

Abstract O3 Wellbeing Solutions & Almira Labs
2010

Title: Mobile Psycho-technology: Voice Messages by Mobile Phone for Emotional Regulation in Spanish Teenagers.

Keywords: Psycho-technology, mobile-health, emotional regulation, teenagers.

Purpose: The objectives of this pilot study were: 1) to assess whether voice messages sent by mobile phones could improve emotional regulation (depression, anxiety, helplessness, irritability and impaired thoughts) in Spanish teenagers; 2) to appraise their efficacy to increase academic records and 3) to evaluate the user experience of this system.

Methods: A total of 29 adolescents participated in a Health and Performance program at the school lasting for three months. Participants were randomly assigned to two different groups: experimental (N=15, mean age: 14.27 SD: 1.16) and control-waiting list (N=14, mean age: 13.79 SD: .8). Students filled out the Educational and clinical questionnaire for anxiety and depression (CECAD), (Lozano, García-Cueto y Lozano, 2007) pre-post intervention. Psychologists designed 24 one-minute voice messages with instructions to self-regulate emotions, to train attention and for better time management. A technology platform for telecom services named VoiceCast, was used to send voice messages simultaneously to multiple recipients by phone. The experimental group received 24 messages on their mobile phones. Academic records were collected at the second and the third quarter of the 2010 school year to analyze the messages' effect on them.

Results:

Both experimental and control group were equivalent in age ($p > .05$), total score of CECAD and its subscales of depression, anxiety, helplessness, irritability and impaired thoughts ($p > .05$) and school scores ($p > .05$). Experimental group yielded a reduction in the CECAD total score ($p < .05$), depression symptoms ($p < .01$) and impaired thoughts ($p < .01$). There was a positive correlation between the quantity of messages heard ($p < .01$) and CECAD total score; and negative with depression symptoms ($p < .01$) and impaired thoughts ($p < .01$). Moreover, experimental group increased their academic scores pre-post intervention ($p < .05$) in comparison to the control group. Finally, 93,3% of the students reported that the voice messages received were useful to feel better, to increase attention and to improve their time management.

Conclusions:

According to the results in this study, we can conclude that voice messages delivering instructions to better self-regulate attention, emotions and time are efficient and have positive effects on increasing academic performance. Thus, it is necessary to continue investigating how mobile psycho-technology interventions can help teenagers at school.