Author’s response to reviews

Title: The Clinical Effects of School Sandplay Group Therapy on General Children with a Focus on Korea Child & Youth Personality Test

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Author’s response to reviews:

we attached an answer description file to review as supplementary file through QA format at previous step.

From: paperose@dku.edu
To: em.psyo.0.673ed0.27b765c3@editorialmanager.com
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The Clinical Effects of School Sandplay Group Counseling on General Children with a Focus on Korea Child & Youth Personality Test [PSYO-D-19-00233 []
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Thank you for comments from reviewers. Thankfully, we was able to revise this paper based on your comments.

Reviewer(s)' Comments to Author:

Reviewer: 1

Comments to the Author

Abstract.

Q1. The abstract is clearly written and outlines the study; however, there are errors in the abstract that need to be fixed. For example, the abstract states the number of participants in the study is 113, when the Methods section states the study consisted of 284 participants.

A1. I am sorry. There was an numeric error in the writing process so, has been deleted. The contents of the abstract have been revised. Thank you. (113<284; 56<141; 57<143)
Before
To this objective, 10 sessions of in-school sandplay group counseling were administered to 113 fourth- to sixth-graders in an elementary school located in Cheonan city for 12 weeks from March to July 2015. Each small group consisted of 10 to 16 children and the entire 12 sessions were composed of a baseline test, 10 therapy sessions, and a post-test and evaluation session. The study subjects consisted of 56 boys (49.6%) and 57 girls (50.4%).

After Revised sentence:
To this objective, 10 sessions of in-school sandplay group therapy were administered to 284 fourth- to sixth-graders in two elementary schools located in Chungcheongnam-do for 12 weeks from 2015 to 2019. Each small group consisted of 10 to 16 children and the entire 12 sessions were composed of a baseline test, 10 therapy sessions, and a post-test and evaluation session. The study subjects consisted of 141 boys (49.6%) and 143 girls (50.4%). As the evaluation instruments, an epidemiologic questionnaire and the Korea Child & Youth Personality Test were used during the baseline phase and after the termination of the therapy.

Q2. The results on the abstract mention, for example, that there is a decline in depression and improvements in self esteem. Neither of these findings are consistent with the results found

A2.
Thank you for reading carefully. Based on the results of this study, the contents of the abstract have been revised.

Before sentence:
The comparison of the scores according to the KCYP clinical scales and detailed evaluation scales before and after the 12-week counseling showed an increase in the self-esteem and a significant decline in depression in the elementary schoolers after the counseling.

Revised sentence:
Results: The comparison of the scores according to the KCYP clinical scales and detailed evaluation scales before and after the 12-week therapy showed an increase in the ego strength and a positive effect on emotional problems and behavioral problems in the elementary students after the therapy.

Q3. Finally, the abstract states that there were 10 to 16 students in each small group, while the methods section states that there were three to six children in each small group. It is essential that the abstract is updated to accurately reflect the participants and the findings of the study.

A3.
Thank you. To accurately explain the method, the contents of the abstract have been added to method part.

Added sentence:
Each student was provided with a sand tray 72 cm wide, 57 cm high and 7 cm deep, and about 10-16 students created their own sand work in the classroom. 3-4 students and 1 counselor therapist gathered together to talk about their work and interact with each other to sympathize with each other.
INTRO.

Q4. In the second sentence of paragraph one of the Intro section the authors indicate that Domenico developed "a unique idea" that is different from Kalff’s individual sandplay, but does not provide details related to this differentiation. Please insert a qualifying sentence to describe Domenico’s approach and how it may be different than Kalffian sandplay. The type of sandplay used in the study is important to understand for clinical and research purposes.

A4
We revised these sentences. We focused Kalff therapy and Korean sandplay therapy history.

“In 1986, psychiatrist Rhi introduced the Dora Kalff’s sandplay therapy based on Jung’s analytical psychology to five patients, playing sand play as a therapeutic intervention.

Since then, there have been extensive developments in sand play therapy in Korea. Since 2000, not only Kalff’s sandplay, but also Domenico’s ‘therapist directed sandplay, group sandtray’, etc. There have also been various studies of sand play group therapy in American countries.”

Deleted sentence:
In the 1980s, while studying Lowenfeld's Sandplay World Technique, Domenico developed types of sandplay such as ‘therapist directed sandplay’ and ‘group sandtray sessions’ based on its communication function. This was a different approach from Kalff’s individual sandplay therapy.

Q5. There may also be a typo in the sentence that begins with Boik and Goodwin in that I believe the authors are introducing group sandplay here, but do not mention group.

A5.
Thank you for your kind point. This is my mistake. A typo in the sentence has been have been revised.

Revised sentence
Boik and Goodwin[3] saw that sandplay “group” therapy for diverse clients can promote healing and growth as it does for individuals.

Q6. At the end of the first paragraph of the Intro section, a sentence states that group counseling is more suitable "for children in the stage of psychosocial development." What is meant by this? What stage of psychosocial development?

A6.
The phrase is not suitable for this sentence and has been deleted.

Revised sentence
Wang [5] noted that group counseling is more suitable than individual therapy for children and adolescents with problem behaviors.
Q7. The manuscript goes on to describe how children participate "honestly" in group counseling. Perhaps another word is more suited?

A7. The word is not suitable for this sentence and has been deleted.

Revised sentence
Children participating in a group counseling interact with their peers and experience emotional intimacy with others.

Q8. In the 3rd paragraph of the Intro section the authors state that Campbell found that with 8-10 sessions of sandplay in school, children enter "a problem-solving stage." What does this mean? Also, did the children in the Campbell study receive individual or group sandplay? This is not clear.

A8 There was an undefined paper because of our mistake. We deleted this sentence:
Deleted sentence
“Campbell and her colleagues found that most children who participated in eight to ten sessions of sandplay therapy in school enter a problem-solving stage within the period [6].”

Q9. In the 4th paragraph of the Intro section the authors describe the setting as "in school, with teacher, as a class." It will be important to mention in this paragraph that the sandplay intervention is provided by counselors, not teachers. This is mentioned later in the methods section; however, mentioning this in the introduction section will better help orient the reader to "school sandplay group counseling" as a mental health intervention provided by counselors, not teachers.

A9. Thank you for reading carefully. To help orient the reader, this word have been revised.

Revised sentence
This study uses the term "school sandplay group therapy," which implies the condition that can be briefly expressed as "in school, with therapist, as a class".
…”With therapist" refers to an organic partnership with homeroom teachers and therapist.

METHODS

Q10. Please clarify how participants were chosen for the study. All 4th to 6th graders? From there, it is clear who was excluded and why, but it is unclear how they were chosen in the first place.

A10 The reviewer requested a more detailed subject recruitment process, we added these contents. Thank you so much for your kind opinion.

Added sentence.
School sandplay group therapy programs were introduced to elementary schools located in Chungcheongnam-do, and two schools with over 600 students interested in research on the effects of school sand play group therapy were selected. In order to study the effects of children's sand play, grades 4-6, which can be self-reported, were selected. A total of 327 students in 12 classes, whose parents and
classroom teachers agreed to participate in the program, participated in the program. Among the 327, 16 intellectual disabilities and four transfer students were excluded from the study because no test was performed.

Q11. Please clarify how many students were in each small group- 10 to 16 as described in the abstract, or three to six as described in the Procedure section.

A11. We deleted this sentence
“The entire class, divided into small groups of three to six, participated in the group therapy.”

And we added more detailed the procedures of sandplay therapy as your opinion.

Revised sentence.
12 cabinets (100cm wide, 150cm high and 30cm deep) were placed in the treatment room, and a variety of miniatures (more than 9,000) such as people, transportation, plants, animals, buildings, food, furniture etc. Each student was provided with a sand tray 72 cm wide, 57 cm high and 7 cm deep, and about 10-16 students created their own sand work in the classroom. 3-4 students and 1 therapist gathered together to talk about their work and interact with each other to sympathize with each other. The therapist and group’s members were not changed during the program.

Q12. In the second paragraph of the procedures section "the communication sand tray of Boik and Goodwin" needs to be described. It is important for the reader to know how sandplay was conducted

A12. The phrase is not suitable for this sentence and has been deleted.

Deleted “ based on the communication sand tray of Boik and Goodwin [2].” Because of mismatching information(referencing error).

Q13 The next sentence, "The session process and program were also reconstructed with the application of Kalff's stages of ego development" is also very unclear. Perhaps this sentence could be omitted or explained better. This reviewer is an expert in Kalffian sandplay and could not make the connection between the procedures / prompts clearly articulated in Table 3 and Kalff's stages of ego development.

A13. After hearing your comments, we were very embarrassed. And very sorry for you. We follow Kalf's way in most sandplay settings. Nevertheless, directive words were used. We know that the use of directives was Dominico’s way. However, in the Korean school situation, it was inevitable to use a few directives to treat play to many students at the same time. And they were often used in other sand play therapy groups in Korea. If it's not acceptable for your treatment way, we'll discuss the shortcomings of our treatment very fully. I'm sorry again.

Revised sentences.

We used a few modified directive words from Dominico’s way, which led to the use of these specific directives to treat a large number of children at the same time in the context of Korean school sandplay therapy (Table 3).
Q14. The last paragraph of the procedure section makes it clear how sandplay is administered. It sounds very much like Kalffian sandplay. Then at the end we find Table 3 that shows prompts are given that are not used in Kalffian sandplay. Hence, it would help the reader to understand why these prompts were used. It is assumed they are used based on the work of Domenico or Boink and Goodwin??. Finally, a citation for Table 3 is missing from the Procedures section. Table 3 is a helpful addition.

A14. following sentence have been added and [Table 3] has been revised.

Added sentence.

[Table 3] applies Dominico's “therapist directed sand play” to group therapy, where lead counselors introduced a topic and an experience during the “intro” time of each session [2]. However, the principle is that children create their sand work freely and voluntarily.

Table 3. Directives of school sand play group therapy.

MEASURE

Q15. Measure is described adequately. Please add when the measure was administered and to whom: students and/or parents. Results are only reported for either student self report OR parent report. If only one of these measures was used, please clarify which one. If both were used then results need to be reported for both self report and parent report.

A15..

the contents of the abstract have been added.(=A1)

It was conducted to 141 male(49.6%) and 143 female(50.4%) students with questionnaires for their sex and age, assessing KCYP results at the point of baseline and post-therapeutic condition.

Reviewer 2:

Q16. Need to know more about the exact interventions/content of the "group counseling sessions" that occurred throughout the study. The authors refer to these sessions, but no information is provided regarding the content, the interventions, the prompts, etc.

A16. following sentence have been added.(A11)

Added sentence.

12 cabinets (100cm wide, 150cm long and 30cm wide) were placed in the treatment room, and a variety of miniatures (more than 9000) such as people, transportation, plants, animals, buildings, food, furniture etc. About 12-16 students conducted the program simultaneously in the same treatment room. One group consisted of 3-4 children, with one counselor assigned to the group. The counselor and group’s members were not changed during the program. The counseling was provided by a lead counselor who plans and oversees all of the counseling activities and 3 to 6 assistant counselors, who comprised certified sandplay therapy specialists or higher-level specialists.

Q17. How were the groups selected?
A17. Thank you. following sentence have been added.(A10)

Added sentence.
School sand play group counseling programs were introduced to elementary schools in Chungcheongnam-do, and two schools with over 600 students interested in research on the effects of school sand play group counseling were selected. In order to study the effects of children's sand play, grades 4-6, which can be self-reported, were selected. A total of 327 students in 12 classes, whose parents and classroom teachers agreed to participate in the program, participated in the program. Of the 327 participants, 20 intellectual disabilities and four transfer students participated in the program, but no test was conducted.

Q18. Where are the statistics that would provide evidence to support conclusions? What were the mean scores on the instruments administered and how significant were the differences in the pre/post assessment?

A18. I'm sorry. We had omissed table 4 during submission procedure.

Table 4. Changes in KCYP after 10 weeks of sandplay therapy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Before sandplay therapy</th>
<th>After 10 weeks of sandplay therapy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n=284)</td>
<td>(n=284)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M±SD</td>
<td>M±SD</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response reliability</td>
<td>47.98±9.67</td>
<td>45.65±9.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequency</td>
<td>48.02±9.28</td>
<td>46.81±9.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
<td>50.45±9.81</td>
<td>50.9±10.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>50.14±10.33</td>
<td>49.79±9.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego strength</td>
<td>54.32±10.26</td>
<td>55.87±10.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality distortion</td>
<td>50.58±9.99</td>
<td>49.21±9.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucination</td>
<td>50.85±10.37</td>
<td>48.49±8.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somatization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosomatic</td>
<td>49.99±9.78</td>
<td>47.99±9.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tension/Anxiety</td>
<td>49.46±9.56</td>
<td>47.48±9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypochondriacs</td>
<td>49.60±10.47</td>
<td>47.79±9.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional distractibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phobia</td>
<td>48.54±10.16</td>
<td>46.23±10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>48.62±9.68</td>
<td>46.23±10.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep problems</td>
<td>50.08±11.21</td>
<td>48.38±10.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introversion</td>
<td>48.31±10.17</td>
<td>46.75±9.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated feeling</td>
<td>49.32±8.70</td>
<td>48.50±7.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inattenttion</td>
<td>48.71±9.41</td>
<td>46.86±9.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactivity</td>
<td>48.88±9.34</td>
<td>48.07±9.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Delinquency
- Oppositionality: 46.54±17.49 vs 44.77±17.87, p = 0.045
- Conduct problem: 48.59±19.36 vs 45.63±19.58, p = 0.007

### Social relation
- Peer isolated feeling: 48.39±18.06 vs 47.06±18.92, p = 0.139
- Peer conflict: 44.78±16.82 vs 45.43±16.42, p = 0.417

### Family relation
- Parent conflict: 47.38±16.43 vs 43.59±15.91, p < 0.001
- Family discord: 45.46±19.65 vs 45.90±19.72, p = 0.596
- Learning difficulty: 48.11±9.58 vs 47.56±10.01, p = 0.361
- Media Indulgence: 49.54±9.42 vs 49.11±9.34, p = 0.398

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Q19. Who recorded information about what was being addressed in the sandtray creation?

A19. (The last paragraph of the procedure section).

Also, Counselors recorded the interactions of communication and empathy, and they observed the group dynamics and make therapeutic interventions. Thank you for your kind comments.