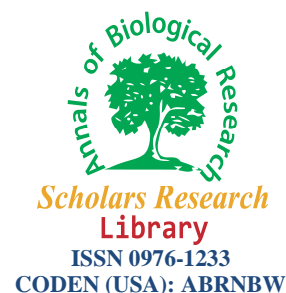




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The Effectiveness of Mother-Child Relational Enrichment Training on Mother's Personal Wellbeing and Family Function

Mohammad Jafar Daneshjoo¹; Shiva khalili², Masoud Gholamali Lavasani³, Ghasemali Khoshnod³ and Samira hoseinpour⁴

¹Faculty of Psychology and Education Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

²The Department General of Fars Province Education, Fars, Iran

³Faculty of Psychology and Education Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

⁴Faculty of Geography, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate effectiveness of mother-child relational enrichment training on mother's personal wellbeing and family function. This study was a quasi-experimental research (pre-test and post-test design). Forty mothers of high-school student were selected randomly and assigned to control and experimental groups (each group included 20 mothers). Mothers of experimental group participated to 8 instruction sessions of relational enrichment. Instruments were psychological wellbeing questionnaire and family Assessment Device (FAD). The result showed that mother-child relational enrichment training had significant effects on personal wellbeing of mothers ($p < 0.05$). The independent t-test showed that this method of instruction had not improved family function among mothers ($p > 0.05$), but this instruction had significant effects on subscales (communication and affective responsiveness).

Keywords: Mother-child relational enrichment, Personal wellbeing, Mothers, Family function

INTRODUCTION

Family is a unique social system in which the membership forms based on biological, emotional, geographical, historical and legal factors. Unlike other social systems, people enter to family system through birth, adaptation or marriage and their membership of family systems expires only by death. Family is the most basic social association and the main part of society. Achieving a healthy society is due to healthy family in which members have mental health and suitable relationship with each other [1].

Infant relationship problems may be the most common problem of people who seek to different kinds of treatment. One of the main concerns of parents especially for mothers is how to treat and contact with their children. Parent education is one of the most appropriate ways to prevent and treat behavioral problems of adolescents. Wagonseller and McDowell (1994), believed most of home and school problems of adolescents can be solved by parents who have a good perception about how to establish an effective and accurate relationship [2]. Most of parents think many of situations in their children lives are out of their control, while they are able to bring up children who act better in

different situations and their social skills and awareness of interpersonal relationships are developed properly. The world “adolescent” itself remains some special features and conditions. Teenagers have always had special conflict with their parents and other members of their family. Almost all the psychologists believe that adolescence period is the most critical, important and sensitive step of everyone’s life. A person comes to maturity and searches for her/his personality and separation from childhood dependences, so teenager doesn’t have a stable mental mood and most of behavioral problems grow in this period of life [3]. Mental well-being or mental health of people is one of issues that gained from a special importance in recent years. Pathological approach to human health study experienced some critics in recent years. New approaches emphasis on wellness instead of having any illness or bad mood, while Pathological approach defines health as not having any illness [4]. Lack of illness symptoms is not healthiness characteristic, but happiness, self-confidence, compatibility and other similar positive features show healthiness and the main goal of a person life is to flourish her/his abilities [5]. On the other hand one of issues that researches have always been studying is family function. Healthy and functional family is the open system that its members gain from warm emotional relationships, while they preserve their personal identities. Love is unconditional, members accept each other, family threshold is high against stress and conflict and all of family members help each other voluntarily when it’s needed [6]. On the opposite side inefficient family is not able to provide evolutionary needs, solve its problems and conflicts and its functions are disturbed. There is some chaos in power structure and relationships in such families. Relationships pattern is inefficient and disturbed because there are many Contradictions and free expression of emotions is not encouraged in this type of families. Since conversation and discussion are rare and limited between members, the family is disturbed and experiences a lot of difficulties for solving its problems [7]. So it's essential to teach inefficient families and families that have a Disturbed relationship pattern to turn them to efficient and healthy families. Shollenberger (2001) studied effectiveness of relational enrichment on marital compatibility promotion. They carried out on 28 couples and reported that the method increase marital compatibility, assistance and agreement on marital problems[8]. Duquette (2001) has studied enrichment effectiveness on general and marital compatibility in couples suffering from HIV[9]. They reported that the intervention was effective. The couples participated in the courses were also more ready and acceptant for learning how they can deal with their illness and they were also more willing to apply specialists’ recommendations. Brock and Joanning (1983) compared relational enrichment with couples interaction training programs in a composite sample of distressed and non-distressed couples[10]. The results show that relational enrichment is effective on improving couples interaction and satisfaction. Relational enrichment is not restricted to couples relationship, but also includes fruitful interactions between parents and their children. Previous researches on relational enrichment focused more on relationship between couples, but the importance of parents role in children education, mentioned issues, the importance of relationship topic and lack of related researches in this field in Iran rise a question that whether mother-child relational enrichment affects personal wellbeing and family functions or not?

Thus three research hypotheses are: First, training by relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being of parents. Second, training by parent - child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being factors (life satisfaction, positive relationship with others, spirituality, joy and optimism, personal growth and development and self-culture). Third, training by mother-child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on the general function of the family from the perspective of mothers.

Table 1. Explanation of 8 sessions of family education class

Session	Topic
1	Making initial contact, explaining the objectives and methodology, reviewing of existing problems in the family.
2	Training receptive listening skills (reflection of feelings, nonverbal communication (eye contact), to avoid asking a lot of questions and interrupt others).
3	Training rational speaking skills (expressing latent feelings, Training to avoid scandal, negative attribute and generalization)
4	Training problem-solving method (training problem-solving method, problem definition, and brain storming, offering alternative solutions, decision making, applying and implementing the solution).
5	Training discussion skills (coordination with their wife and children, enjoyable conversation, listening with interest to the other family members, to avoid interrupting the other family members).
6	Training empathy skills (training the skill of make attention to others, appropriate physical activity, eye contact, etc.), training follow up skills (using short encouragement, attentive silence and so on), empathic understanding, avoiding criticism, minimizing the significance of a problem or enlarging it).
7	Training self-expression skills and assertive behavior, turning (coordination with their wife and children, enjoyable conversation, listening with interest to the other family members, to avoid interrupting the other family members).
8	Training anger management skill (defining and explaining the violence, symptoms, reasons and consequences of violence, aggression control techniques, ways of expressing aggression in different people).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Forty parents of male students form population of the investigation and sampling method available. The researchers informed parents about the aim and process of this investigation by the students. Then they selected mothers who had more communicational problems with their children and placed them randomly in 2 group; experimental and control groups (each group including equally 20 parents). The experimental group participated in 8 sessions of family education class as relational enrichment (Table 1).

Instruments

Psychological Well-being Questionnaire was used in this study. This questionnaire was created by Zanjani Tabasi (2005) to measure psychological well-being. The scale of psychological well-being measurement contains 77 questions which prepared based on psychometric principles and methods. This test is composed of 6 subscales including; life satisfaction, spirituality, happiness and optimism, personal growth and development, positive relationships with others and self-culture. Reliability of psychological well-being scale was evaluated by two methods; internal consistency and retesting. Cronbach's alpha method is used to estimate the internal consistency of the scale, the validity coefficient of total scales 0.94. This coefficient is between 0.62 and 0.90 in the sub-tests. Developed psychological well-being scale has been implemented twice in an interval of two weeks on a single group of subjects. Correlation coefficient obtained for the total scale is 0.76 and for sub-tests is between 0.67 to 0.73 which is significant ($p < 0.01$). Validity of psychological well-being scale was evaluated in two ways, content validity and construct validity. Evidences dependent on content: developed scale of psychological well-being and its dimensions and components were submitted to the professors, experts and scholars and recognized as valid and relevant according to the theoretical framework [11].

Family Assessment Device (FAD): The McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD), a newly developed questionnaire designed to evaluate families according to the McMaster Model of Family Functioning. The FAD is made up of 7 scales which measure problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavior control and general functioning. Family assessment device subscales with alpha coefficients of 0.72 to 0.92 of internal consistency is good [12].

Statistical analysis

For data analysis and to compare the differences between two groups, independent t-test was used. Paired sample t-test was used to assess differences within every group. A significant level was set at the 95% confidence level for all statistical parameters ($p < 0.05$).

RESULTS

The profiles of age for participants are presented in table 2. It is indicated from the table that average age of the experimental group (39 years) is lower than the control group (41 years).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for age of subject

Group	Mean	Standard deviation
Experimental	39	5.6
Control	41	4.87

The table 3 indicates showed educational level that has been divided to four sectors (Less than diploma, diploma, Associate degree and Bachelor Degree) and most members participating in the experimental group and control have a diploma degree. And minimum participants are those who have a Bachelor degree. Frequency of participants with Associate degree and less than diploma degrees are also separate categories in the table above. Moreover, minimum participants are those who have a Bachelor degree. Many people with degrees and Associate degree graduates are also mentioned for separate groups in the table 3.

First hypothesis: Training by relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being of parents. Independent t-test and paired sample t-test was used to analyze the hypothesis.

The results showed a significant difference ($t=3.5, p=0.001$) between the experimental group (27.95 ± 8.17) and control group (10.15 ± 7.07). The research hypothesis that shows the difference between experimental group and control group was accepted. As a result, training by relational enrichment method had a positive effect on personal well-being of mothers.

The paired sample t-test indicated there is not any significant difference between scores of control group of pre-test (271.8 ± 35.4) and post-test (261.6 ± 31.7); ($p=0.168, t=1.43$).

Table 3. Educational level of participants

Number of children	Less than diploma		Diploma		Associate degree		Bachelor Degree	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Experimental	6	30	7	35	5	25	2	10
Control	6	30	7	35	4	20	3	15
Total	12	60	14	70	9	45	5	25

Second hypothesis: Training by mother - child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being factors (life satisfaction, positive relationship with others, spirituality, joy and optimism, personal growth and development and self-culture) has a positive impact.

Life satisfaction subscale

An independent t-test showed between experimental group (8.9 ± 2.29) and control group (2.4 ± 2.16) in life satisfaction subscale ($t=3.58, p=0.001$). The results indicate that the experimental group has a significant progress in life satisfaction subscale compared to the control group.

Spirituality

The differences in spirituality sub-scale ($p=0.025, t=2.33$) was significant between the experimental group (3.35 ± 2.13) and control group (2.58 ± 1.56). The results indicate a significant enhancement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Happiness and optimism subscales

The difference of happiness and optimism subscale was significant between the experimental (4.7 ± 2.2) and control group (1 ± 1.5), ($p=0.037, t=2.16$). The results indicate a significant enhancement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Personal growth and development subscale

The results did not show significant difference between the experiment (1.65 ± 1.03) and the control group (1.05 ± 0.9) in growth and development subscales ($p=0.060, t=1.93$). The results indicate a significant enhancement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Self-culture subscales

The difference of self-culture subscales was significant between the experiment (6.1 ± 1.62) and control group (1.95 ± 1.5), ($t=3.65, p=0.001$). The research hypothesis which indicates the difference between the experiment and the control groups was accepted.

The positive relationship with people subscale

The differences of relationship subscale was significant between the experimental (3.35 ± 1.13) and control group (1.10 ± 0.9), ($t=3.01, p=0.005$). The results indicate a significant enhancement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Third hypothesis: Training by mother-child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on the general function of the family from the perspective of mothers.

General function subscale of family

The results did not show any significant difference between the experimental group (2.80±1.18) and the control group (0.60±1.28) (t=1.94, p=0.059). The results indicate that training by mother-child relational enrichment method has no positive effect on general function subscale.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research was to make effective mother-child relational enrichment on personal well-being of mothers of high school students. 40 mothers was chosen and randomly assigned in two groups (each group 20 person). The research results indicate that training as parent-child relational enrichment is efficient on personal well-being of mothers of high school students. Previous researches done on the parents and couples reported a communication is a process of mental training. In other words, parents and young couples need to be educated in communicational field in order to compensate their deficiencies and eliminate their relational problems[13].

Goldstein and Ellison (2002) indicated that problem solving training of mothers cause to improve their parental role. Roles of a healthy family are assigned to two parental and marital sub categories in which they support and complete each other. Parental and marital roles are also more important in identity formation of children and adolescents. Other researchers also indicated that behavior change of parents take less time and cost, and sometimes even changing must begin from them, especially when there are communicational problems or when parents suffer from a psychological disorder[14]. Moreover, parents training lead to behavioral improvement of mothers and consequently their children [15].

The first hypothesis: Training by relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being of parents. It is generally accepted that relational enrichment approach is one of the best educational approaches in the realm of psychology and counseling, because people are more likely to be labeled in therapeutic cares, and they are more willing to participate in a training program rather than a treatment program. Therefore, the participants would be more interested to attend in this kind of research and would transfer discussed subjects to their children and families. It seems that if we also wanted to survey the first hypothesis theoretically and logically, can be conclude that there is a high possibility for positive impact of relational enrichment method on personal well-being of mothers, since one of the important dimensions of personal well-being is communication and making a positive relationship with others and one of well-being effect is positive relationship with others. Also the most important part of relational enrichment approach is making a healthy relationship with other people. There is a great emphasis on active listening, clear speaking and feelings expression in relational enrichment approach and these can have a positive effect on personal well-being of mothers. The results of this study are consistent with an investigation[16] that had carried out the effect of relational enrichment on improving self-esteem and different dimensions of communication. The results had shown that relational enrichment approach improves self-esteem. Our results also showed conflicting with the study of Murray et al. (2002)[17]. The results are in agreement with a research done by According and Guerny (1998). The study indicated that relational enrichment program increases adaptation and mental health of prisoners [18].

Second hypothesis: Training by parent-child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on personal well-being factors (life satisfaction, positive relationship with others, spirituality, joy and optimism, personal growth and development and self-culture). Statistical data analysis has been done separately for each one of personal well-being subscales, but all of them are presented as one hypothesis. The hypothesis testing: the effect of parent-child relational enrichment training on life satisfaction factor (personal well-being) indicated that: training by relational enrichment method has a positive impact on life satisfaction (personal wellbeing) of mothers and this kind of training has improved life satisfaction of mothers in experimental group as reported in table 4. Life satisfaction is a common variable in statistical studies and a determinant index of healthiness and well-being of people [19]. Positive psychology is one of the prospective areas where currently it is important to life satisfaction is an index to measure mental health. The majority of researches are based on protective factors and health improvement due to the necessity of positive-oriented psychology; Life satisfaction as an index to measure mental health of people is one of important factor for positive-oriented psychologists now. Previous researchers have been proposed several factors of life satisfaction which family has the major role on life satisfaction of people among the other factors [20]. The results of this part are consistent with researches of Yalcin and Brumberg(2007), and Troy(2005). Yalcin and Brumberg(2007) investigated communicational skills to 28 couples. Experimental group has shown a higher life satisfaction and marital compatibility in comparison with control group at the end of the course [21].

TheTroy(2005)also indicated that the most important factor effective on relationship satisfaction is communicational skills [22].The results that referred to the effect of parent-child relational enrichment training on spirituality factor (personal well-being) indicated that training by relational enrichment method has a positive impact on spirituality factor and this training has increased spirituality rate of mothers in experimental group.The results of research refer to evaluate the hypothesis considered the effect of parent-child relational enrichment training on joy and optimism factor (personal well-being) indicated that training by relational enrichment method has a positive impact on joy and optimism and this kind of training has increased joy and optimism rate of mothers in experimental group as reported in table 6.The results of this part are consistent with former findings [23, 24].The findings of a research done by Esanejad (2011)showed that teaching of relational enrichment skills (RE)has increased joy and optimism rate in couples from Isfahan [25].The results of table 7 used to evaluate the hypothesis considered the effect of parent-child relational enrichment training on personal growth and development factor (personal well-being) indicated that training by relational enrichment method has no significant effect on personal growth and development and the control and the experimental group didn't have any significant difference at this subscale. Personal growth and development means ongoing growth and development as an individual, welcoming new experiences and feeling of personal and behavioral evolution and progression during the time according to the definition of [26].

It could be because of short period of the course that the training in this area was not significant according to the definition and people need frequent and regular training through the time to feel growing and developing. The results of this research about the hypothesis considering the influence of parent-child relational enrichment training on self-culture factor (personal well-being) and analysis available in table 8 indicated that the difference between the experimental and control group was significant in self-culture subscale. The results confirmed that the experimental group had a significant development in comparison with control group. Results about testing of the hypothesis considering effectiveness of parent-child relational enrichment training on positive relationship with others (personal well-being)indicated that the difference between the experimental and control group are significant in the relationship subscale. Researches which have studied the effect of communication training, has been initiated since 1970 and some important documents has been obtained about effectiveness of these programs[27]. The relationship between family members is one of the most important interpersonal aspects for realizing the mental health, reducing the anxiety and increasing the happiness between family members, so we can change wrong behavioral patterns and replace the efficient methods with communication skills training. Results obtained from the research is compatible with similar researches in this field, such as; Dicovic andBuis(2005) that investigated the relationship between patterns of family relationships and they concluded that the quality of the family relationships is related to rising of behavioral problems of adolescents [28]. They found that the stronger and closer are the relationships of family members, the less are behavioral problems of the adolescents of these families. The investigation of Esanejad (2011)on couples showed that the relational enrichment program causes improvement in marital relationship quality. The couples that have a good relationship with each other, their relationship is more likely to be proper and desirable with their children too.

Third hypothesis: Training by mother-child relational enrichment method has a positive effect on the general function of the family from the perspective of mothers. The statistical results of table10 indicate that training by mother-child relational method has no positive impact on general function of family from the point of view of mothers. However obtained value (0.059) is close to level of 0.05, but it can't be called as significant. Perhaps the reason that enrichment training had not any effect on overall performance of families is that the training has been shot term and long term and planned educations are needed to change general function of family.

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