Psychological Achievements

(Psychol Achiev), 2025
32(*Special Issue*), 235-254
Received: 21 Oct 2024
Accepted: 06 Mar 2025
DOI: 10.22055/psy.2024.46659.3244

ISSN (E): 2588-6649
https://psychac.scu.ac.ir/

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Publish Free

Research Article

Comparison of the Parenting Educational Package for Children with Specific Learning Disorders Based on Parents' Lived Experience and Barkley Parenting Education on students' psychological resilience, Social Adjustment, and Students' Academic Performance

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Keywords:
Specific learning disorders; Parenting educational package based on parents' lived experiences; Barkley parenting training; Psychological resilience; Social adjustment; Academic performance.

Citation:
Dehghani, M. H., Faramarzi, S., & Ramezani, Kh. (2025). Comparison of the Parenting Educational Package for Children with Specific Learning Disorders Based on Parents' Lived Experience and Barkley Parenting Education on students' psychological resilience, Social Adjustment, and Students' Academic Performance, *Psychological Achievements, 32*(Special Issue), 235-254.

Abstract

Objectives: The aim of the study was to compare the parenting educational package for children with specific learning disorders based on parents' lived experience and Barkley Parenting Education on students' psychological resilience, social adjustment, and academic performance.

Methods: This was a mixed-methods study: an exploratory qualitative phase followed by a quantitative quasi-experimental phase with pre-test, post-test, control group, and follow-up. The qualitative population comprised parents of children with specific learning disorders; semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 parents using purposive sampling until thematic saturation, and data were analyzed by thematic analysis. The quantitative population comprised mothers of students with specific learning disorders referred to the Abadeh Learning Disorders Center in 1402. Forty-five mothers were selected by convenience sampling and randomly assigned to three 15-member groups: parenting educational package based on parents' lived experiences, Barkley parenting training, and control. Each intervention consisted of eight 90-minute sessions. Measures were the Connor-Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (2003), Bell Social Adjustment Questionnaire (1961), and Pham and Taylor Academic Performance Questionnaire (1999). Data were analyzed using MANOVA and repeated-measures ANOVA.

Results: The results showed a significant difference between the effectiveness of the two methods of parenting training package based on parents' lived experiences and Barkley parenting training on students' social adjustment and academic performance among students with specific learning disorders, while there was no significant difference between the effectiveness of the two methods on students' psychological resilience.

Conclusion: The parenting training package based on parents' lived experiences can be used to improve students' psychological resilience, social adjustment, and academic performance.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Specific learning disorders (SLD) are common neurodevelopmental issues in elementary students, persisting into adulthood without proper intervention. DSM-5 reports a 5% global prevalence, while Iran's rate reaches 12%. A child with SLD generates family tensions, particularly affecting mothers who face significant psychological and social burdens. Resilience—the capacity to adapt to adversity—mitigates these strains, with family communication patterns playing a key role in its development. Social adjustment, defined as balancing individual needs with societal expectations, improves alongside resilience. Academic performance, a critical educational outcome, is strongly shaped by parent-child dynamics and family climate. Among effective interventions, Barkley's parenting training focuses on behavioral inhibition and fostering positive parent-child relationships. Given the pivotal role of mothers and the necessity of modifying interaction patterns, this study compared a parenting educational package based on parents' lived experiences, against Barkley's approach. The aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of these two parenting training methods on the psychological resilience, social adjustment, and academic performance of students with SLD.

Method

This research was conducted with a mixed approach (qualitative-quantitative). In the qualitative part, to develop a parenting training package, semi-structured interviews were used with 10 parents of children with specific learning disabilities using purposive sampling until theoretical saturation. Content analysis of the interviews was conducted in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding, and eight main themes were extracted, including parenting styles, parental emotional self-awareness, parent-child relationship, child behaviorism, increasing desirable behavior, shaping behavior, preventing undesirable behavior, and problem solving. The closed-ended content validity was confirmed by 10 university professors and the content validity ratio (CVR) was 0.91. In the quantitative part, a semi-experimental study was conducted with a pre-test, post-test, and three-month follow-up design with two experimental groups and one control group. The statistical population included mothers of students with specific learning disabilities who referred to the Abadeh City Center for Learning Disorders Education. Among the eligible mothers (full consent, having at least a high school diploma, not receiving psychological interventions in the past 6 months, having a child with a specific learning disability), 45 were selected by convenience sampling and randomly assigned to three groups of 15 (experimental group 1: parenting educational package based on parents' lived experiences, experimental group 2: Barkley parenting training, control group: no intervention). The research instruments included the Connor-Davidson Resilience Questionnaire (with a reliability of 0.80), the Bell Social Adjustment Questionnaire (with a reliability of 0.88), and the Pham and Taylor Academic Performance Questionnaire (with a reliability of 0.86). Both interventions were implemented in 8 90-minute sessions. Data were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance and multivariate analysis of variance with SPSS-26 software.

Findings

Demographic findings showed that most mothers in all three groups were in the age group

of 35-40 years, had a diploma education and had one child. The results of the analysis of variance with repeated measures showed that there was a significant difference between the effectiveness of the two methods of the parenting training package based on parents' lived experiences and the Barkley parenting training on students' social adjustment and academic performance ($P<0.01$ and $P<0.001$, respectively), while there was no significant difference on students' psychological resilience ($P>0.05$). The results of the LSD post hoc test showed that the parenting training package based on parents' lived experiences had a greater effect on improving social adjustment (with a mean difference of -5.29 at post-test and -5.16 at follow-up) and academic performance (with a mean difference of 21.46 at post-test and 21.60 at follow-up) than the Barkley parenting training. The mean post-test and follow-up scores in the experimental groups increased in psychological resilience and academic performance and decreased in social adjustment (indicating improvement) compared to the control group.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, both parenting training methods (researcher-designed package and Barkley training) were effective in improving the variables under study, but the researcher-designed parenting training package, which was prepared based on the parents' lived experience and appropriate to the regional culture, had a greater impact on the social adjustment and academic performance of students with specific learning disorders. This superiority could be due to the package's content being consistent with the cultural and educational needs of Iranian families and paying attention to the parents' real experiences. The lack of significant differences in the effects on students' psychological resilience indicates that both training approaches had similar effects on this variable. Given the limitations of the study, including being limited to mothers in Abadeh city, it is suggested that counseling centers and welfare organizations use both parenting training methods to support students' psychological resilience, social adjustment, and academic performance, and that parenting training workshops be held for mothers. Further research with larger samples and in different cities is also recommended for greater generalizability of the results.

Author Contributions: In the present study, Salar Faramarzi (second author), as the supervising professor, oversaw and guided the overall research process, including the development and finalization of manuscript revisions. Mohammad Hossein Dehghani (first author) was responsible for designing the research plan, conducting the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of findings, and drafting the manuscript. Overall, the conclusion drawn from the findings, as well as the elaboration and interpretation, were carried out jointly through discussion and exchange of views among all colleagues, with the collaboration of Khosro Ramezani (third author), who served as the thesis advisory professor.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to express their sincere appreciation to all individuals, institutions, or organizations that provided scientific, technical, editorial, or administrative support during the conduct of this research or the preparation of this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Funding: The authors declare that no funds, grants, or other financial support were received during the conduct of this research or the preparation of this manuscript.