Clinical Trial Protocol
Iranian Registry of Clinical Trials

09 Nov 2026

Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Training on Improving Social Skills and Reducing Anxiety in Language Learners Aged 14 to 18 Years

Protocol summary

Study aim
To investigate the effectiveness of an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based (ACT) educational intervention on improving social skills and reducing social anxiety in 14-18-year-old language learners

Design
A randomized controlled clinical trial with parallel groups, not blinded, without placebo, on 30 participants. A random number table was used to allocate participants to the two groups.

Settings and conduct
Language learners aged 14 to 18 years attending English language institutes in Choghadak city who are screened during the study will be enrolled if eligible and randomly allocated to intervention and control groups using a random number table. This study will not be blinded, meaning participants, the intervention provider, and the data analyst will be aware of group assignment.

Participants/Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Inclusion criteria: Age 14–18 years; enrolled in English language institutes; score below cut-off on Matson Social Skills Questionnaire; score above mean on Connor Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN); written informed consent from participant and parent. Exclusion criteria: Severe psychiatric disorder requiring urgent/pharmacological intervention; prior ACT training; concurrent participation in other psychological interventions.

Intervention groups
Experimental group: will receive an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based educational intervention in 8 weekly 90-minute group sessions. Control group: will receive no intervention

Main outcome variables
Social skills; social anxiety

General information

Reason for update
Acronym
IRCT registration information
IRCT registration number: **IRCT20260817070700N1**
Registration date: **2026-10-10, 1405/07/18**
Registration timing: **registered_while_recruiting**

Last update: **2026-10-10, 1405/07/18**
Update count: **0**

Registration date
2026-10-10, 1405/07/18

Registrant information
Name
Mohsen jamali
Name of organization / entity
Country
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
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+98 77 3342 5234
Email address
mohsenjamali2070@gmail.com

Recruitment status
Recruitment complete
Funding source

Expected recruitment start date
2026-10-02, 1405/07/10
Expected recruitment end date
2026-10-12, 1405/07/20
Actual recruitment start date
empty
Actual recruitment end date
empty
Trial completion date
empty

Scientific title
Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Training on Improving Social Skills and Reducing Anxiety in Language Learners Aged 14 to 18 Years

Public title
Effect of Acceptance and Commitment Training on Social Skills and Anxiety

Purpose
Education/Guidance

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:
Age between 14 and 18 years Currently enrolled in English language institutes in Choghadak city Score below the cutoff point on the Matson Social Skills Questionnaire Score above the mean on the Connor Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN) Not concurrently participating in other counseling or psychological programs

Exclusion criteria:
Known diagnosis of severe psychiatric disorders requiring immediate or pharmacological intervention. History of participation in Acceptance and Commitment Training courses. Diagnosed intellectual or cognitive impairment that prevents understanding of the questionnaire items.

Age
From **14 years** old to **18 years** old

Gender
Both

Phase
N/A

Groups that have been masked
No information

Sample size
Target sample size: **30**

Randomization (investigator's opinion)
Randomized

Randomization description
Randomization method: Simple randomization using a random number table. Randomization unit: Individual (each participant will be randomized separately). Stratified randomization will not be used. Randomization tool: Random Number Table. Sequence generation: After final confirmation of 30 eligible participants, each participant will be assigned a numeric code from 1 to 30. With eyes closed, a starting point will be randomly selected in the random number table, and numbers will be read sequentially from left to right. Two-digit numbers between 01 and 30 will be extracted in the order they appear, excluding repeated numbers or numbers outside this range, until a complete sequence of 30 numbers is obtained. The first fifteen numbers of this sequence will be assigned to the intervention group, and the next fifteen numbers will be assigned to the control group. Allocation concealment: The allocation result for each participant will be placed in sealed, opaque, numbered envelopes by a person outside the study execution team, and will not be opened until the participant enters the study, by the principal investigator.

Blinding (investigator's opinion)
Not blinded

Blinding description

Placebo
Not used

Assignment
Parallel

Other design features
Participants will be selected from among volunteers using convenience sampling, as random sampling from the entire target population is not feasible; however, the allocation of the selected participants to the intervention and control groups will be carried out randomly.

Secondary Ids

empty

Ethics committees

1

Ethics committee

Name of ethics committee
Ethics Committee of Bushehr University of Medical Sciences

Street address
Regional Secretariat of Research Ethics Committee, Research Vice-Chancellery, First Floor, Medical Sciences Campus, Salman Farsi St., Bahmani, Bushehr

City
Bushehr

Province
Boushehr

Postal code
7518759577

Approval date
2026-07-29, 1405/05/07

Ethics committee reference number
IR.BPUMS.REC.1405.164

Health conditions studied

1

Description of health condition studied
Social Anxiety

ICD-10 code
F40.1

ICD-10 code description
Social phobias

2

Description of health condition studied
Social Skills Deficit

ICD-10 code
Z73.4

ICD-10 code description
Inadequate social skills, not elsewhere classified

Primary outcomes

1

Description
Mean score of social skills in language learners
Timepoint
Measurement of social skills before the start of the intervention (pretest) and immediately after the completion of the eighth intervention session (posttest)
Method of measurement
Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (MESSY) by Matson, Rotatori, and Helsel

2

Description
Mean score of social anxiety in language learners
Timepoint
Measurement of social anxiety before the start of the intervention (pretest) and immediately after the completion of the eighth intervention session (posttest)
Method of measurement
Social Phobia Inventory by Connor, Davidson, Churchill, Sherwood, Foa, and Weisler

Secondary outcomes

empty

Intervention groups

1

Description
Intervention group: Participants in this group will receive an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based educational intervention over 8 weekly 90-minute group sessions, based on the standard protocol of Hayes, Strosahl, and Wilson (1999). The content of each session is as follows:Session 1: Introduction of members, explanation of group rules and framework, initial assessment of participants' social and anxiety-related difficulties, and general introduction to the acceptance and commitment approach.Session 2: Training on the concept of experiential avoidance, examination of the ineffectiveness of common emotional control strategies, and introduction of the concept of Creative Hopelessness through experiential exercises.Session 3: Training in emotional acceptance as an alternative to emotional control, with experiential exercises for accepting unpleasant feelings related to social situations.Session 4: Cognitive defusion training, introducing techniques such as "thought labeling" and "word repetition" to reduce belief in negative automatic thoughts related to social interactions.Session 5: Training in contact with the present moment through mindfulness and conscious breathing exercises, focusing on application in anxiety-provoking social situations.Session 6: Self-as-Context training through the "chessboard metaphor" exercise and distinguishing between the conceptualized self and the observing self.Session 7: Clarification of personal values in the domains of social relationships and academics, and distinguishing between values and goals.Session 8: Committed action training, development of a practical behavioral plan for improving social skills, overall summary, and administration of the posttest.Sessions will be conducted by the trained researcher under the direct supervision of the academic supervisor. Protocol adherence will be monitored through a session content checklist.
Category
Behavior

2

Description
Control group: Participants in this group will not receive any educational or psychological intervention during the study period and will only complete the pretest and posttest questionnaires.
Category
N/A

Recruitment centers

1

Recruitment center
Name of recruitment center
Safir-e Danesh Language Institute
Full name of responsible person
Fatemeh Mirki
Street address
Safir-e Danesh Language Institute, No. 1, Yas 9 Alley, Next to Bank Melli, Choghadak, Bushehr
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Sponsors / Funding sources

1

Sponsor
Name of organization / entity
Islamic Azad University
Full name of responsible person
Rouhollah Ershadi
Street address
Islamic Azad University, Bushehr Province and Branch, Velayat Building, Beginning of Shahid Raeisali Delvari Blvd., Shahrdari Sq., Bushehr
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rouhallahershadi@iau.ac.ir

Grant name

Grant code / Reference number

Is the source of funding the same sponsor organization/entity?

Yes

Title of funding source

Islamic Azad University

Proportion provided by this source

100

Public or private sector

Public

Domestic or foreign origin

Domestic

Category of foreign source of funding

empty

Country of origin

Type of organization providing the funding

Academic

Person responsible for general inquiries

Contact

Name of organization / entity

Islamic Azad University

Full name of responsible person

Mohsen Jamali

Position

MA Student in General Psychology

Latest degree

Bachelor

Other areas of specialty/work

Psychology

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No. 1, Shahid Bakeri Alley, Mellat St., Choghadak, Bushehr

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Person responsible for scientific inquiries

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Person responsible for updating data

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Sharing plan

Deidentified Individual Participant Data Set (IPD)

No - There is not a plan to make this available

Justification/reason for indecision/not sharing IPD

Given the ethical commitment made to participants regarding the full confidentiality of their information, and considering the small sample size (n=30), which increases the risk of indirect re-identification even after removal of identifying details, it has been decided not to publish the raw individual participant data.

Study Protocol

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Statistical Analysis Plan

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Informed Consent Form

Yes - There is a plan to make this available

Clinical Study Report

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Analytic Code

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Data Dictionary

Undecided - It is not yet known if there will be a plan to make this available

Title and more details about the data/document

1. The complete study protocol, including methodology, measurement instruments, and the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-based educational intervention protocol, will be made available. 2. The complete statistical analysis plan, including descriptive statistics and inferential methods (multivariate analysis of covariance), will be made available. 3. The informed consent form used for participants and, where applicable, their parents, will be made available.

When the data will become available and for how long

The access period will begin 6 months after publication of the study results in a scientific journal and will continue for 3 years.

To whom data/document is available

Researchers affiliated with academic and scientific institutions with a research-oriented, non-commercial purpose.

Under which criteria data/document could be used

The data and documents may only be used for research, educational, and meta-analysis purposes. Commercial use is not permitted, and the applicant must clearly state the purpose of their research.

From where data/document is obtainable

Applicants may contact the principal investigator, Mohsen Jamali, via email at mohsenjamali2070@gmail.com, or the academic supervisor, Dr. Mohammad Aksir, at m.aksir@iaubushehr.ac.ir.

What processes are involved for a request to access data/document

The applicant submits a written request via email, stating the research purpose. The request will be reviewed and responded to within one month. Upon approval, the requested documents will be sent to the applicant within two weeks of approval.

Comments