmental organizations.

It is not difficult for me to say "No" against the other's requests.

I often prefer to find job by writing a letter rather than being interviewed.

If close friends and relatives bother me, I let them know my feelings about it.

I can keep cool and calm while discussing with others.



If a celebrated lecturer states something, which I do not believe it, I can say my ideas to audiences.

I usually bargain to buy something without shame feeling.

If I have any success, I let other people know it.

I express my feelings with others intimately.

If someone says something behind me, I try to talk to him about it as soon as possible.

I do not let the others to make me believe an unwanted opinion.

I prefer to state my emotions rather than suppress them.

If I have something to say, I express it.

I do not feel ashamed when people admire me.

If someone chats with each other in a theater or cinema, I ask them politely to be silent and talk in another place.

I let no one to pass over me in row.

I express my opinions in spite of the other's oppositions.

I seldom feel hopelessness in front of the others' request and opposition

#### Appendix B

The main cognitive objective items planned for the teaching sessions.

Knowledge items:

Assertion is the person ability to state his own beliefs, feelings and his individual rights.

Assertive behavior causes to decrease tension and anxiety.

There are passive, aggressive and assertive behaviors in individuals relations with other ones.

Assertion skill is a social one, which is possible to learn.

Assertion is not instinctive and is attainable by all ones.

Assertive Skills items:

Spending enough time to respond the other individuals.

Expressing one's own requests.

Changing one's own ideas about any subject.

Stating one's own experience and feelings to others.

Owning positive attitude towards oneself in every situation.

Not being shamed while making any mistake.

Logical approach towards unfair behaviors and criticisms.

Expressing one's considerable successes.

Asking the others assistance.

Saying "NO" and not feeling ashamed.

#### Appendix C

The main objective outlines of each session education for Group A (BASNEF Model) and Group B (Classic Education)

The main outlines sessions in BASNEF group: using BASNEF Model planning (belief, attitude, behavioral intention, and enabling factors)

First session: Be acquainted the students with social skills training, definition of these skills and the importance of their practicing.

Second session: Be acquainted the students with assertion social skills and its practice benefits.

Third session: Educating the identity of assertive, passive and aggressive behaviors and their differences with each other and also the outcomes of taking everyone one of them.

Forth session: Be acquainted the students with the different social groups influence over learning and practicing assertion social skill.

Fifth session: practical rehearsal of social skills related to assertion.

Sixth session: practical rehearsal of social skills related to assertion and summarizing the students views about the held sessions.

The main outlines sessions for students' BASNEF group families and their school officials: using BASNEF Model planning (subjective norm)

Educational session for students' families: Be acquainted the families with the main aims of this educational course and asking them to get involved in students training.

Educational session for high school officials (teachers, principal and...): describing the main aims of holding this educational course for school officials and asking them to involve and cooperate with.

The main outlines sessions for Classic group: using Classic Model planning

First session: Be acquainted the students with social skills training course, definition of these skills and their practicing benefits.

Second session: Be acquainted the students with assertion skill definition and its practicing benefits.

Third session: Be acquainted the students with passive & aggressive behaviors identity and their differences with assertion behavior.

Forth session: Practical rehearsal of aggressive behavior and compare it with assertive behavior practice results.

Fifth session: practical rehearsal of passive behavior and compare it with assertive behavior practice results.

Sixth session: Be acquainted the students with social factors influencing over practicing assertion skill and summarizing educational course results.

#### Appendix D

The main objectives related to BASNEF components items planed for the teaching sessions.

##### Belief and evaluations of behavioral outcomes items:

The main reason of not being assertive is the fear of expressing the individual beliefs and feelings in the presence of others.

Being assertive doesn't cause student to be supposed as a selfish guy by the others.

Assertion considered as frankness in our society.

My family members can affect my assertion practicing.

I believe that classmates and friends can affect my assertion practicing.

I think that my low assertive leads to anxiety during communication with others.

In student's opinion, assertion is not to get his rights at any price.

Student thinks that existing financial and motivational facilities do not affect assertive behavior.

##### Attitude toward the behavior items:

I can reject politely others' requests, which are difficult to do for me.  
I can state easily his belief, feelings and perceptions with others.  
I can take eye contact with others during my feeling and beliefs expression.  
I can keep cool during stating my opposite beliefs with other people.  
My voice tone and body posture, demonstrate assertion while I speaks with others.

Normative Belief and Social norms Items:

My parents help and encourage me to learn and practice assertion skill.  
My brothers and sisters help and encourage me to learn and practice assertion skill.  
My school officials help and encourage me to learn and practice assertion skill.  
My relatives help and encourage me to learn and practice assertion skill.  
The mass media which I have access, help and encourage me to learn and practice assertion skill.

Enabling Factors Item:

Social skills training course materials are handed to the students by the educator.  
Social skills training course materials are handed to the students' families by the educator.  
The educator gave the books and other references to the students for learning skill that is more assertive.  
Educational materials are provided based on the students' age and educational level.  
Educational media are used based on student age and educational level.  
The educator answers to unclear points of any educational session.  
The educator lets students discussed about, if he attend late or be absent in any session.  
The educator lets student know his telephone numbers to call him during training course.  
The educator demonstrates how to use assertion social skill practically.  
The educator answers to students' questions in consulting room.  
School officials let students to participate in the educational assertion skill course.  
The school's counselor answers to any ambiguities questions about assertion skill.  
The educator creates suitable conditions to rehearse trained skills at intervals of the sessions.  
The teachers assist students to learn and practice assertion skill.  
Family members help students to learn and practice assertion skill.  
Student's friends and classmates encourage them to learn and practice assertion skill.