

Extended Abstract

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Research paper

The Impact of a Rational Positive Parenting Program on the Parent-Child Relationship Among Mothers of Children with Specific Learning Disabilities

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Introduction

The parent-child relationship is a fundamental factor influencing children's emotional, cognitive, and social development (Shapourabadi et al., 2012). This relationship is particularly crucial in families with children who have specific learning disabilities, as these children face greater challenges in academic performance and cognitive processes, leading to increased tension in their interactions with parents (Aslani et al., 2016). Studies have indicated that parents of children with learning disabilities, especially mothers, are more susceptible to stress, anxiety, and even depression, which can negatively impact the quality of the parent-child relationship (Ashouri et al., 2016). In this regard, a rational positive parenting program, based on Bandura's social learning theory, focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors, reducing parent-child conflicts, and improving interactions between parents and children (Abbaszadeh et al., 2021). This program encourages parents to adopt effective behavioral strategies for managing their child's behavior and strengthens the parent-child bond through training in positive parenting techniques (Aslani et al., 2016). Given the significance of this issue, the present study examines the effectiveness of the rational positive parenting program in improving parent-child relationships among mothers of children with specific learning disabilities.

Method

This study employed a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with a control group. Participants included mothers aged 25 to 40 years, all of whom had children diagnosed with specific learning disabilities. A total of 60 participants were randomly assigned to either the experimental group (n=30) or the control group (n=30). Data were collected using two standardized instruments: the Parent-Child Conflict Scale and the Parent-Child Intimacy Scale, both designed to assess the quality of parent-child relationships in terms of emotional connection and conflict. The positive parenting intervention for the experimental group comprised eight training sessions, during which mothers were taught techniques to enhance positive interactions with their children. These strategies included positive reinforcement, emotional regulation, and methods for managing challenging behaviors. The control group did not receive any intervention during this period. Data analysis was conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality assessment, and Multivariate and Univariate Covariance Analyses (MANOVA and ANCOVA) to evaluate the effects of the intervention.

Results

The findings revealed significant improvements in parent-child relationships within the experimental group. Specifically, participants in the experimental group exhibited a considerable reduction in parent-child conflicts and a notable increase in intimacy following their participation in the rational positive parenting program. Statistical analyses indicated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in both conflict reduction and parent-child intimacy ($P < 0.001$). The effect size for conflict reduction was 0.936, while the effect size for improved intimacy was 0.711, highlighting the intervention's substantial impact on strengthening parent-child relationships. Furthermore, multivariate analysis showed that the positive parenting program accounted for 94.4% of the variance in the composite components of parent-child relationships.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the impact of the rational positive parenting program on the parent-child relationship among mothers of children with specific learning disabilities. The results demonstrated that the intervention significantly improved parent-child interactions, reduced conflicts, and increased intimacy between mothers and their children (Abbaszadeh et al., 2021; Aslani et al., 2016). Children with specific learning disabilities frequently encounter academic challenges that contribute to frustration and stress for both themselves and their parents. These difficulties often lead to increased tension in parent-child interactions (Shapourabadi et al., 2012). According to Bandura's social learning theory, the program assists parents in developing positive interaction skills through step-by-step behavioral strategies. By reinforcing positive behaviors and employing appropriate disciplinary methods, ineffective parent-child interactions are corrected, resulting in significant improvements in their relationship (Ashouri et al., 2016). Research has indicated that parents of children with learning disabilities, particularly mothers, experience heightened levels of anxiety and depression, which can negatively impact their ability to maintain a supportive relationship with their children. Thus, enhancing the parent-child relationship is critical for both maternal well-being and child development (Aslani et al., 2016). The rational positive parenting program provides a structured and practical approach that strengthens parenting skills and supports children's emotional and academic growth. Given its effectiveness, implementing the rational positive parenting program in educational and counseling centers is highly recommended. Educators and psychologists should incorporate this program into parent workshops to support families of children with learning disabilities. Future research should extend the study to include fathers and employ diverse data collection methods such as interviews and direct observations to gain deeper insights into the program's efficacy. Despite its limitations, such as focusing exclusively on mothers and relying on self-report questionnaires, this study highlights the rational positive parenting program as a valuable tool for strengthening parent-child relationships, reducing family stress, and ultimately contributing to children's social and academic success (Shapourabadi et al., 2012). The rational positive parenting program has proven to be an effective intervention for improving parent-child relationships, particularly among mothers of children with specific learning disabilities. By emphasizing positive communication, reinforcing desirable behaviors, and providing strategies for managing challenging situations, the program significantly reduces conflicts and enhances intimacy between parents and children. This research suggests that such programs should be integrated into educational and therapeutic environments to better support parents in addressing the unique challenges of raising children with learning disabilities. Based on the positive outcomes of this study, widespread implementation of the rational positive parenting program in educational and clinical settings is strongly recommended, as it can offer considerable benefits to families of children with learning disabilities. Moreover, future research should explore the program's applicability to fathers and expand data collection methods to include qualitative approaches such as interviews and observations to further validate its effectiveness.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical Code

This study was conducted with ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Guilan (Ethical Code: IR.GUILAN.REC.1401.004).

Financial Support

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Authors Contributions

Maedeh Mansourpour (Student): Collected data, conducted training, performed statistical analysis, and drafted the manuscript. Dr. Mehnaz Khosrojauid (Supervisor): Managed the research process and reviewed the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

No conflicts of interest were reported

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