



Parent Training Based on the Choice Theory: Analysis of its Impact on Mothers' Sense of Self-efficacy and their Conflicts with their Daughters

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Abstract

Background: This research aimed to study the effectiveness of “parent training based on the Choice Theory” on the mother-daughter conflicts and increasing mothers' sense of self-efficacy.

Methods: The quasi-experimental method was used to examine the research variables. The research population included a group of mothers of the students who were in sixth to ninth grade at Nure Narges school in region 5 of Tehran. The parent-adolescent conflict questionnaire (teen's papers) was used to assess the frequency and intensity of the conflict. A group of 24 volunteer mothers whose daughters had reported the most conflicts with their mothers was randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. Both groups filled the parent-adolescent conflict questionnaire. The experimental group were trained parenting skills based on the Choice Theory for 8 sessions, while the control group were not trained. Finally, both groups answered the questionnaire again. They also answered the questionnaires three months later, as a follow-up. Multivariate analysis of covariance was used for data analysis.

Results: The results showed a significant difference between the scores of the experimental and control groups.

Conclusions: Parent trainings based on the choice theory can improve the mother-daughter relationship, increase the mother's sense of self-efficacy and reduce the mother-daughter conflicts significantly.

Keywords: Parent Training Skills, Choice Theory, Mother-Daughter Conflict, Self-Efficacy

1. Background

Family is the first social environment which supervises and takes care of a child. Therefore, it can be said that it is more effective in his/her development and evolution than any other environments. Despite the experts' disagreement about the family importance and its effect on evolution, they have mutual point of view about the effect of family on evolution process. Most psychologists, regardless of their school, consider the parents-children conflicts as the basis of emotional evolution. Adolescence is an intense and sometimes difficult phase in life. Hormones secretion is increased in the body and the transmission speed of nerve impulses is much more than before in this period as same as other mammals, leading to fast and out of control reactions (1). Accordingly, some theories about neurosis in adolescent have been developed. This sudden development causes stranger feeling in ado-

lescence (2). Sigmund and Anna Freud believe that the revival of sexual drives to parents is the reason for adolescence crisis (3). The conceptions of invulnerability, numerous information resources accessibility, and change in him/her perception about parental power (4) which had been ideal and faultless, with a desire for independence in spite of dependency to parents, according to Hall, would lead to a period of emotional pressure that causes conflicts between generations (2). Conflicts like disagreement and argument are the most significant interactions in this period (4, 5), which would disturb the equilibrium of the family system and make other members of the family to act differently for maintaining equilibrium that might be ineffective (6). In other words, passing this difficult changes would challenge both the adolescent and parents, conflict parents who are unaware of adolescence characteristics and its difficulties as well as their children and also the

mother-child relationship (4). Mothers feel they are incapable of any impact on their children's behavior and that's what Bandura (1968) calls the experience of lack of control and the reducing factor of self-efficacy (7). Perceptions and belief in self-ability have a key role in performing any act and behavior, thus believing in self-efficacy as determiner of one's behavior in a specific situation predicts the experienced thoughts and emotions on that situation. According to the cognitive-social theory of believing in self-efficacy, all psychological functions are affected by self-efficacy expectations (8). In other words, parents who believe that they can control their adolescents' behavior, selection criteria and the way of dealing with problems, increase the probability of failure by unrealistic touchstone. These lead to parents' elimination of self-efficacy in parenting skills and also adolescents' risky behaviors. Studies have shown that familial conflicts and the way of adolescent transformation to an independent adult are highly related to adolescent personality and his/her parents' behavior (3). The results of the first longitudinal study in America on adolescents' health that published in "Protecting Adolescents from Harm", showed that the adolescents' connection to family and school would secure them against all risky behaviors (9). Therefore, what parents need to learn is how to establish and keep this relationship. William Glasser presented choice theory as the supporting theory through reality therapy approach in 1994. Choice theory emphasizes that all dissatisfied individuals have a mutual problem, that is, they cannot deal with whom they like to reach an understanding (10). This theory helps parents to treat their children well and it is a suitable substitution for external control psychology theory. Parents who follow the external control theory in relationship with their adolescents, are observed to be more dissatisfied (10) because this would clearly increase the adolescents' conflicts and their consequences. Parent training based on choice theory will decrease the effects of external control and replace it with human relations theory by teaching its disadvantages (9). Glasser (2000) believes that the only factor which can control the child at the time of loneliness is the integrity and intensity of the parent's relation with him/her (9). Therefore, parent training based on Choice Theory will help improving adolescent and parent relations. It is hard for an adolescent to easily pass this stage which Erickson calls identity vs. role confusion. Acceptance of these fact that there are differences between parents and children's requirements and also fulfillment of the parents' needs should not obstacle fulfillment of the child's need, will help the parents to choose reachable goals in parenting, increase the chance to reach them and feel higher self-efficacy (10).

Regarding the mentioned subjects and lack of stud-

ies about the impact of parent training on variables related to mother and children's health, the current research aims to determine the effectiveness of parent training based on choice theory on the self-efficacy of mothers and mother-adolescent conflicts to answer this question whether choice theory based parent training affects the self-efficacy of mothers and mother-adolescent conflicts or not?

2. Methods

The quasi-experimental method was used to examine the research variables. The research population included a group of mothers of the students at Nure Narges school in region 5 of Tehran. The parent-adolescent conflict questionnaire (teen's papers) was used to assess the frequency and intensity of the conflict. A group of 24 volunteer mothers whose daughters had reported the most conflicts with their mothers was randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

Both groups filled the parent-adolescent conflict questionnaire. The experimental group were trained parenting skills based on the choice theory for 8 sessions, while the control group were not trained. Also a separate post-test conducted for both groups simultaneously, a week after the training sessions ended. They also answered the questionnaires three months later, as a follow-up. Besides the theoretically teaching of the choice theory, group activities, homework, movies, and educational cards were used to improve the training quality.

Sherer general self efficacy questionnaire and parent-adolescent conflicts questionnaire (Parent form) were used to collect data.

Sherer general self efficacy questionnaire: this scale was prepared by Sherer and Maddux in 1982. They believed that it can assess three aspects of behavior included desire to initiate, desire to expand effort to complete a task and differences in facing obstacles. Sherer's scale includes 17 items which each of them has 5 options with Likert scale. Among them 1, 3, 8, 9, 12, 14 numbers have been graded from 1 to 5 where other items have been graded vice versa from 5 to 1. Therefore the highest grade for self-efficacy is 85 and the lowest is 17 in this scale (11).

Sherer (1982) reported the calculated reliability by Cronbach alpha for general self-efficacy as 0.76. Afrooz et al. (2013) calculated the reliability of this tool by Cronbach alpha 0.71. Rahimi Pardenjani and Ghobari Bonab (2011) reported the reliability of this questionnaire by Cronbach alpha 0.84 (11). In the current research, for questionnaire reliability, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.85 which indicated the proper reliability of this tool. The validity of this scale was obtained through construct validity.

Barati conducted a research on 100 high school students to evaluate the reliability and validity of this scale. The correlation (0.61) obtained from self-esteem and self-evaluation scales using self-efficacy scale proved that it had construct validity (11).

2.1. Parents' Conflict Behavior Questionnaire, Parents Form

Conflict behavior questionnaire was designed in 1979 by Prinz. It was redesigned by Asadi Younesi et al. in 2011 to be used in Iran. This questionnaire contains two forms for teens and parents. Parents form includes 89 questions and 14 factors. Each question has two parts: the first part assesses frequency of the conflict and the second one assesses the intensity. Each part has been graded separately based on Likert scale. Frequency is the number of resources or conflicted subjects, and it can be graded from 0 to 89. Intensity is the excitement and feeling alongside with conflict. This scale is graded based on Likert scale and the individuals' score is graded as conflict intensity average in conflicted subject from 0 (Calm) to 5 (angry). Conflict behavior questionnaire is for teenager's parents and the higher score shows more conflict between teenager and parents (6).

Asadi Younesi et al. had reported its reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient 0.98 in intensity dimension and 0.96 in conflict frequency dimension. The retest coefficient in this scale was 0.72 for conflict frequency and 0.74 for conflict intensity. In this research, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was 0.80 for conflict frequency and 0.83 for its intensity showing the reliability tools (6). Concurrent validity and scale convergence are assessed by executing it and Robin and Foster adolescent-parent conflict scale (1989) at the same time. The results showed the correlation at significant level of 0.01 in total scores of 0.31 and 0.39 for conflict frequency and intensity (12). Validity of Robin and Foster research (1989) which showed the ability of conflict behavior questionnaire in splitting the families with and without clinical problems, supported the differential validity of this tool (6).

After sampling, mothers with the appropriate conditions (having child with high score in CBS (teens' form)), were informed by the researcher about purpose of the study, and the interested mothers for cooperating were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. After performing self-efficacy and conflict teen-parent pre-tests, the experimental group was trained parenting skills based on the choice theory in 8 three-hour sessions for two months. Sessions were about training and explaining the features of adolescent, success and fail identity, concepts of choice theory including basic needs, desired world, behavior machine, improver and destructive

habits of relationship, negotiating and disputing disagreement methods, responsibility and its utilization on adolescent training, short movies, instruction cards, purposive games, training and discussion in little groups, reviewing the sessions and submitting assignments. One month after finishing the sessions, post-test was conducted for both groups. In this research, mean and standard deviation of the descriptive statistics indexes and covariance analysis inferential statistics index had been used for data analysis.

3. Results

The results related to the mean of the variables in pre-test and post-test have been reported in [Table 1](#).

According to the results shown in [Table 1](#) the mean of mothers' self-efficacy had been increased and mother-daughters' conflict frequency and intensity had been decreased in post-test and follow-up.

Due to the homogeneity of variance assumption based on Levin test and data normality based on kolmogorov-smirnov, covariance analysis can be used for data analysis.

The results of data analysis of the self-efficacy covariance have been reported in [Table 2](#).

[Table 2](#) shows that there is a significant difference between the calculated scores of self-efficacy feeling based on the group membership by clearing the effect of pre-test variable. Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed. So it can be concluded that parent training had influence on mothers' self-efficacy feeling in experimental group in post-test and follow-up (according to the mean of the scores shown in [Table 1](#) parent training increased the mothers' self-efficacy feeling in the experimental group).

The results of covariance analysis of mother-daughter conflict frequency and intensity have been reported in [Table 3](#).

[Table 3](#) shows there is a significant difference between the calculated scores of mother-daughter conflict frequency and intensity based on the group memberships in post-test and follow-up by clearing the effect of pre-test variable. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed. So it can be concluded that parent training had influence on the mother-daughter conflict frequency and intensity (According to the mean of the scores shown in [Table 1](#), parent training decreased the mother-daughter conflict frequency in the experimental group).

4. Conclusions

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of choice theory based parent training on the self-efficacy feeling and mother-daughter conflict. According to the results of [Tables 2](#) and [3](#) there was a significant difference

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Mothers' Self-Efficacy and Mother-Daughters' Conflict in Pre-Test, Post-Test and Follow-Up

Index	Pre-Test				Post-Test				Follow-Up			
	Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
	M	Q	M	Q	M	Q	M	Q	M	Q	M	Q
Mothers' self-efficacy feeling	57	7.63	61.75	8.91	55.75	7.42	57	7.63	35.41	7.82	42.16	5.79
Mother-daughter conflict frequency	284.58	44.75	213.58	28.04	272.33	26.49	67.166	29.44	175.91	32.35	221.08	57.95
Mother-daughter conflict intensity	219.08	44.06	161.41	3.46	181.41	19.14	176.41	17.68	150.25	28.60	221.08	57.95

Table 2. Results of Covariance Analysis of Adjusted Mean Differences of Intervention Effect Scores on Mothers' Self-Efficacy Feeling

Index	Square Sums	Freedom Degree	Square Mean	F	Meaningfully	Etta' Square
Mothers' self-efficacy feeling in post-test	100.847	1	100.847	1.77	0.197	0.27
Mothers' self-efficacy feeling in follow up	247.299	1	247.299	5.36	0.31	0.26

Table 3. Results of Covariance Analysis of Adjusted Mean Differences of Intervention Effect Scores on Mother-Daughter Conflict Frequency and Intensity

Index	Square Sums	Freedom Degree	Square Mean	F	Meaningfully	Etta' Square
Mother-daughter conflict frequency in post-test	23707.228	1	23707.228	35.056	0.000	0.72
Mother-daughter conflict frequency in follow-up	12625.582	1	12625.582	5.51	0.029	0.20
Mother-daughter conflict intensity in post-test	6597.894	1	6597.894	35.37	0.000	0.73
Mother-daughter conflict intensity in follow-up	9776.431	1	9776.431	45.18	0.000	0.73

in post-test and follow-up as well with the control group for the self-efficacy feeling, conflict frequency and intensity between mother and daughter in the experimental group who received parent training. The results showed that there was much more decrease in self-efficacy feeling between the experimental group than the control group in post-test and follow-up after three months. Also it a decrease was revealed in the conflict frequency and intensity between mother and daughter in post-test and follow-up. These findings are parallel with Mouton and Ruskam (2015) research for the positive effect of positive parent training on the mothers' self-efficacy (13); Abarashi et al. (2014) research in determining the positive effect of positive parent training on the parents' self-efficacy (14); Tellegen and Sanders (2013) research in increasing the self-efficacy of parents by parent training (15) and Gonabadi (2013) study on comparing the effectiveness of the selective parent training and positive parent training on mothers' self-efficacy feeling (16); Taleie, Tahmasyan and Vafaeie (2011) research for determining the effect of positive parent training on parents self-efficacy (17); Poorbafrani et al. (2014) study in assessing the effect of positive parent training on decreasing the conflict between mother and daughter (18); Matsumoto et al. (2007) research in detecting the effect of parent training on decreasing the conflict between parents and teenagers (19).

Bandora believes that receiving useful ways of parent training by retrieving some factors such as (exposure to successful experiences and patterns, vocal promotions and physiological arousal) increases the mothers' self-efficacy feeling. Having conflict with teenagers will decrease the mothers' self-efficacy feeling. When they do their homework in the class, mothers will have an accessible short-term purpose which exposes them to a good experience by achieving them. Their children often have top goals and academic achievement too (8, 20) and these successes will also increase the parents' self-efficacy feeling. The trainer gives mothers successful experiences and patterns by presenting his successful experiences with his patients' in improving the relationship between parent and adolescent. Being a part of group prepares a kind of vocal exhortation and social influence for mother and this exhortation comes in two ways, first they will understand that they are not the only one who has this conflict and the other one is that they will get some respond after doing their homework that is a kind of vocal exhortation and social influence. Therefore, self-efficacy feeling will be increased due to physiological arousal which is the result of group and doing homework.

This finding explains that teaching the concepts of choice theory to mothers will change their relationship pattern with other family members. Based on the decu-

ple principles of choice theory, the mother will learn that her child is the only one who can control her behavior and she has no control on it. Mother can only give her information and it's her choice to use it or not. She will learn that the only way that this choice will be influential is to enter the child desired world. So, to enter the child's world, the mother needs to improve her relationship with her daughter. Some factors including not engaging in destructive behavior and stressing on relation improvement behaviors and also predicting conflict between family members based on their needs, will improve the relation pattern between family members specially mother-daughter and allow the members to discuss and exchange their ideas where parents and child will discuss more effective about different subjects, be accepted and not worry about being judge (21).

In the family with thinking based on choice theory, the members' needs are equal and the individuality of all members will be recognized. This friendly atmosphere will help the teenager's communication abilities to develop (22, 23). She shows less conflict intensity and negative feelings and aggressive conflict with her parents (24). Cohesive and flexible atmosphere of the family resulting from learning and using the choice theory courses that responsibility and keeping the relation are on top of it, facilitate the adolescent-parent negotiation for solving their problems and prevent increasing conflicts (25). The given homework after each session includes exercises for stabilizing and applying the courses including familiarity with adulthood and its psychological features by helping to acceptance, learning the negotiation ways and solving their conflict by showing the ways to decrease the conflict frequency, learning techniques for relaxation during the sessions to hold anger and decreasing the conflict intensity between mother-daughter.

The purpose of this research is to study the effectiveness of choice theory based parent training on mothers' self-efficacy feeling and mother-daughters' conflict. The results show that parent training has a positive effect on mothers' self-efficacy feeling and choice theory based parent training has a negative effect on conflict between them by making change in family conflict patterns and mother's expectations for her daughter.

Increasing mother's self-efficacy and control feeling will help the mother satisfying the need for power through inner strength which leads to decrease conflicts' frequency and intensity. On the other hand, decreasing conflict is a kind of performance achieving that increases the self-efficacy feeling. In other words, increasing mothers' self-efficacy feeling and decreasing the mother-daughter conflict reinforce each other, and learning the choice theory in group sessions and workshops has a direct and indi-

rect effect on each of the variables.

Samples had been chosen as available samples which made some problem with their normal distribution and caused deleting some data. Regarding the time and cultural limits, the learning-package applied to mothers with teenage daughter. Certainty and confidence of the results effectiveness and stability could be improved in longer time and better condition. Another limitation in this research was lack of an appropriate learning-package raising the interest of researcher to develop a package. (Also in recent years, William Glasser institute has developed some learning-packages and they will be available in Iran soon). We recommend other scientists to resume this investigation in another population to investigate a more cohesive language for using the variables. This study incorporated mothers owing teenage daughters and we recommend continuing researches on mothers owing teenage boys. We also recommend this investigation for father-children relationship too. This work will help us to expand our investigations and analyze them. In order to determine the durability of effectiveness, this is highly recommended that this study will be continued in longitudinal method. It is recommended to prepare a short form of adolescent-parent conflict questionnaire (parents' papers) to reduce the effect of multiple unnecessary questions and avoid losing concentration in answering. We recommend exhibiting these results for parents owing middle school children. We also recommend training choice theory to the children who their parents are under the learning process.

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