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Effect of systematic two-year chess intervention on the IQ of school children

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Research on the effect of chess training on cognitive abilities has generally pointed to increases in IQ and cognitive functioning among children. However, some studies have not substantiated this finding. The present study, funded by the Cognitive Science Research Initiative, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, analyzed the effect of 2-year systematic chess training on the IQ of schoolchildren. A pre-test–post-test with control group design was used. The sample was randomly selected from children studying in four city schools (grades 3–9), which included both the genders. The experimental group (N=80) underwent weekly chess training for 2 years, while the control group (N=77) was involved in extracurricular activities offered in school such as cricket, football, and hockey. Both the groups were involved in these activities after school hours. Intelligence was measured by Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV INDIA). This test yields five composite scores—Full Scale IQ, Working Memory Index, Processing Speed Index, Verbal Comprehension Index, and Perceptual Reasoning Index. Assessment was carried out prior to the chess training, after 1 year of training, and after 2 years of training by psychologists. The training methodology comprised Winning Moves Chess Learning Program with the demonstration board, on-the-board playing and training, chess exercise through workbooks, and working with chess software, which was carried out by trained chess coaches. Preliminary analysis at the end of 1 year revealed significant increases in all indices except verbal comprehension. Results of ANCOVA (Analysis of Covariance) carried out at the completion of 2 years will be presented in the paper.

Biography

Veena Easvaradoss is associate professor and Head of the Psychology Department, Women's Christian College, Chennai, India. She is a professional clinical psychologist whose research interests include evaluation of the effectiveness of clinical, counseling and educational interventions in normal and clinical groups, test construction to measure psychosocial functions and positive psychology and mental health. She is the co-investigator of the Government of India-funded Department of Science and Technology project.

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