

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTING SKILLS TRAINING ON SEPARATION ANXIETY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST-GRAD STUDENTS IN TEHRAN

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of parenting skill training on the first-grade primary school students' separation anxiety and social growth in District 5 of Tehran City. This research is semi-experimental and has the pre and post-test type with control group. The statistical population consists of the first-grade primary school students in Tehran, and 60 ones are selected according to the simple random sampling. The research tool includes the Child Symptom Inventory (CSI-4) and Winland's social growth questionnaire. The data analysis is done by SPSS19 Software and also the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is utilized in this regard. The study on results indicates that the parenting skill training has an impact on the first-grade male students' separation anxiety in addition to their social growth.

**Keywords:** Parenting Skill Training, Separation Anxiety, Social Growth

### INTRODUCTION

The parenting practices refer to a set or system of behavior which describes the parent-child interactions under a wide range of situations and considers him in an interactive effective environment. The parenting practices play the important and influential roles in children's psychopathology and growth. Discussion about children's any problems is almost impossible regardless of attitudes, behaviors and parenting practices. A few studies are conducted on the way of parenting and child's psychopathology (Alizadeh and Andreis, quoted by Mehrabi, 2004).

The separation anxiety has long been taken into account by researchers and therapists and considered as the health process and relatively normal status. This term is associated with the child or parent's concerns about the lack of significant people in life (Hatami, 2003).

Sometimes, the normal separation anxiety may be severe and devastating in child's life; under this situation, it is considered as the separation anxiety disorder which is as the excessive or disproportionate anxiety during the separation or source of attachment (Mofrad *et al.*, 2009).

Several studies in numerous centers of anxiety studies have indicated that the anxious children parents inadvertently facilitate the anxiety responses in child and perform it through the fear or avoidance model, the effort to control the child behavior- in a way that the child independence is limited- the too much support of child or facilitating his avoidance responses (Pincus *et al.*, 2005).

The mothers, who have high levels of anxiety, excessively support their children, express less affection to child and give him the less independency (Bayer *et al.*, 2006).

Furthermore, they tend to minimize the exploring behavior in the child and this leads to the anxiety separation in child (Marvin *et al.*, 2002) and can cause damages to the child's social growth (Hirshfeld *et al.*, 1997).

The social growth refers to a balanced set of social skills and adaptive behavior which enable the individual to have proper interrelationship with others, produce the positive reactions and avoid the behavior with negative consequences. The existence of skills such as the cooperation, responsibility, empathy, self-control and self-reliance are among the components of social growth (Katiz *et al.*, 2005).

The children with higher levels of social skills have more positive interactions with their peers. However, some of the children have lower social skills than their peers and the lack of their social skills becomes obvious by entering into the community especially the school (Keane *et al.*, 2004).

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The studies have shown that the teachers play the important roles in the children's social growth. The teacher-child relationship has most of the properties and functions in positive and close relationships between the child and parents. Therefore, supporting the high quality relationships and valorizing these relationships are necessary for children's social growth (Berry *et al.*, 2010).

Therefore, according to the importance and necessity of subject, the researcher aims to ultimately answer whether the parenting skill training has an impact on the first-grade primary school students' separation anxiety and social growth.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research is applied in terms of objective and is a kind of field study based on the situation. Since this research investigates the effectiveness of parenting skill training on the students' separation anxiety and social growth, it has the semi-experimental design and pretest-posttest type with control group.

- The statistical population of this study includes all first-grade male students in District 5 of Tehran City in 2013. Based on the obtained information, 400 first-grade primary school students are available in District 5 of Tehran City.

This research has simple random sampling. Based on the research nature, the sample size includes 60 first-grade male students with separation anxiety (30 in experimental group and 30 in control group) and they are put in two 3-individual experimental and control groups. The questionnaire is utilized in this study as the tool for data collection. The applied questionnaires are as follows:

- 1- Winland's social growth questionnaire
- 2- Child Symptom Inventory (CSI.4)

The obtained results of SPSS in descriptive statistics describe the characteristics of statistical samples in the form of central tendency and dispersion indices such as the mean, median, mode, variance, standard deviation and frequency distribution tables and charts. In inferential statistics, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) is utilized according to the nature of reach for investigating the research hypotheses.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The normality of variables is initially studied for examining the research hypotheses. Therefore, this condition is first investigated for research variables. It should be noted that the non-parametric tests are utilized in the case of non-normal research variables.

**Table 1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of research variables**

	Indices	Total	Mean	Standard deviation	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	P-value
Pre-period control group	Separation anxiety	30	49.2	8.13	0.585	0.883
Post-period control group	Social growth	30	63.47	1.92	0.79	0.56
Pre-period experimental group	Separation anxiety	30	48.53	7.95	0.555	0.918
Post-period experimental group	Social growth	30	63.6	1.55	0.598	0.598
Pre-period control group	Separation anxiety	30	48.6	10.19	0.621	0.836
Post-period control group	Social growth	30	63.93	1.163	0.734	0.654
Pre-period experimental group	Separation anxiety	30	29.27	7.15	0.684	0.738
Post-period experimental group	Social growth	30	66.4	8.13	0.728	0.665

Given that the significance level of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in the table above is more than 0.05 for research variables of four control groups before and after period and experimental group before and after period, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the distribution of above-mentioned variables and normal distribution. Therefore, it is concluded that the research variables have normal distribution.

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The Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) is utilized to investigate the research hypotheses according to the normality of research variables. Its results are presented as follows:

**First hypothesis:** The parenting skill training affects the first-grade male students' separation anxiety.

**Table 2: ANCOVA for the impact of parenting skill training on separation anxiety**

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F Statistics	Significance level	Effect rate
Model	65.367	2	32.683	12.233	0.000	0.3
Width	23362.6	1	23362.6	8744.66	0.000	0.994
Training	25.35	1	25.35	9.489	0.003	0.143
Group	40.017	1	40.017	14.978	0.000	0.208
Error rate	152.3	57	2.672			
Total	248673.0	60				
Total model	217.65	59				

With regard to the P-value, which is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded in group variable that there is a significant difference between both two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parenting skill training has a significant effect on the first-grade male students' separation anxiety. Due to the effect rate, it is observed that 20.8% of separation anxiety is explained by parenting skill training.

**Second hypothesis:** The parenting skill training affects the first-grade male students' social growth.

**Table 2: ANCOVA for the impact of parenting skill training on the social growth**

	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F Statistics	Significance level	Effect rate
Model	2980.07	2	1490.03	16.069	0.000	0.361
Width	20815.3	1	20815.26	224.483	0.000	0.798
Training	1500.00	1	1500.00	16.177	0.000	0.221
Group	1480.07	1	1480.067	15.962	0.000	0.219
Error rate	5285.3	57	92.962			
Total	123898.0	60				
Total model	8265.4	59				

With regard to the P-value, which is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded in group variable that there is a significant difference between both two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the parenting skill training has a significant effect on the first-grade male students' social growth. Due to the effect rate, it is observed that 21.9% of social growth is explained by parenting skill training.

**Discussion**

Based on the first research hypothesis, the parenting skill training has the impact on the first-grade male students' separation anxiety. The obtained result of data analysis indicates the impact of parenting skill training on the first-grade male students' separation anxiety ( $P < 0.05$ ). This effect is 20.8% indicating the effectiveness of parenting skill training on the reduced separation anxiety in first-grade male students. The mean separation anxiety scores in control group of pre-and post test are equal to 49.2 and 48.53 and equal to 48.6 in pre-test and 29.27 in post-test in experimental group.

According to the explanation of this hypothesis, based on the effective parenting skill training on the reduced separation anxiety disorder, it should be noted that the parenting skill training leads to the changed quality of parent-child relationship quality and seeks to help them to have warm and responsive relationships with their children by teaching the skills to parents. Therefore, the parents learn the skills such as considering a certain time for playing with child, paying attention to positive behavior, ignoring the negative behavior, reflecting the child's behavior and utilizing the behavioral description, and thus the parent-child relationship will be modified. This can positively affect the parent-child attachment (Hudson

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et al., 2000). The attachment improvement, which may occur after the application of this method, can help the child to feel safe when he is away from the parents and thus enable him to separate from the parents without anxiety and tolerate the separation situations. On the other hand, this training curriculum represents the nature and cycle of anxiety as well as the importance of not avoiding the anxiety-provoking situations and also takes steps in child's exposure to separation situations.

According to the second hypothesis, the parenting skill training affects the first-grade male students' social growth. The obtained result of data analysis in the fourth chapter indicates the impact of parenting skill training on the first-grade male students' social growth ( $P < 0.05$ ). This effect is 21.9% indicating that the parenting skill training affects the first-grade male students' increased social growth. The mean scores of social growth in control and experimental groups are equal to 63.47 and 63.3 in pre-test and post test, respectively, and 63.93 in pre-test and 66.4 in post-test of experimental group.

In the field of social growth variable, the findings of this research indicate that it is enhanced in children by the parenting skill training and these findings are consistent with the studies by other experts. For instance, the research by Mahta and Whitebread on 50 twelve and thirteen-year-old children (26 boys and 24 girls) for evaluating the impact of philosophy training on the development of ethics and moral relations indicates that the philosophy teaching program has a positive impact on establishing the children's social and emotional relationships and leads to their progress in the field of accepted ethical behavior in society. Kate Topping has also found that the implementation of this curriculum over a six-month period in weekly sessions helps the children to achieve the special privileges such as improving the communicational skills and participation in social behavior, and thus they can be developed in social, cognitive, verbal and communicational skills (Hosseini, 2006).

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