



## The effectiveness of a group counseling program based on zumba exercises in enhancing emotional well-being among a sample of adolescent female students

*La eficacia de un programa de asesoramiento grupal basado en ejercicios de zumba para mejorar el bienestar emocional en una muestra de estudiantes adolescentes*

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of a group-counseling program based on Zumba exercises in enhancing the emotional well-being among a sample of adolescent female students.

**Method:** Thirty teenagers from the Greek Catholic Secondary Girls' School, affiliated with the Directorate of Education in the First Zarqa District participated in the study. They volunteered to participate in the developmental counseling program, their ages ranging between 13 and 16 years old, with an average age of 14.5 years. The program was implemented for the participants in the experimental group over the course of 10 sessions, with each session lasting 60 minutes, conducted twice a week.

**Results:** statistical analysis indicated statistically significant differences in posttest scores between the experimental and control groups, favoring the experimental group in the total score of the Sterling Emotional Well-being Scale for Children and Adolescents, as well as subscales. Furthermore, the results indicated no differences in the scores of the experimental group on the posttest and follow up test after one month, indicating the maintenance of emotional well-being levels among the experimental group members one month after the counseling program ended.

**Conclusion:** This suggested that the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises used in this study contributed to enhancing emotional well-being among the sample of adolescent female students in the city of Zarqa, in addition to the persistent effect of the program after one-month follow-up. **Recommendation:** the implementation of Zumba-based programs with adolescent female students to help enhance their emotional well-being.

### Keyword

Group counseling; zumba exercises; emotional well-being; adolescent girls.

### Resumen

**Introducción:** Este estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar la efectividad de un programa de asesoramiento grupal basado en ejercicios de Zumba para mejorar el bienestar emocional entre una muestra de estudiantes adolescentes.

**Método:** Treinta adolescentes de la Escuela Secundaria Católica Griega para Niñas, afiliada a la Dirección de Educación en el Primer Distrito de Zarqa, participaron en el estudio. Se ofrecieron como voluntarias para participar en el programa de asesoramiento para el desarrollo, con edades comprendidas entre los 13 y los 16 años, con una edad promedio de 14,5 años. El programa se implementó para los participantes del grupo experimental en el transcurso de 10 sesiones, con una duración de 60 minutos cada una, realizadas dos veces por semana.

**Resultados:** el análisis estadístico indicó diferencias estadísticamente significativas en las puntuaciones posteriores a la prueba entre los grupos experimental y de control, a favor del grupo experimental en la puntuación total de la Escala de Bienestar Emocional de Sterling para Niños y Adolescentes, así como en las subescalas. Además, los resultados no indicaron diferencias en las puntuaciones del grupo experimental en la prueba posterior y la prueba de seguimiento después de un mes, lo que indica el mantenimiento de los niveles de bienestar emocional entre los miembros del grupo experimental un mes después de que terminó el programa de asesoramiento.

**Conclusión:** Esto sugirió que el programa de asesoramiento grupal basado en ejercicios de Zumba utilizado en este estudio contribuyó a mejorar el bienestar emocional entre la muestra de estudiantes adolescentes en la ciudad de Zarqa, además del efecto persistente del programa después de un mes de seguimiento. **Recomendación:** la implementación de programas basados en Zumba con estudiantes adolescentes para ayudar a mejorar su bienestar emocional.

### Palabras clave

Terapia grupal; ejercicios de zumba; bienestar emocional; adolescentes.

## Introduction

There is an increasing need for psychological counseling services during adolescence, due to the many changes the adolescents go through during this period in all areas of their development. However, most often many adolescents resist participation in these services. Hence, the need emerged for counseling interventions that are compatible with the nature of growth and that require less verbal interaction, in addition to creating therapeutic methods that help adolescents express themselves more than traditional treatment. This is based on the idea that employing some methods and techniques of personal creativity in counseling programs facilitates the growth process and increases awareness among the counsees (clients) (Al-Shareefain & Bahar, 2020).

The most common and widespread non-verbal expressive activities are music, dancing, rhythmic movements, and visual expression. Through expressive counseling, we can formulate perceptions, thoughts, emotions, etc. through most physical activities. Many types of the organized physical activities emerged, and widely spread, as such activities are characterized by the absence of specific or complex rules; in addition to its use of the entertaining music as an alternative of the traditional physical activities (Pop, 2017).

These new physical activities have been observed to have a positive impact on developing social and psychological abilities, as well as physical health benefits and improving muscle strength, such as the psychological health benefits of Zumba physical fitness training (Vendramin et al, 2016). Some sports have recently proved, most notably Zumba, their ability to significantly improve quality of life, feelings of independence, and stable balance.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), emotional disorders are common among adolescents, and are more common among older adolescents rather than younger adolescents. The estimates indicate that depression occurs among (1.1%) of the adolescents whose ages are between (10-14) years; and among (2.8%) of the persons whose ages are between (15-19) years. The negative feelings associated with these disorders have deep effects on going to school. Social withdrawal can worsen isolation and loneliness, which are linked to suicide attempts in adolescents (WHO, 2021). Many studies had proven the role of Zumba exercises in improving and enhancing the emotional well-being (Barene & Krustup, 2022, (Delextrat, 2016). This research comes in response to the researchers' recommendations to examine the effectiveness of such a type of programs in various cultures, societies and samples.

Based on the above, the idea of this research had risen to know the effect of Zumba exercises in enhancing the social well-being among the female adolescents as an untraditional intervention method and less spreading in the specialized professional practice in the educational psychological counseling. It also came after the study of many counseling methods, and referring to the views of the specialists in the psychological counseling and psychological health. Therefore, the researcher adopted the Zumba exercises method, which effectiveness could be predicted through its characteristics in the ability of enhancing the emotional well-being among the female adolescents. The significance of this research springs out of that it is one of the rare research works at the domestic level that dealt in Zumba exercises as a developmental intervention to enhance the emotional well-being of the female adolescents, who comprise an important category to be taken care of in terms of the educational counseling services.

However, these associations were evidenced with various types of exercise, and it would be interesting to observe if the practice of Zumba could achieve similar results. Within this context, the aim of the present study was to investigate the Effectiveness of a Group Counseling Program Based on Zumba exercises in enhancing Emotional Well-Being among a Sample of Adolescent Female Students. Intervention based on Zumba exercise on cardiovascular fitness, body composition, physical self-perception and psychological well being in Adolescent Female Students. A secondary objective was to identify if there was any association between the changes in physiological and psychological parameters as a result of the intervention. there is a paucity of data in the literature on the

The study problem could be formulated by the following two questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of a group counseling program based on Zumba exercises in enhancing emotional well-being among a sample of female adolescent students?

2. Will the effect of the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises continue in enhancing the emotional well-being one month following the elapse of application on a sample of the female adolescents?

## Method

Design: Semi-experimental method were used with pre and post-measurements for the experimental and control groups.

### Participants

The research comprised thirty female adolescent students of the Greek Catholic Secondary Girls' School, Zarqa Governorate, which houses (300) female students of the eighth, ninth and tenth basic grades. The sample ages ranged between (13-16) years, with their average age is (14.5) years; and their academic performance varied between good, very good and excellent. The research participants were randomly divided into two groups: experimental and control groups, with (15) female students in each. The researcher agreed with the control group to have the group counseling sessions after concluding the program application on the experimental group, and after the elapse of the post measurement stage. Table (1) illustrates the distribution of the study sample members according to the grade and group variables.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample members according to the grade and group variables

Variable	Category	Control Group		Experimental Group		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Grade	Eighth	5	33.33	5	33.33	10	33.33
	Ninth	5	33.33	5	33.33	10	33.33
	Tenth	5	33.33	5	33.33	10	33.33
	Total	15	50%	15	50%	30	100%

Table (1) shows that the members of the study sample of the eighth, ninth and tenth grades female students were distributed evenly according to the grade variable, with (5) female students for each grade, and with (33.33%) of the study members in both the experimental and control groups. Procedures:

**Study Instrument:** The researchers applied Stirling Children's Well-Being Scale (SCWS), which was used in the study of Liddle & Carter, (2015). The scale consisted in its initial form of (15) items distributed over (3) dimensions, as follows:

**Positive Emotional State:** is the psychological state within which the individual is happy, comfortable and optimistic. This state includes feelings of comfort, happiness, satisfaction with life, a sense of success, and optimism about the future. The positive emotional state is characterized by the positive feelings, such as happiness, enthusiasm, psychological comfort and self-confidence (Cohn et al., 2009).

**Positive outlook:** it is known as the optimistic outlook to life, even in the hard times. Positive people look at the bright aspect of every situation and feel grateful to what they have. They often see the glass as half full rather than half empty (Cohn et al., 2009).

**Social Desirability:** it is a dimension related to the influence of societal expectations on the way individuals behave. Social desirability indicates the tendency of people to introduce themselves positively in a manner that Meets societal expectations regarding social rules and norms, and their tendency to present themselves positively in a traditional social manner (Jamal et al., 2022).

Table 2. Values of the correlation coefficients among the items of Stirling Scale of the well-being of the children and the adolescents, on one part, and the total degree of the scale and the related dimensions, on the other

Dimension	Item No.	Content of the item well-being	Correlation with	
			Dimension	Total
Positive Emotional State	4	My mood is good.	0.56*	0.48*
	5	I feel relaxed.	0.73*	0.67*
	6	I enjoy what every new day brings to me.	0.68*	0.57*
	7	I treat people well.	0.58*	0.51*
	8	I feel happy about many things.	0.63*	0.59*

	10	I feel calm and serene.	0.64*	0.58*
	1	I believe that good things will happen in my life.	0.67*	0.59*
	2	I feel I am good in performing certain things.	0.58*	0.47*
	9	I can find many enjoyable things to do.	0.76*	0.64*
Positive Outlook	12	It is easy for me to take decisions and choose from among the alternatives.	0.63*	0.55*
	14	I feel that many people care for me.	0.59*	0.43*
	15	I think I have many things that I can be proud of.	0.63*	0.55*
Social Desirability	3	I am always chivalrous.	0.69*	0.56*
	11	I love everyone I meet.	0.55*	0.49*
	13	I always tell the truth.	0.77*	0.69*

- Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level.

Table (2) shows that the values of the correlation coefficients of the scale items ranged between (0.55-0.77) with its dimensions, and between (0.43-0.69) with the total degree of the scale. All the correlation coefficients values were higher than (0.20) with statistical significance at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level. This value is considered acceptable to maintain the items within the scale as per Oudeh's scale (2010), which indicates to maintain the items that their correlation coefficient with the dimension and the total degree of the scale are higher than (0.20). Accordingly, the scale in its final shape remained consisting of (15) items distributed over three dimensions.

Furthermore, inter-correlation coefficients of the well-being dimensions were calculated using Pearson Correlation Coefficient, as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. Values of the scale dimensions correlation coefficients of Stirling scale for children's well-being with the scale as a whole, and the inter-correlation coefficients with the scale dimensions

Variable	Positive Emotional state	Positive Outlook	Social Desirability
Positive Outlook	0.79*		
Social Desirability	0.66*	0.62*	
Emotional well-being as a whole.	0.87*	0.89*	0.77*

- Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level.

Table (3) indicates that the value of the correlation coefficient among Stirling scale dimensions for the well-being of the children and adolescents ranged between (0.62-0.79). On the other hand, the correlation coefficients between the dimensions and the scale, as a whole, were between (0.77-0.89), all of which are statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level, which indicate the validity of the scale construction.

Emotional Well-Being Scale Correction: Stirling scale for children and adolescents well-being was formulated in its final shape of (15) items, distributed over (3) dimensions, to be responded according to the five-point scale:

- All the time: 5 scores;
- Much of the time: 4 scores;
- Some of the time: 3 scores;
- Not much of the time: 2 scores; and,
- Never: one (1) score.

Knowing that all the items were with positive direction; and to achieve an objective judgment on all the means of the responses of the study sample members, the following grading was adopted:

- Very high: (4.21-5.00)
- High: (3.41-4.20)
- Medium: (2.61-3.40)
- Low: (1.81-2.60)
- Very low: (1.00-1.80)

**Group-Counseling Program:** The group counseling program based on Zumba exercises consists of (10) sessions distributed over five weeks, at the rate of two sessions weekly. The duration of the session was one hour, and the program was applied in the Greek Catholic Secondary School for Girls in Zarqa Governorate.

**Study Design:** The experimental method and quasi-experimental research design were used with pre and post-measurements for the experimental and control groups, as well as the tracking measurement for the experimental group only. The current study design could be expressed as follows:

Tracking Measurement	Post-Measurement	Treatment	Pre-Measurement	Assignment	Group
O3	O2	X	O1	R	EG
-	O2	-	O1	4	CG

Where:

- (EG) Experimental Group
- (CG) Control Group
- (R) Random Distribution
- (O1) Pre-measurement for the study performance
- (X) Treatment
- (-) Without Treatment
- (O2) Post-measurement of the study performance
- (O3) Tracking measurement by the study scale.

**Research Variables:** Independent Variable: Treatment method used (research groups): experimental group to which the group counseling program based on Sumba exercises was applied; and the control group that did not receive any treatment.

**Dependent Variables:** Scores of the female adolescent students' scores on Stirling scale for children and adolescents emotional well-being.

**Statistical Methods Applied:** Data statistical treatments were applied using (SPSS) program; and the means and ranks of the female adolescent students' scores were obtained using Mann-Whitney-U test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test.

## Results

**Question One:** What is the effectiveness of a group counseling program based on Zumba exercises in enhancing emotional well-being among a sample of female adolescent students?

The means and ranks of the scores of the study sample members of the adolescent female students were calculated using the Stirling scale for the emotional well-being of the children and adolescents through its overall significance and its sub-dimensions in the post-measurement. Furthermore, Mann-Whitney-U Test and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test were used to find the significance of the differences between the rank means of the post-measurement of Stirling scale for the emotional well-being of the children and adolescents through its overall significance and sub-dimensions, among the members of the control group and the first experimental group (the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises), as illustrated in Table (4).

Table 4. Results of Mann-Whitney U

Dimension	Group	No.	Rank Mean	Total Ranks	M	Mann-Whitney U Test	Wilcoxon W	Z	Sig
Positive Emotional State	EG	15	22.97	344.50	3.40	0.500	120.50	-4.676	*0.000
	CG	15	8.03	120.50	2.12				
Positive Outlook	EG	15	23.00	345.00	3.44	0.000	120.00	-4.707	*0.040



	CG	15	8.00	120.00	2.29				
Social Desirability	EG	15	21.93	329.00	3.16				
	CG	15	9.07	136.00	2.40	16.000	136.00	-4.094	*0.034
Emotional WellBeing as Whole	EG	15	23.00	345.00	3.37				
	CG	15	8.00	120.00	2.24	0.000	120.00	-4.679	*0.005

- Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level. EG: Experimental Group CG: Control Group

Table (4) shows statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level between the means of the post-measurement on Stirling scale for the well-being of the children and adolescents by its overall significance and its sub-dimensions between the two groups: the control and experimental to which the group counseling program based Zumba exercises was applied, favoring the experimental group.

Question Two: Will the effect of the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises continue in enhancing the emotional well-being one month following the elapse of application on a sample of the female adolescents?

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test was used for paired samples t-test, in order to find the difference significance between the rank means of the post-measurement and track measurement of the performance of the experimental group, who were exposed to group counseling program based on Zumba exercises, on both the overall score and sub-dimension scores of the emotional well-being scale, as illustrated in table (5)

Table 5. Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks

Dimension	Ranks	No.	Rank Means	Rank Total	Z	Statistical Significance
Positive Emotional State- Track	Negative Ranks	11	7.27	80		
	Positive Ranks	4	10.00	40		
	Equal Ranks	0			-1.138	0.255
Positive Emotional state - Post	Total	15				
	Negative Ranks	8	9.50	76		
	Positive Ranks	7	6.29	44	-0.911	0.362
Positive Outlook- Track	Equal Ranks	0				
	Total	15				
	Negative Ranks	5	11.00	55		
Social Desirability- Track	Positive Ranks	10	6.50	65		
	Equal Ranks	0			-0.285	0.776
	Total	15				
Emotional Well-Being (As A whole)-Track	Negative Ranks	9	9.67	87		
	Positive Ranks	6	5.50	33		
	Equal Ranks	0			-1.534	0.125
Emotional Well-Being (As A Whole)- Post	Total	15				

Table (5) shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level between the rank means of the performance of the experimental group members, who were exposed to the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises on the overall score and sub-dimension of the emotional well-being scale between the post and track applications.

## Discussion

The results indicated statistically significant differences at (0.05) level in the scores of the individuals in the experimental and control groups on the total score of the Stirling scale for emotional well-being of children and adolescents, and on the three sub-dimensions of the scale, which are (positive emotional state, positive outlook, and social desirability) in the post-measurement in favor of the experimental group. This means an improvement in the scores on the positive emotional state dimension, as well as the positive outlook and social desirability dimensions over the state the female participants were before joining the group counseling program based on Zumba exercises. This study supports results of many studies, such as (Al-Galabi, 2024; Fatehi, 2022; Al-Shabouri, 2020; Delextrat, 2016).

The sample members' participation and integration into the counseling group membership provided them a safe, appropriate and supportive environment to explore themselves, enhance their positive feelings, and achieve learning and training. In addition, the female educational counselor provided organized methods that helped the participants shift the learning benefits outside the counseling session in their daily life and relations with others. These methods included a series of the homework which was provided to them, and which will be discussed and followed up regularly (Abu Eita & S'aad, 2015).

On the other, the positive improvement that occurred on the experimental groups could be ascribed to the leadership method that is followed inside the counseling program sessions. This contributed to building trust, encouraging positive interaction between the educational counselor, the members of the counseling group, and the Zumba trainer, developing their skills, and reflecting this on personal growth. Additionally, this leadership style also creates a sense of freedom among group members to express their ideas, activate the participants' potential, and achieve collective development and success (Salaazar, 2009).

The success of the counseling program may also be attributed to the counseling skills of the educational counselor with the counseling group members during offering the counseling program sessions. For instance, showing the unconditional acceptance feelings, listening actively to the female participants, practicing the active listening skills, such as reflecting content, and reflecting feelings, when were needed during the sessions of the counseling program (Corey et al., 2018). The importance of using group counseling to enhance emotional well-being through Zumba exercises and positive psychology is highlighted, in light of which we can interpret the results obtained. In this concern, the group counseling is deemed an active way to provide a safe environment characterized by unconditional respect, with focus on acceptance and finding a climate that facilitates learning and growth. This method offers a climate that encourages open participation, and provides opportunities to benefit the offered content.

We can also say that the number of the counseling sessions of the program provided to the participants (n=10), including the introduction and conclusion sessions, enabled the researcher, during the sessions, to include all the dimensions of the emotional well-being that are targeted by the study through the activities and Zumba exercises, which ultimately enrich the emotional well-being level with the participants.

The program also included Zumba exercises that included a group of activities inspired by Latin dance, and based on the basic principles of aerobic exercises and resistance training with music to raise energy and enthusiasm. Furthermore, there are many other general benefits of Zumba exercises, such as burning the calories, increasing feelings of pleasure, relief from stress, and happiness, which increases the chances of enjoying life and experiencing pleasant and enthusiastic feelings, which enhance emotional well-being (Fatehi, 2022).

### ***Zumba exercises practices contributed to providing friendship and emotional***

intimacy opportunities among the participants. Also, the participants were training on relaxation and calming skills that increase the chances of responding in a healthy and positive way to emotionally stimulating situations, which contribute to enhancing emotional well-being (Robinson, 2021).

While the physical and physiological benefits of Zumba classes seem, effects of Zumba. (+9.8%) improvement of total quality of life score (assessed by a questionnaire) after eight weeks of Zumba in young women (El-Deen et al., 2025). The psychological benefits of other types of dance are better described. Significant improvements in mood, body image, personal accomplishment, strength and endurance self-perception and self-concept (including physical self, identity and self-satisfaction) were reported after various dance-based group interventions. It has also been shown that performing dance workouts alone (dance mat "exer-gaming") could lead to significant psychological improvements, such as a greater autonomy (May Irigoyen & Mijangos Noh, 2024). Several associations were reported between the different types of benefits brought about by physical exercise (El Kailani et al., 2025). Indeed, a greater level of aerobic fitness has been positively linked to various aspects of quality of life, including decreased mental stress and improved self-control and mental resources (Apriady et al., 2025). Likewise, showed that self-acceptance and self-satisfaction could be related to body composition and body mass changes over time (Hernández Rosas et al., 2025).

As for the discussion of the second question, the study results indicated that there are no statistically significant differences between the rank means of the experimental group performance on the sub-dimensions of Stirling scale for children and adolescents' well-being, and the overall score of the scale on both the post and track measurements, following the elapse of one month after applying the group counseling program. This is an indicator that the participants in the experimental group maintained the results they achieved with the experimental group, after applying the group counseling program, and continuity of the group counseling program effect on the members of the counseling group.

This result is in line with many studies that showed effectiveness of the programs based on Zumba exercises in enhancing the emotional well-being, and its continuous effect even after concluding the application of the counseling program (Wang et al., 2024), (Koch et al., 2019), (Aguayo & Juste, 2023).

Many women's motivation to exercise is weight loss (Nanjari-Miranda & Fernández-Vergara, 2024) and anecdotal evidence suggests that Zumba should be a good way to achieve this objective. However, results from previous studies did not show any significant decrease in total body fat levels following short-term Zumba interventions in healthy Adolescent Female Students with components of the metabolic syndrome (El-Deen et al., 2025). This absence of body fat loss seems specific to Zumba since a significant decrease in fat mass in the lower limb was observed after a soccer-based but not a Zumba-based intervention of similar durations in middle-aged sedentary women (El Kailani et al., 2025). The relatively short duration of the interventions could explain this absence of body fat changes, since significant fat losses linked to the practice of Zumba® were only evidenced after 40 weeks (Rosado Alvarez et al., 2025).

This result may be attributed to that the effect of enhancing the emotional well-being could remain and continue to exist and stay with those who acquire it, learn it, and adopt it as a way of life. This is what the researchers were keen to emphasize throughout the counseling sessions that were provided, which included homework assignments that instilled and planted the concept of transferring the impact of what is learned to practical application in daily life. It also encouraged the participants to generalize what was learned in the sessions to reality and in their daily interactions with themselves and others in positive relationships, and to begin developing healthy habits that make the level of emotional well-being in all its dimensions evident and tangible in the participants' behaviors.

From the above, we can conclude that the counseling program applied on the experimental group showed its effectiveness, and that the program acted on enriching the emotional well-being through Zumba exercises with the female adolescent students. And, in the context of evaluating the qualitative aspects and practical impact of the participants' experience in the group counseling program, the researchers obtained feedback from the program participants after its completion, which clearly indicated the effectiveness of the counseling program based on Zumba exercises in enhancing emotional well-being.

## Conclusions

There are statistically significant differences at the ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) level in the scores of the experimental group and control group members on the overall score of Stirling scale for the emotional well-being of the children and adolescents, and on the three sub-dimensions of the scale, namely: (positive emotional state, positive outlook, and social desirability), in the post measurement in favor of the experimental group.

There are no statistically significant differences between the rank means of the experimental group performance on the sub-dimensions of Stirling scale for the children and adolescents well-being, and the overall score of the scale in the post and track measurements, after the elapse of one month following the application of the group counseling program.

Recommendations: Implementation of group counseling program based on Zumba practices in enhancing the emotional well-being among the female adolescent students, as well as the different expressive counseling methods that are related to the emotional well-being issue in the context of the adolescence stage. Conducting experimental studies based on Zumba exercises on diverse samples other than the

one targeted in our study, such as married women, mothers, female workers, and male and female students in the universities.

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