The Effectiveness of Cognitive Behavior Group Counseling Program on Self-Efficacy among 7th-Grade Students

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Abstract:

Self-efficacy is the students' belief about their ability to perform school tasks successfully, and Counseling is the crucial way to help students to understand their potential and help them to solve their problems at school and in their daily life. This research examined the effectiveness of group counseling program on self-efficacy among 7th-grade students. Self-efficacy was measured by Self-Efficacy Self-Report Scale that was designed by (Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011). The researcher found the validity and reliability of the scale, ultimately the scale consisted of (15) items. This research was designed as (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) quasi-experimental design with (11) students from Srwa school for girls in the academic year (2018-2019). The students participated in 35 minutes sessions twice a week including (Homework assignments, Coping skills, Modeling, Role-play, Feedback, Problem-solving, Coping cards and Adaptive attribution beliefs). After the counseling sessions the collected data were analyzed with (IBM SPSS statistics version 23) by using paired sample t-test, the results revealed that there were significant differences between mean scores of pretest and posttest. It concluded the group counseling program based on Cognitive Behavior Therapy Approach made improvement in students' self-efficacy. The research marks a closure with a discussion and the limitations of the research, suggestions for further researches and practical implications of the research.

Key words: self-efficacy, group counseling, Cognitive behavior therapy

Introduction:

Counseling is an effective way to help students to solve their emotional, social, behavioral, and academic problems. Effective counseling program has an important role in improving student's achievement, wellbeing, and mental health(American Counseling Association, 2006)**.**

Findings from previous research indicated that students who participated in counseling programs are more positive, having greater feelings of belonging, and feel safe in their schools (Lapan, Gysbers and Sun, 1997). Another study from the American school counselor association in (2013) conducted by Wilkerson and Hughes (2009) found that students' academic performance would be better if there are counseling programs in place. And also stated that there is a relationship between academic success and services that school counselors offered at school. Many studies like Hong *et al.* (2012) and Crespi (2009) suggest that group counseling is an effective intervention in the school setting, and one important serves that address child's psychological needs.

Self-efficacy defined as " beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997: 3). Most studies have demonstrated that self-efficacy beliefs are significantly correlated with academic achievement and performance (Zimmerman, 2010; Margolis and Mccabe, 2007; Ahmad and Safaria, 2013; Schunk, 1989; Webb-Williams, 2006). It was found that self-efficacy was the best predictor of student's performance, and could have a devastating effect on students 'psychological well-being (Margolis and Mccabe, 2007: 218).

Researchers suggested a need for counseling among students with low self-efficacy and the need for developing students' self-efficacy in school is essential for improving academic outcomes (Chen *et al.*, 2013). Also (Benawa, 2018) suggested that it is vital to increase the students' self-efficacy to awake motivation. Friston (2009) mentioned that increasing students' self-efficacy enhance their capability to initiate, persist, and succeed with classroom activities. Researchers concluded that focusing on interventions that increasing students' internal beliefs about their ability are essential for later academic and life success (Bardhoshi, Duncan and Erford, 2017).

Based on the observations and initial interviews were done by the researcher, it is proved that many schools and teachers are struggling with unmotivated students, lack of confidence in their ability, neglecting to do their tasks and assignments that must be done, and poor academic performance. According to teachers and counselors perspectives at school, those problems common among seventh grade students, they were underperforming when compared to other grades, they attribute these common problems to move students from primary to secondary schools, it was indicated that this transition has a negative impact on students' performance (Galton, Gray and Rudduck, 2003: 62). The findings above motivated the researcher to conduct this research and to find out the effect of group counseling program on students' self-efficacy.

The importance of the research:

The present research is significant because of the importance of the concept of self-efficacy in educational psychology and increasing self-efficacy will lead to increase motivation, academic performance, and students' engagement in learning activities. The findings of the current research will contribute to valuable and new information in the field of educational psychology, more specific in the field of educational counseling; its findings serve to verify if short, intensive counseling program can improve self-efficacy of a group of students under study, also focuses on an area that has had little attention within the current field of educational research**.**

The results obtained from the research will provide information to educational planners, administrators, school counselors and teachers if the level of self-efficacy among students can be improved through counseling. These findings may then add to the belief that the counseling program is vital and could be incorporated as part of the daily curriculum; or as a program for extra-curricular activities for the development of student potentials.

Up to our knowledge, no prior research had been conducted to apply for group counseling program and to explore the effect of this program on self-efficacy in our region.

Literature review:

The concept of self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a key component in the theories of personality (Artino, 2012). It is an important personality characteristic (Friedman and Schustack, 2006). The concept of self-efficacy was first introduced by Albert Bandura to explain how people's behavior and performance are affected by their beliefs about their ability to perform or do a task well (Bandura, 1977).

Schunk (2003) defined self-efficacy as students' beliefs about their ability to learn or perform at designated levels, and self-efficacy helps students to be motivated and increases learning. Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2001: 313) stated that "one of the most important motivational beliefs for students' achievement is self-efficacy which beliefs about abilities to perform a task or an activity".

Sources of self-efficacy:

Bandura (1977) stated that self-efficacy can be developed through four main sources as follow:

- **Mastery experience**: Previews experiences are the most important source of self-efficacy, if a person has performed a task successfully, he or she evaluates the outcomes and develops judgments about abilities in another or similar task, but when a person has not performed a task well or successfully, his or her beliefs decreased to do or perform another or similar task (Bandura, 1977). In general, past success increases self-efficacy beliefs and repeated failures lower it (Schunk, 1989).

-Vicarious experience: Self-efficacy can be developed through modeling experiences, when a person sees someone that successfully completes a task, his or her self-efficacy is increased for accomplishing the same task, and the opposite is true, watching someone similar fails can decrease the level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

-     **Verbal persuasion:** When a person receives encouragement from significant people, including parents, teachers, and peers this can strengthen his or her self-efficacy. This verbal or social persuasion makes individual realize that he or she has the ability to complete a task successfully (Bandura, 1977).

-     **Psychological arousal:** psychological arousal like negative emotions (anxiety, stress, nervous…) before doing a task can lead to decrease self-efficacy, and it may be viewed as a sign of vulnerability to poor performance (Bandura, 1994).

Self-efficacy activated process:

Bandura suggested that self-efficacy affects behavior and performance through four major psychological processes: Cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection.

Cognitive processes: The cognitive processes include an individual's self-efficacy and his or her ability to shape thought patterns regarding tasks. People with high self-efficacy visualize success on tasks, even if tasks are challenging. In contrast, people with low self-efficacy visualize failure on tasks, and this tend to dwell on all the possible things that might go wrong, leading to an increased likelihood for failure (Bandura, 1977).

Motivational processes: Self-efficacy works as a motivating force, increases persistence on a task, which then improves performance (Bandura, 1989), three cognitive motivators have been identified as being influenced by self-efficacy including: Causal attributions, Outcome expectancies, and Clarity and value of goals.

Affective processes: How people perceive their coping abilities, facing difficult situation leads to experience higher level of stress, bothering thought pattern, and lower level of coping abilities

among those with low level of self-efficacy, and according to bandura this lead to distress and impaired functioning (Bandura, 1993).

Selection processes: People choose those challenges that they believe they can handle and avoid ones their control, and these choices typically a direct result of their success or failure on previous challenges (Bandura, 1993).

Students motivation was predicted by self-efficacy, (Bandura, 1977) hypothesized that efficacy beliefs determine amount of effort, persistence and choice of activities , students with high self-efficacy for completing an academic task will participate more readily, work harder, and persist longer when they face difficulties than those who doubt their ability.

In summary, as indicated above self-efficacy can have an impact on performance of cognitive, affective, selection, and motivational processes, and also concept of self-efficacy is used to explain how self-confidence and self-beliefs can impact learning, performance, and well-being of students.

Counseling is an appropriate way to assist students to solve their personal, psychological and social problems. One approach that is common in counseling is Cognitive –Behavioral approach which defined as " intensive, short-term (6 to 20 sessions), problem-oriented approach, it was designed to be quick, practical, and goal-oriented and to provide people with long-term skills to keep them healthy. Cognitive-behavioral approach has been shown to be effective for people of all ages, from early childhood to older adults; and for people of different levels of education and income and various cultural backgrounds, it has also shown to be effectiveness when used individual or group format" (Rector, 2010 : 2).

Cognitive behavioral approach helps students to be aware of three things; how their thoughts affect their behavior, how they can control these thoughts, how can apply counseling techniques to effect behavior change (Chodkiewicz, Boyle, 2015).

Cognitive-behavioral counseling could include education about the role of thoughts, problem-solving, exercise, teaching breathing techniques, muscle relaxation and stress coping techniques, role-play, cognitive coping skills, worksheets and homework, Each of the aforementioned techniques could be utilized in small groups or classroom guidance as well (Chodkiewicz, Boyle, 2015; Toland and Boyle, 2008; Zyromski and Joseph, 2008). Cognitive-behavioral approach has the superior effect either on self-efficacy and other psychological problems, and also the commonly used by other previous studies as the theoretical base of their program.

Materials and methods:

Research design: This research used quasi- experimental with three stages (pretest-posttest with follow up). The data were taken from pre-test and post-test in order to know whether group counseling program can increase student's self-efficacy**.**

Purpose of the research:

The aim of this research is to investigate the effect of group counseling program on self-efficacy among 7th-grade students.

Hypothesis:

- The group counseling program will have effect on students' self-efficacy among 7th-graders.

Participants:

The researcher selected (Srwa basic school for girls) to conduct her research. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the students for the study because the researcher intended to select only the low self-efficacious students were studying in 7th grade in selected basic school for girls. There were 4 classes (A, B, C, D) in Srwa basic school for girls, totaling 87 students, the Self-Efficacy Self-Report Scale(SESRS) scale was applied to them, (11) of them who received low grades on the scale (less than 15 score). (11) Students participated in the program.

The students met the following criteria to participate the counseling program:

- Their scores on the scale were low.

- They wanted to participate the counseling program.

- They agreed to attend all session.

- They had not participated previously in any counseling program for increasing self-efficacy.

- They were not currently involved in any other counseling.

- Their parents agreed and signed on the consent.

- Self-Efficacy Self-Report Scale

Self-efficacy was measured by the Self-Efficacy Self-Report Scale (SESRS)designed by (Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011). The scale is a self-report scale designed to measure general self-efficacy among students aged 10 to 17 years. It composed of 19 items scored on 3 point scale from (2-usually) to (0- rarely), it is a quick and easy tool to help us to know students with low self-efficacy.

(Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011) conducted a preliminary analysis of reliability and validity of Self-Efficacy Self-Report Scale (SETRS) with two independent samples and provided evidence that the

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instrument is a psychometrically adequate screening tool for assessing students' self-efficacy. The researchers reported high internal consistency, stable test-retest reliability across a period of two weeks as well as adequate convergent an discriminant validity, coefficient alpha was reportedly .90 for standardization sample (N=652), and .88 for second sample (N=81) while the test-retest reliability of the total scale score in the study was .80.

Validity and reliability of the instrument:

The (SESRS) was originally developed by (Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011) with respect to American culture, therefore it had to be adapted to Kurdish culture, the adaption (SESRS) to Kurdish children which included translation, validity, and reliability were conducted by the researcher in the following steps:

Face validity:

After translating the (SESRS) scale and obtaining linguistic validity. The scale was validated by a panel of (5) experts in the field of psychology. The researcher responded to their opinions and has performed the needed editing or deleting in the light of their suggestions, after that the last version of the scale prepared and it consisted of (15) items, items (1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13) has changed, and items (4, 8, 12, 15) has omitted because the percentage of agreement by experts was (%40). Finally the percentage of face validity was (%86).

Reliability:

The researcher used Cronbach's alpha to get the reliability on the (SESRS) Kurdish version scale, the alpha value of the scale was 0.77 (n=74) which means that the scale is reliable for application. The score above .70 would be regarded as satisfactory (Howitt & Cramer, 2011; Pallant, 2016).

Group counseling program:

This program based on cognitive behavioral approach. The assumption of this approach is feelings and behaviors are largely a product of thoughts (Stallard, 2002). Altering these thoughts will lead to change feelings and behaviors (Tolland and Boyle, 2003), therefore, the counseling program used in the current research based on that assumption, and negative automatic thoughts are the reason for the problem (low self-efficacy), changing cognitive process will have an important role in the development of self-efficacy.

The cognitive behavioral strategies used in current program such as: Psycho-education, identification of negative thoughts, recording negative thoughts, thought stopping and positive self-talk skills, cognitive rehearsal, homework assignments, coping skills, modeling, role-play, feedback, problem-solving, coping cards, and adaptive attribution beliefs.

Structure of the program:

The **overall objective** of the program is increasing student's self-efficacy among 7th graders, the number of sessions of the present program was eleven sessions, two sessions weekly with 35 minutes to each session, Starting from 31st of January to 6th of march, the sessions implemented on every Mondays and Wednesdays. The first week, the researcher conducted one session and the last week conducted three sessions before coming spring holidays. Bellow was the subjects of the each session (table 1).

Table 1. Subjects of sessions

Session	Subjects
First	General introduction of the counseling program, discussing the basic ground rules for the group, getting acquainted with each other through activity.
Second	Education about self-efficacy and the importance and influence of (I can) in their life as a student, presenting the characteristics of high self-officious students, Setting goal for the counseling.
Third	Presenting the link between thoughts- feelings- behaviors.
Forth	Introducing the idea that some thoughts are helpful and some are unhelpful
Fifth	Presenting the characteristic of unhelpful thoughts and how we identify them. Expressing real life examples by students, and helping each other to replace more helpful thoughts
Sixth	Discussing how we face our unhelpful thoughts via thought stopping, positive self-talk, and finally self-congratulation.
Seventh	Identifying those helpful and unhelpful thoughts we attribute our successes and our failures to them, encouraged adaptive attribution beliefs.
Eighth	Presenting time management skills as well as Presenting some study skills
Ninth	Presenting problem solving skills like stop and think, (or) techniques, and brainstorm the solution, and finally choose best solutions.
Tenth	Identifying how we face our difficult time or tasks via deep breathing and imagery and visualization
Eleventh	Reviewing the learned skills and helping students to remember the whole program through the story named (the little engine can do).

In each session, the students were assigned homework, the researcher began each session by saying welcome to the students, summarized previous session, then checked students' homework, at the end of each session, each students were asked to give a score ranging from 1 to 5 to assess the usefulness of the session

Results:

- To check the hypothesis which states the group counseling program will have effect on students' self-efficacy among 7th-graders, Paired Sample T-Test was conducted. The result shows in the table 2:

Table 2. Paired Sample T-Test for self-efficacy scores

Tests	Mean	S.D	df	T value	S.g(2.tailed)
Pre-test	13.18	1.07	10	6.74	Significant at level 0.00
Post-test	19.81	3.31			

Table 2 shows the presence of statistically significant differences between scores of pre-test (M= 13.18, S.D= 1.97) and post-test (M=19.81, S.D= 3.31); t=6.74, df=10, P=0.00). The result indicates that the group counseling program has an effect on students' self-efficacy.

Then the researcher applied the self-efficacy scale after 1 month of period, and used (paired sample t-test) to find significant difference between post-test and follow-up tests as shown in table 3:

Table 3. Paired Sample T-Test for self-efficacy score after 1 month

Tests	Mean	S.D	DF	T value	P value
Post-test	19.81	3.31	10	.367	No significant at level .721
Follow-up	19.18	4.02			

Table 3 shows that there were no significant differences of self-efficacy scores between post-test (M= 19.81, S.D= 3.31) and follow- up (M=19.18, S.D= 4.02) ; df=10, t value= .367, p b=value= .721. it means the stability of the group counseling program after 1 month.

Discussion:

As indicated before, the main aim of this study was to investigate the effect on group counseling program on self-efficacy among 7th- grade. As mentioned previously, students were administrated the (SESRS) as pre-test, at the end of the program (SESRS) was administrated as post-test and follow up-test. The hypothesis was shown to be accurate based on the result of increasing students' score at the post-test.

As a result we can assume that counseling made an improvement on the students' self-efficacy, this means that the scores on self-efficacy scale of students increased after applying the counseling program among group members.

The result of the current study showed insignificant difference in the level of self-efficacy among group after one month of counseling program application, this is related to the stability of the program and ensures the positive effects of the counseling program.

The researcher attributes this result of the current study to some reasons; this can be explained that the activities and techniques included in the program have been based on cognitive-behavioral approach creating an opportunity for members to be aware of that negative thought is the reason behind their problems (low self-efficacy).

The major causes of low self-efficacy reported by the entire sample were they saw the school tasks beyond their ability, negative perception about themselves, poor academic performance, and low marks scored in tests that lowered their self-efficacy.

The results also confirm the previous studies that apply cognitive-behavioral therapy CBT, they confirmed that CBT is an excellent intervention to improve many of educational problems such as self-control of behavioral (Squires, 2001), retraining attribution for success and failure in learning (Toland and Boyle, 2008) social adjustment (Al-Mseidin, Fauzee, And Kuar 2017), motivation (Mehrabi *et al.*, 2016), depressive symptoms (Gillham and Seligman, 1994), academic procrastination (Wang *et al.*, 2017). This approach uses techniques to produce changes in thinking, feelings, and behavior.

The effect of CBT and other kinds of group counseling on the self-efficacy have also been reported elsewhere in the literature. Hyun, Chung, and Lee (2005) concluded the effect of cognitive-behavioral therapy on self-efficacy, depression, and self-esteem among runway adolescents residing in a Shelter. They found that cognitive-behavioral group therapy is effective to help improving self-efficacy and decreasing depression. Ilkhnchi, Poursharifi, and Alilo (2011) found that there was a significant improvement of self-efficacy among anxious female students. They aimed to target coping beliefs with stressful condition and dysfunctional thoughts about self and others, they used cognitive behavior techniques in reducing certainty of dysfunctional thoughts through challenging irrational thoughts and replacing rational thoughts. Sohrabi, Mohammdi, and Aghdam (2013) indicated that the group

counseling with problem-solving was effective to improve educational self-efficacy and also counseling is rational and emotional process.

This study has some limitations; the sample size of this research was small, a large sample size would increase in Validate findings. The participant selection was limited to one school, more students from varied schools would allow for a broader examination of how the self-efficacy of students is impacted by group counseling, and also this limits the ability to generalize the results. The present study was carried out on 7th grade students and the findings can only be generalizing on this age group.

Based on the results of this study, we recommend number points. The ministry of education should develop guidance and counseling policy to guide the implementation such programs in all basic education schools based on student's problem areas namely: academic, career, and personal domains. The counselors in school should collaborate with parents to provide counseling in schools. Ministry of education should train school counselors on managing of the group counseling programs and using cognitive- behavioral therapy counseling to solve student's problems and use it as effective way to help student. The researcher suggests to replicate another study can be done with a larger sample size for more generalizability and with male students, and with different academic levels.

Conclusions:

The study has concluded that the students who had undergone the counseling program showed significant increase in the level of their self-efficacy in the post-test and follow-up test. As indicated in the literature self-efficacy is an important construct in education and promoting students' self-efficacy can contribute to promote academic performance, achievement, learning, and reduce some psychological problems. A need for this type of program exists especially when considers the number of students struggling with negative perception about their personal ability. Also in group counseling students know that they are not alone, find the solution of their daily life problems, realize that how they deal with their psychological/emotional concerns and problems, and Students feel relax while talking about their problems that it is not possible to talk about them outside of the group.

فعالية البرنامج الإرشاد جمعي معرفي سلوكي على فعالية الذات لدى طالبات الصف اسابع الأساسية

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مستخلص الدراسة:

هدفت الدراسة الحالية إلى الكشف عن فاعلية برنامج إرشادي جمعي يستند إلى العلاج المعرفي السلوكي على فعالية الذات لدى طالبات الصف الاسابع الأساسية في مدرسة (سروة الأساسية للبنات) لعام الدراسي 2018-2019 , و تكونت عينة الدراسة من (11) طالبات ,و تم اخيارهن بطريقة القصدية، اللواتي حصلن على درجات متدنية في مقياس فعالية الذات.استخدمت الباحثة مقياس فعالية الذات المصمم من قبل (Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011) و الذي قامت الباحثة عن طريق الخبراء بترجمته الى اللغة الكردية و إيجاد صدق الترجمة و الصدق الظاهري و الثبات له ليناسب البيئة الكردية.و كما قامت الباحثة بأعداد جلسات البرنامج إرشادي قائم على علاج (المعرفي- السلوكي) و تكون من (11) جلسات إرشادية تم تطبيقها على مدي (35) يومياً بواقع جلستين في الاسبوع.

أظهرت النتائج الدراسة عن وجود أثر ذو دلالة إحصائية للبرنامج في رفع مستوى فعالية الذات لدى أفراد المجموعة الدراسة, و تشير هذة النتائج إلى فاعلية البرنامج إرشادى الجمعي قائم على علاج (المعرفي- السلوكي) في رفع مستوى فعالية الذات لدى طالبات الصف السابع الأساسية.

الكلمات الدالة : برنامج إرشادي, فعالية الذات, العلاج المعرفى- السلوكى, إرشاد جمعي.

کاریگەری بەرنامەیەکی ڕێنمایی بە گروپی هزری-ڕەفتاری لەسەر خودکارایی لای خوێندکارانی پۆلی حەوتەمی بنەڕەتی

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کورتەی توێژینەوە:

خودکارایی بریتیە لە باوەڕی تاک بەوەی دەتوانێ ئەرکێک بە سەرکەوتووی تەواو بکات، ڕێنمایی بریتی یە لە هاوکاری کردنی خوێندکار بۆ ئەوەی بتوانێ کێشە پەروەردەیی و کەسی و هەڵچوونی و ئەکادیمیەکانی چارەسەر بکات و خۆی لەگەڵدا بگونجێنی. ئامانجی ئەو توێژینەوەیە بریتی بوو لە زانینی کاریگەری پرۆگرامێکی ڕێنمایی بە کۆمەڵ لەسەر بنەمای چارەسەر زانەکی – ڕەفتاری لەسەر خودکارایی لای خوێندکارانی پۆلی (7) ی بنەڕەتی. توێژەر قوتابخانەی (سروەی بنەڕەتی کچان)ی هەڵبژاد بۆ ئەنجامدانی توێژینەوەکەی، بەمەبەستی هێنانەدی ئامانجی ئەم توێژینەوەیە، نمونەی توێژینەوەکە پێک هاتبوو لە (11) خوێندکار ،توێژەر دیزاینی نیمچە ئەزموونی بەکارهێناوە کە پێک هاتبوو لە یەک کۆمەڵە. نمونەی توێژینەوەکە پێک هاتبوو لەو خوێندکارانەی کە نزمترین نمرەیان بە دەست هێناوە لەسەر پێوەری خودکارایی کە لەم توێژیژینەوەیە دا بەکار هاتووە و دروستکراوە لە لایەن(Erford, Schein and Duncan, 2011) و توێژەر راستگۆیی و جێگیری بۆ پێوەرەکە دۆزیوەتەوە بۆ ئەوەی بیگونجێنێ لەگەڵ ژینگەی کوردی، بەرنامەی ڕێنمایی کە توێژەر بەکاری هێناوە لەسەر بنەمای بیردۆزی (زانەکی – ڕەفتاری)یە کە پێک هات بوو لە (11) دانیشتن و ماوەی هەر دانیشتنێک

(35) خولەکە و دوو دانیشتن لە هەفتەیەکدا ئەنجام دەدرا. ئەنجامی توێژینەوەکە دەریخست کە   جیاوازی بەڵگەداری ئاماری هەیە   لە نێوان ناوەندی نمرەکانی فێرخوازان لە تاقیکردنەوەی پێشەکی و پاشەکی. ئەمەش واتە بەرنامەکە کاریگەری هەبووە لەسەر بەرزکردنەوەی ئاستی خودکارایی لای فێرخوازانی پۆلی (7)ی بنەڕەتی ، لە ژێر ڕۆشنایی ئەنجامەکان چەند پێشنیاز و ڕاسپاردەیەک پێشکەشکرا.

کلیله ووشه: پڕۆگرامی ڕێنمایی، خودکارایی، چارەسەری زانەکی- ڕەفتاری، ڕێنمایی بە گروپ.

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