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Investigating the Effectiveness of Positive Parenting Group Training on Aggression, Anxiety and Depression of Preschool Children

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The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of positive parenting group training on aggression, anxiety, and depression in preschool children. The research was also conducted semi-experimental with a research design of 2 groups (one experimental group and one control group) with pre-test and post-test. The statistical population includes preschool children in Tabriz City who were referred to two private clinics by their parents to solve behavioral problems (aggression, anxiety, and depression), who were selected randomly from two treatment centers, 20 children from each center. Before the implementation of educational programs. The two groups were tested by Beck's anxiety questionnaire (1967), Bass and Perry's aggression (1992), and Beck's depression (1964) tests. For the experimental group, the positive parenting training program was implemented in sessions of 90 minutes, and the control group did not receive anything. Finally, by answering the aggression, anxiety, and depression

questionnaires again, the parents did the post-test. These research data were analyzed using SPSS software and in two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics with MANOVA analysis. The research findings indicate that the positive parenting group training of parents has an effect on the level of aggression, anxiety, and depression of children and also reduces aggression, anxiety, and depression in preschool children.

Keywords: positive parenting by parents, aggression, anxiety, depression

The family is one of the fundamental institutions of society which plays an essential role in the formation of the personality of a healthy child and a happy adult. The influence of the family on the all-round development of a child is evident from the moment of birth and remains throughout his life. It is one of the effective factors in their physical and mental health (Stewart and Amsili, 2020). As one of the vulnerable age groups, children are exposed to a variety of mental disorders, including (aggression, anxiety, and depression) which is the most common type of mental injury in children and causes the most problems and disorders in their growth and development. The roots of many behavioral problems begin in childhood and reach the later periods of children's growth and development (Finan et al., 2019). The fact is that many families are not familiar with the areas of child development or are involved in their problems that expose the child to risks and psycho-social harm (Shin, 2021).

Behavioral and emotional problems of children are common and debilitating disorders that are the inevitable result of educational, cultural and social deficiencies, poverty, disease ignorance, misbehavior, illiteracy, ignorance, family disorders, lack of attention and lack of proper guidance in children. The process of growth and development is a serious obstacle in the child's emotional development and reaching the perfections that

are established in their essence and existence (Konrad et al., 2021). Parents have a very prominent role in the formation of the character and also the damage caused to the character of the children. Addiction and divorce of parents and inappropriate and unhealthy behaviors, blame and humiliation, numerous fights, unbalanced strictness, irreparable effects such as feelings of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence, despair, aimlessness, weak self-concept, aggression, anxiety, depression, etc. It creates a child's psyche. Behavioral disorders in children are common and debilitating disorders that cause many problems for families, parents and children themselves, and are associated with a high rate of social problems. (Brzezinski, 2019).

Teaching positive parenting to parents about the role of environmental and family factors causes the development of self-control skills. It affects various aspects of parenting and family functioning and has been introduced as a preventive solution for raising children with behavioral problems. High parental awareness, familiarity with educational problems and existing challenges play a significant role in the quality of positive parenting (Liu, 2020). The purpose of the positive parenting program of the Saunders model is to change the behavioral problems of children in the field of family education based on the principles of social learning. This program includes increasing the knowledge, self-confidence, and efficiency of parents and the social, emotional, linguistic, intellectual and behavioral competence of children (Lind Hard, 2020). In the etiology related to aggression, anxiety, and depression, the most important risk factor is the conflict with the autonomy, identity, and independence of the child, the strong reaction of the parents toward the natural behavior of the child during the period of

transformation opens the way for disobedience and aggression. Therefore, parents who do not supervise their children sufficiently, do not participate in their activities, and use violence and physical punishment increase aggression and anxiety in their children (Powell et al., 2020). The purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of positive parenting group training of parents on the level of aggression, anxiety, and depression of preschool children.

The results of the present research by Ercorica et al. (2022), Fan and Chen (2020), Johnston et al. (2020), Newman et al. (2023), about positive parenting group training for parents about each of the internal and externalizing problems of children showed that these training could reduce the psychological pressure of parents, especially mothers, and improve depression, anxiety and stress of parents, and as a result, reduce behavioral problems and increasing self-esteem and self-confidence of children. In the study conducted by Longworth et al. (2019), Steele, McKinney (2019), it was found that there is a direct relationship between aggression, anxiety, and depression of parents and the increase in children's behavioral disorders, as well as the study by Rohn and Carr (2019), Sexton (2019), show showed that the amount of behavioral disorders in children whose mothers had a history of depression is significantly higher than children who did not have such a history.

Method

The current research was conducted as a semi-experimental design with two groups (one experimental group and one control group) with pre-test and post-test. The statistical population studied included preschool children in Tabriz, who were

introduced to two private clinics by their parents to solve their problems (aggression, anxiety, and depression) before the implementation of the educational programs. 20 children were randomly selected from each center. Two groups of parents commented on their children with Bass and Perry's aggression questionnaire, Beck anxiety, and Beck depression (pre-test). Then, for the parents of the first center as the experimental group, the positive parenting training program was implemented in 8 sessions of 90 minutes. Still, the parents of the second center as the control group did not receive any training, finally, by re-answering the questionnaire on aggression, anxiety, and depression by the parents of both groups (post-test). It should be noted that the collected data has been analyzed using SPSS software and at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics with MANOVA analysis.

Instruments

Aggression Questionnaire

Bass and Mark Perry's Aggression Questionnaire (1992) has 29 questions and assesses four aspects of physical aggression (PA), verbal aggression (VA), anger (A), and hostility (H). The total score of the questions and its range is from 29 to 145, the results of the retest coefficient for four subscales (with an interval of 9 weeks) are .80 to .72 and the correlation between the four subscales is .38 to .49. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the internal validity of the scale. The results showed that the internal consistency of the subscale of physical aggression is .82, verbal aggression is .81, anger is .83, and hostility is .80. The score of the questionnaire was .89. Higher scores indicate greater aggression.

Anxiety questionnaire

The anxiety questionnaire by Beck (1967), which is a scale designed to measure the level of anxiety, includes 21 years. Beck's four-choice anxiety questionnaire is scored on a four-part scale from 0 to 3. Each test item describes one of the common symptoms of anxiety (psychological, physical, panic). The total score ranges from 0 to 63, and its items' correlation ranges from .30 to .71. Its alpha coefficient is 0.92, its reliability with the retest method after one week is 0.75, and the correlation of its items ranges from .30 to .76.

Depression Questionnaire

Beck's Depression Questionnaire (1964) contains 21 items that rank depression symptoms in three groups (emotional, cognitive, and physical) on a four-choice scale. Each subject gets a score between 0 and 3; therefore, the total score of the questionnaire varies from 0 to 63. The minimum and maximum total score of the clients fluctuates from 0 to 66. Beck et al. obtained a test-retest reliability coefficient of .93 at a one-week interval.

Group training of the positive parenting program of parents

Group training was designed by Saunders et al. (2014) in 8 90-minute training sessions at the University of Queensland, Australia. This program has been developed according to the intensity and power of intervention in five strategic levels regarding parenting with a preventive and supportive approach towards families, and the logical reason for the leveling of this program is the different levels of children's dysfunction and behavior as well as their different needs. The positive parenting

program aims to prevent and reduce children's emotional problems and behaviors, improve parenting skills, and increase parents' knowledge and confidence.

Table 1
Summary of Positive Parenting Sessions

The content of the meetings	
First session	Getting to know the members of the group, teaching group rules, the importance of parenting and a brief introduction of positive parenting, disobedience disorder, its symptoms and causes.
Second session	How to strengthen positive interactions between parents and children, using a good behavior table, modeling, presenting assignments.
third session	Teaching the concepts and descriptions of positive parenting, the reasons for children's behavioral problems, parents' emotional problems, how to record behavior, presenting assignments
Fourth session	Teaching skills to parents in order to control undesirable behaviors and teaching how to deal with problematic behavior, providing homework.
fifth session	Teaching how to control the child, reward for appropriate behavior, negative and undesirable behaviors
sixth session	Investigating parents' problems in how to communicate and deal with the child, presenting assignments
seventh session	Teaching behavior modification methods, teaching effective communication, teaching value differences, goals and expectations, presenting assignments
eighth session	Summarizing what has been learned, reviewing participants' questions, conducting post-tests

Procedure

First, aggression, anxiety, and depression questionnaires were implemented as a pre-test for the experimental and control groups, and the positive parenting training program was

implemented in 8 90-minute sessions for the experimental group, but the control group did not receive any training then the post-test questionnaires were administered to the two groups (test and control). This research data was done using SPSS software and at two levels of descriptive and inferential statistics with MANOVA analysis.

Results

The statistics related to three dependent variables (aggression, anxiety, depression) in the positive parenting group of parents and the control group are shown in Table 2. The average level of aggression, anxiety and depression of children in the positive parenting groups of parents and control in the pre-test and post-test stages are given in the table below.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of the Research Test in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Descriptive Statistics				
	Group	Mean	S. D.	N
Anxiety	Positive parenting	42.1000	11.38281	20
	Control	42.5500	6.97722	20
	Total	42.3250	9.32157	40
Aggression	Positive parenting	74.8000	24.70585	20
	Control	78.5500	27.73839	20
	Total	76.6750	25.99644	40
Depression	Positive parenting	38.9500	8.34440	20

Control	38.0000	8.36031	20
Total	38.4750	8.25860	40

The results of the Table show that the mean scores of the variables (aggression, anxiety and depression) have changed in the pre-test and post-test. Also, the total scores (aggression, anxiety and depression) of children in the positive parenting group training of parents decreased in the post-test, while in the control group, the scores (aggression, anxiety and depression) of children did not change.

Levin's test in Table 3 to check the hypothesis of error covariance homogeneity. (For each dependent variable, the results are obtained separately).

Table 3

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Anxiety pass	9.954	1	38	.003
Aggression pass	14.562	1	38	.000
Depresion pas	29.143	1	38	.000
The null hypothesis indicates that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.				
a. Design: Intercept + EF + PF + AF + Group				

Table 3 shows the measurement and the test of equality of covariances using Levine's statistic. Because the significance level of Levin's test is less than .05, as a result, there is a

significant difference between the covariances, so the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 4

Multivariate Tests

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.
Group	Pillai's Trace	.491	10.625 ^b	3.000	33.000	.000
	Wilks' Lambda	.509	10.625 ^b	3.000	33.000	.000
	Hotelling's Trace	.966	10.625 ^b	3.000	33.000	.000
	Roy's Largest Root	.966	10.625 ^b	3.000	33.000	.000
	a. Design: Intercept + EFpas + PFpas + AFpas + Group					
	b. Exact statistic					

Table 4 MANCOVA was used to analyze the effect of the intervention on all variables. The results of the Table show that the significance level of all four related multivariate statistics (Pillai's trace, Wilk's lambda, Hotelling's red and the largest zinc root) is equal to .000, which is less than the value of alpha (.05), so it is significant. . Therefore, there was a significant difference between the two groups in at least one dependent variable.

Table 5
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Group	Anxiety	1	597.640	11.685	.002
	Aggression	1	917.197	10.201	.003
	Depression	1	206.457	5.758	.022

The results of Table 5 show that there is a significant difference between the scores of the subjects and the control group, because in the grouping of the variables, the significance value is less than .05, so there is a significant difference between the groups. The difference between the results of the two experimental and control groups ($p=.002$ and $F=11.685$). Therefore, we conclude that the positive parenting training program for parents was more effective on children's aggression, anxiety and depression than the control group.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of positive parenting group training of parents on the level of aggression, anxiety, and depression of preschool children. The results obtained from the findings of the current research showed that positive parenting group training of parents is effective on the level of aggression, anxiety, and depression of preschool children. Also, the findings showed that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The implementation of the group training program for the experimental group will reduce the problems and behavioral

disorders in children, improve the relationship between parents and children, and increase the self-esteem, sense of competence, intimacy, security, The result of this research with the research findings of Pinkwart, Kergi (2019), Spataro et al. (2020), Miter et al. (2019), Cardona Izaza (2021), Costa et al. (2020), Yoon et al. (2019), Manti et al. (2019), Zuquette et al. (2019), Mak et al. (2020) is aligned.

The results of the present study showed that the effect of group training was more than the control group, the research also confirms this issue. In their research, they concluded that positive parenting training for parents increases the child's temperamental characteristics in interacting with others, and also reduces children's problematic behaviors that are caused by biological, environmental, and family factors. Therefore, it can be concluded that parents' awareness of positive parenting leads to the reduction of children's behavioral and emotional problems and the elimination of anxiety, aggression, and the improvement of mother-child quality. (Hornor et al., 2020).

In addition to this group training, positive parenting of parents is closely related to the psychological problems of parents, especially mothers, and their educational methods. The mother-child relationship is one of the strengths that can transform a child into a complete, evolved and normal human being (Kwak et al., 2020). Considering the importance of childhood and the necessity of training parents in dealing with their children properly, using emotional, communication and social skills increases the knowledge and skills of parents and the growth and development of children. Personality in children By participating in the educational program, parents gain a correct understanding of the nature of children's behavioral

problems and appropriate methods of dealing with children, how to control and restrain their children's challenging behaviors, and ultimately contribute to the children's well-being (Ercurica et al. colleagues, 2022).

Also, the research findings determined that for differentiation of self, there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. As a result As, positive parenting group training for parents is superior to other methods due to the coordination of both parents in raising children, because the emotional and behavioral support of fathers to mothers reduces the tensions and mental disorders of mothers. It increases self-confidence and reduces behavioral and emotional problems of children. Therefore, the positive parenting group training program of parents can increase the level of self-efficacy of parents by combining the knowledge and ability of both parents. Parent bonding is one of the new methods of raising children. The results of this research are consistent with the results of Maya et al. (2020), Kim, Kim (2021), Arsen (2020), (Christopher et al., 2020). In explaining these findings, Since the child is a vulnerable being and is not able to take care of himself alone, the support of both parents from birth to childhood is necessary to maintain the life of the child, so family disputes, lack of warm relationship between parents, the risk of behavioral and emotional problems. and increase negative emotions such as failure, aggression and frustration in children (Sandu et al., 2021).

Limitations

Finally, this research was associated with limitations, such as ignoring other variables affecting parental correlation and other

children's behavioral problems. Also, this research shows the short-term effects of these interventions and does not include the long-term effects. Another limitation of the current research is the caution in generalizing the results due to time and cost limitations and the difference in the amount of family problems among parents. The results of this research can open the way for psychologists and counselors of welfare and educational centers to take effective steps in education. Also, considering the effect of parenting, mental health, and the quality of the mother-child relationship and the effect of these variables on children's behavioral problems, group training of parents is suggested.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest

Following the Principles of Research Ethics

In this research, the ethical standards were carefully observed and the general principles of the research were explained to the participants, the participants were assured that their personal information would remain confidential and the principle of professional confidentiality would be fully implemented. Also, if the subjects did not want to continue to cooperate, it was possible to leave the research without negative consequences so that they do not feel forced to participate in the meetings. This study was part of the results of the doctoral thesis of Mrs. Maryam Mohdnejad, a doctoral student in the field of educational psychology at the Islamic Azad University, Tabriz branch, with the code IR.IAU.TABRIZ.REC.1400.183.

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