

Carlee Konz, Sesong Jeon, Emily D. Sorenson, Dr. Janet Melby, Jo Ann Lee, Kate Goudy-Haht

Parenting: It's a Life Teen Information Sources on Module Topics

Introduction

Parenting: It's a Life (PIAL) is a curriculum for middle and high school students that focuses on teaching how to build healthy life skills. The PIAL curriculum consists of 10 modules including topics such as: peer pressure, decision-making, healthy relationships, financial awareness, paternity, and child support.

The current study aimed to discover who teens were obtaining information from. Students marked that their previous understanding on PIAL module topics came from: parent, teacher, friend, or other. The second aim of this study was to examine how understanding of topics changed based on students marking that they have never obtained information from the previously listed recourses.

Research Questions

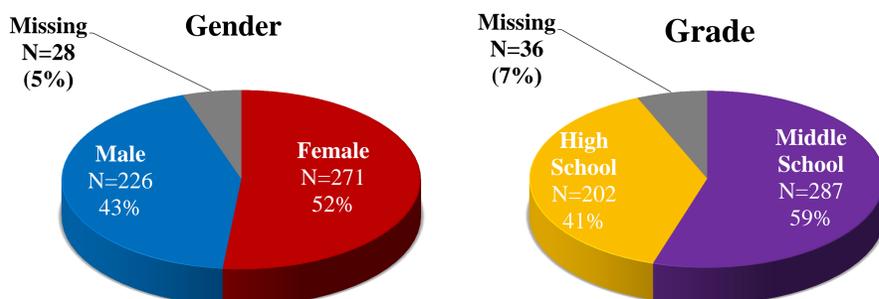
1. Who do students receive the majority of their information from regarding PIAL topics?
2. How do students' understanding change before and after PIAL module facilitation based on information source?

Methods

Data were collected in middle school and high school classrooms across the state of Iowa. PIAL reached 525 students, who completed 925 surveys based on the number of modules facilitated to their classroom. After module facilitation, a topic-focused survey was distributed. The survey used a pre-post design to evaluate program effectiveness and collect non-identifiable demographic information.

Analyses were run, using T-test, to determine from whom students get their information and how understanding on module topics change after facilitation, based on information source.

Participants



Results

Research question one examined where teens get their previous information from regarding PIAL topics. T-tests were used for analyses. Results indicated that female students tend to receive the majority of their information from parents compared to males ($p < .001$), while male students receive their information from friends compared to females ($p < .01$). High school participants indicated that they get the majority of their information from parents compared to middle schoolers, while middle schoolers received their information from teachers or friends compared to high schoolers (see figure 1).

Research question two looked at how the understanding of module objectives changed, after facilitation of PIAL modules. Specifically this question looked at students who marked that they had no previous information on PIAL modules from 3 of the 4 information sources (parent, teacher, friend). A t-test was run to determine the gain in knowledge after facilitation. Significant findings were found for participants receiving information from parents (see figure 2), teachers (see figure 3), or friends (see figure 4). The largest understanding difference was found for participants in high school who received their information from parents.

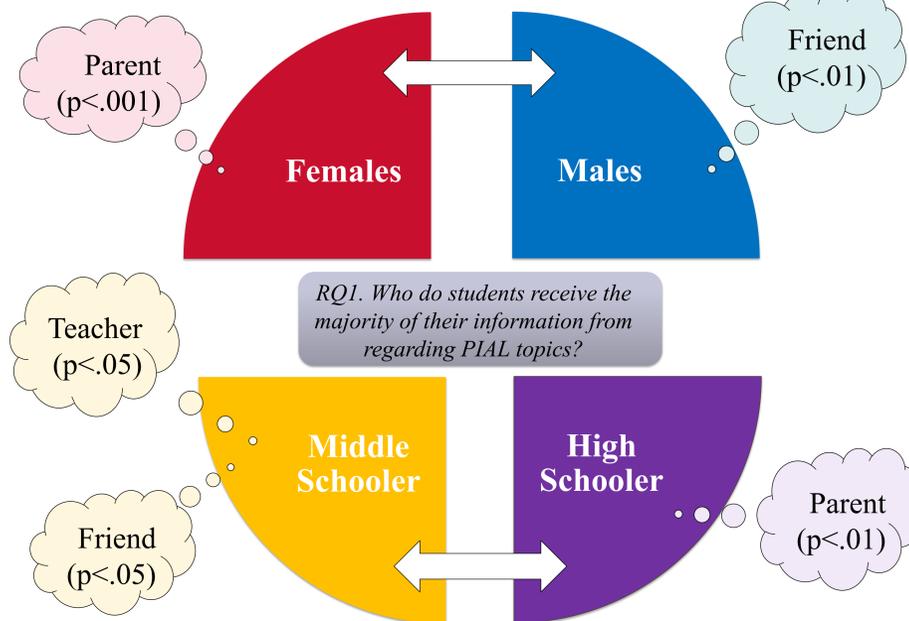


Figure 1. Students indicated source of understanding on PIAL topics. Two separate t-tests were run to compare gender and grade source of information.

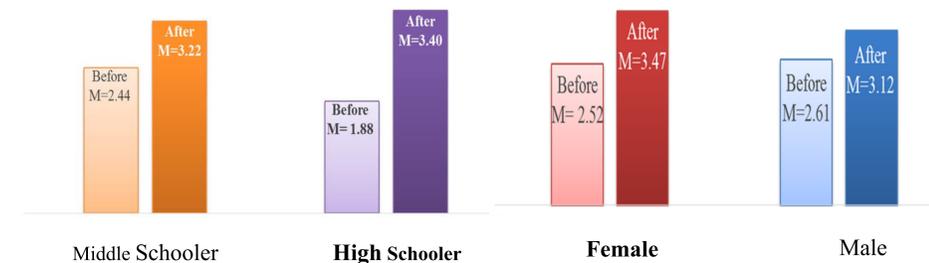


Figure 2. High students who indicated that they did not receive any information on module topics from parents displayed significant differences in understanding of material after PIAL module facilitation.

Figure 3. Female students who indicated that they did not receive any information on module topics from teachers displayed significant differences in understanding of material after PIAL module facilitation.

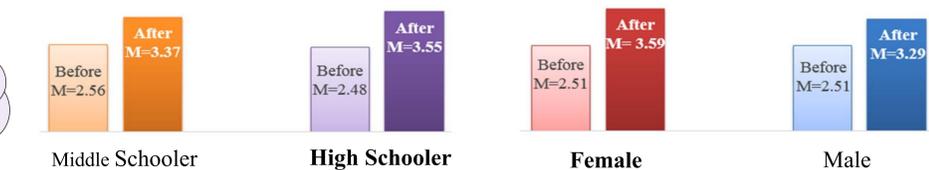


Figure 4. High students who indicated that they did not receive any information on module topics from friends displayed significant differences in understanding of material after PIAL module facilitation.

Figure 5. Female students who indicated that they did not receive any information on module topics from friends displayed significant differences in understanding of material after PIAL module facilitation.

Implications and Future Direction

Findings indicated that student source of PIAL module topics information vary based on grade and gender. From this study, teachers can become more aware of "prime" times to address topics similar to PIAL modules. Implementing a peer-to-peer learning activity would be another direction resulting from these findings. Males and middle schoolers tend to get more of their information from friends compared to females and high schoolers. Adding a peer learning component to the PIAL curriculum would be helpful to ensure that males and younger teens are adequately learning this information.

Another major finding in this study was how information source led to knowledge gained from PIAL modules. Findings indicate that when teens do not have any previous information of PIAL topics from parents that they have a more drastic gain in knowledge after facilitation. Future work could include creating an informational resource for parents in order to help initiate conversations with their teens on PIAL topics. Finally, future PIAL studies should include a "social media" option for information source.