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Introduction

Child protection services, legal and, mental health practitioners had been longing for a systematic way and integrative system for interviewing child victims in Taiwan. Child victims or witness in Taiwan still have to go through a long process and typically interviewed several times by different systems (social services, law enforcement, mental health and medical professionals) with different approaches. Given children's limited cognitive, linguistic, social capabilities and sensory-motor development, it requires specialized knowledge and training to interview children. When interviewed appropriately, children can be competent informants. In order to safeguard best practice, researchers and experts in the field have developed several interview protocols for interviewing child victims or witness. The protocol developed by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) by Lamb, Orbach, Hershkowitz, Esplin and Horowitz (2007) has been supported by plentiful research evidence and tested in many countries.

Given the lack of systematic training and established protocol for interviewing child victims or witness in Taiwan and the promising research findings of the NICHD protocol, the NTU Children and Family Research Center modified and translated the NICHD protocol into Mandarin, and provided training workshops for practitioners to further their knowledge in relevant area and to use the NICHD protocol for their practice.

Current Study

Sample

A total of 43 practitioners (including social workers, police officers, regional prosecutors and psychologists) participated in the 2-day-long NICHD training workshop. The workshop was designed to enhance practitioners' knowledge regarding children's cognitive development, memory, suggestibility, appropriate interview questions and techniques, and to use the NICHD interview protocol to conduct forensic interviews.

Procedure

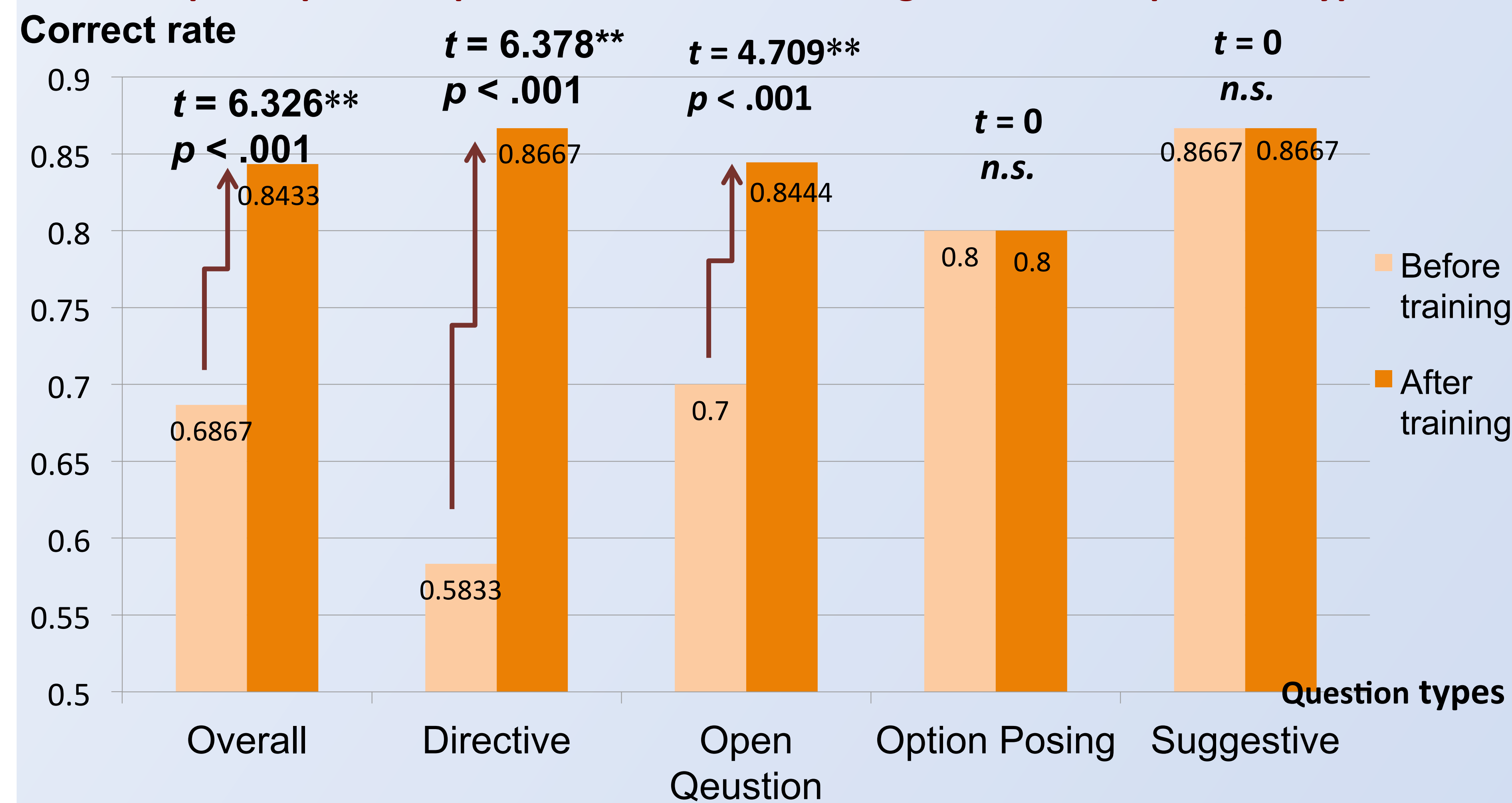
The participants of the workshop were asked to fill out the quiz before and after they took the workshop to evaluate their understanding of different types of questions and see if they have improved their knowledge regarding each question types. They were also asked to fill out a feedback form to evaluate their satisfaction of the workshop and to give suggestions or comments.

Measures

- **Question types quiz:** The quiz composed of 10 items. The first 9 items asked the participants to choose the correct question types from the choices, and the final item requested the participants to change a directive question to open question.
- **Feedback form:** The feedback form contained 3 items (5 point Likerts scale, 5- very satisfied and 1- very dissatisfied) and 2 open questions regarding suggestions or comments.

Results

1. Did participants improve their understanding of different question types?



Question Types:

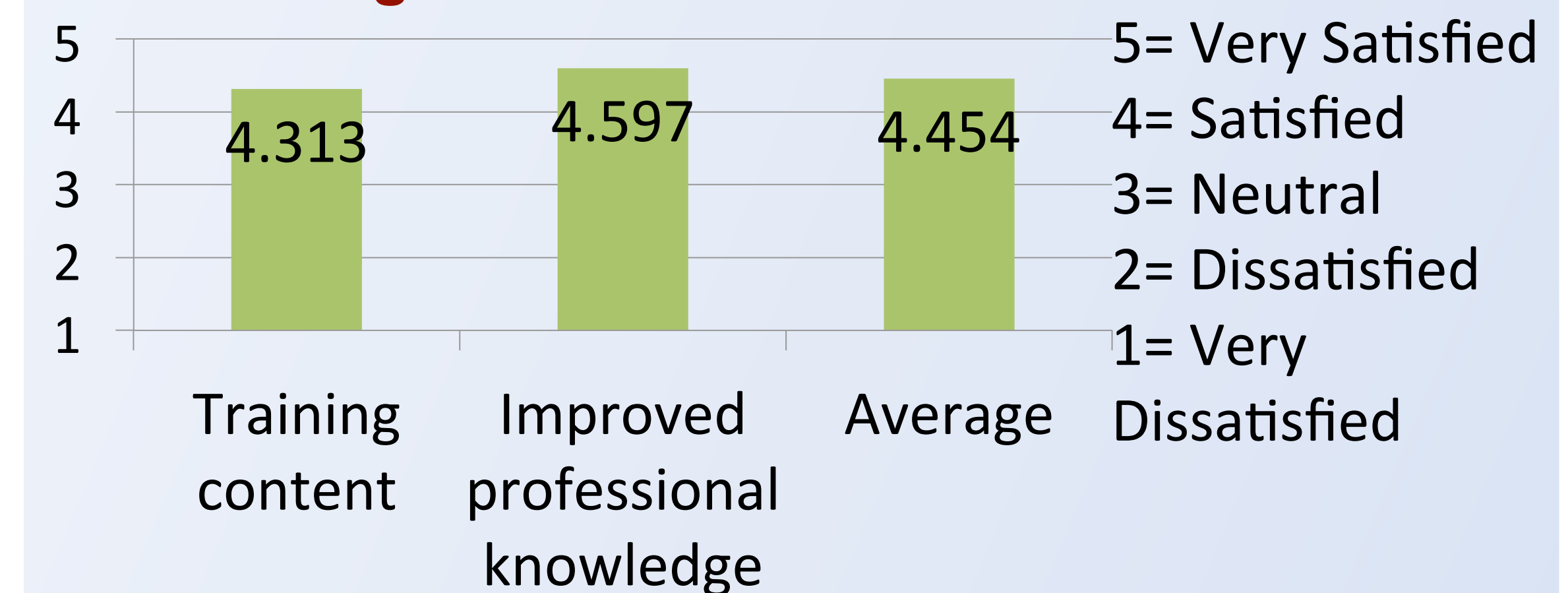
Directive questions: These questions **elicit specific, focused or targeted answers** from the interviewees, such as **wh**-questions (who, where, when, why, what) and **How**.

Open questions: These questions encourage interviewees to give non-targeted answers and give **more complete descriptions**. E.g., Tell me everything about that. And then? What happened? Tell me about...

Option posing: These questions requires interviewees **to choose the answer from the given options** within the questions, such as: Was he touching you over or under your clothes? Did he touch you?

Suggestive questions: Question **which contains information that was not mentioned by the interviewee before**.

2. How satisfied were the participants with the training?



The Satisfactory scores indicated that participants were satisfied with the workshop, both for the training content and thought it would help to improve their professional knowledge.

Conclusions

1. The NICHD training workshop did show promising preliminary results in improving practitioners' knowledge in interview question types, especially in directive and open questions.
2. The participants' feedback and overall satisfaction showed that they were satisfied with the training content which improved their professional knowledge.

Future Implications

The current study showed promising results of the NICHD training workshop in improving the practitioners' knowledge, however, whether it is suitable to adopt the NICHD interview protocol in Taiwan and whether Taiwanese children could benefit from such interview practice awaits future field study's confirmation.

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