



Research Paper

Effectiveness of parenting skills training on increasing sense of control and improvement of parenting skills in mothers of secondary high school female students



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Citation: Moradi Kelardeh, P., Narimani, M., Mohammadi Lieh, A & Molavi, A. (2026). Effectiveness of parenting skills training on increasing sense of control and improvement of parenting skills in mothers of secondary high school female students. *Journal of Family Relations Studies*, 6(1): 31-37. <https://doi.org/10.22098/jhrs.2022.9678.1027>



doi [10.22098/jhrs.2022.9678.1027](https://doi.org/10.22098/jhrs.2022.9678.1027)

ARTICLE INFO:

Received: 2021/10/13

Revised: 2025/12/30

Accepted: 2026/01/10

Available Online: 2026/02/15

ABSTRACT

Objective: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of parenting skills training on increasing mothers' control over the performance of children and improving parenting skills in mothers of secondary high school female students.

Methods: This study was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-posttest for the dependent group, and its statistical population was all mothers of secondary high school students from Siyahkal city of Guilan province, among them 32 people were selected using an available and voluntary sampling method. Parenting skills training was held in 8 sessions of one hour, and the Alabama Parental Skills Questionnaire (Frick, 1991) and Parental Locus of Control Questionnaire (Campis et al., 1986) were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using SPSS software and a t-test for the dependent group.

Results: The results showed that there is a significant difference between the scores of positive parenting, poor supervision, parental efficacy, and parental control in pre-test and post-test ($P<0.01$).

Conclusion: It seems parenting skills training increases monitoring, self-efficacy, and improves maternal control over girls' performance, and it is necessary to use the results of this study in interventions and therapeutic programs for increasing parenting skills and improving parent-adolescent relationships.

1. Introduction

One of the important roles that each adult encounters is the role of parental and subsequently carrying out their duties, the tasks of parenting (Hoghughi & Long, 2008; Shipman, Fitzgerald & Pauletic, 2025). Parenting is synonymous with child care and involves engaging with one or two adults, generally the mother or father of the child (Mansourkhani et al., 2025). McMahon and

Meltzer (1998, cited by Randolph and Radey, 2011) defined parenting skills as "a set of special parenting behaviors that parents do in interacting with their children or report that they are doing or say they should do".

The role of a parent is considered a variety of child care tasks, which can be challenging, difficult, and tiring, but

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it is pleasant (Barlow et al., 1999; Álvarez et al., 2019). In the meantime, mothers play a more important role in educating them because of more time with children and have more responsibility for child care (Allahyari, 2021; Razavi & Sheibani, 2021). On the other hand, adolescence is a critical period for girls as their personal and social identities are being shaped. The need for greater independence, coping with peer pressure, and adapting to familial and societal expectations can all act as sources of stress (Mohammadiyan et al, 2025). During this phase, adolescents may encounter psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, academic pressures, and body image concerns, all of which may lead to risky behaviors or, more broadly, behavioral problems, which shows the need for emotional bonding between parents and adolescents in order to reduce and manage these problems (Javdan, 2022). On the other hand, the Locus of control is defined as an important and key aspect in parenting (Piehler et al, 2016). This concept shows the sense of parents towards their ability to efficiently parent and control their children's behavior. The high Locus of control represents a stable and inner state of parental control, and it is related to the child's behavior and efficient parenting (Jones & Prinz, 2005; Abbaszadeh et al, 2021). The Internal Locus of control is associated with positive results and behaviors in the child, such as the reduction of internalization and externalization syndrome, and the more parents feel control over child behavior, the more stable and effective their childhood activities will be, which will facilitate the positive adaptation of the child (Piehler et al, 2016). The Locus of control in parents is a cognitive determinant of their performance that affects the development of the child (Janssens, 1994). Parents with the external Locus of control attribute the growth and development of the child to forces and factors outside their control (Hoghughi & Long, 2008; Piehler et al, 2016). External locus of control, as opposed to internal locus of control is associated with poor mental health and psychological well-being, both among parents and children/adolescents with and without disabilities. This includes the child's externalizing and internalizing problems, anxiety and depression, parental stress, and more (Yaffe, 2024).

Also, the external locus of control may lead to coercive care behaviors (Bugental, Blue, and Cruzcosa, 1989), which ultimately is related to the growth and increasing behavioral problems in children (Janssens, 1994). In contrast, parents with the internal Locus of control know that their efforts to grow and educate the child and possibly show parenting behaviors that lead to increased understanding and ability to regulate and control themselves and the environment in the children, Therefore these behaviors can lead to an increase in child's feelings in controlling the surroundings (Hagekull, Bohlin & Hammarberg, 2001).

Therefore, according to the above, the control and feelings of parents about the ability to control the behaviors and performance of their children have an important role in parent and adolescent relationships and adolescent behavior management (Mikaeili et al., 2025). Parents who have less control over their children's actions and behaviors usually have anxiety, stress, and more concerns about their performance as a parent, and have fewer parenting skills (Álvarez et al., 2019). On the other hand, adolescent girls are at a stage in life characterized by numerous physical, psychological, and social changes; these changes can present various psychological challenges (Baghaei et al., 2024). So the training of parenting skills to help these people can improve their performance as parents and control their children's behavior.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of parenting skills training on increasing maternal control over the performance of children and improving parenting skills in mothers of secondary high school female students in Siyahkal City.

2. Materials and Methods

This research is a quasi-test-post-test study with a pretest-posttest for the dependent groups. The statistical population was all mothers of secondary high school female students in Siyahkal city (Guilan province) in the academic year of 2020-2021, among whom 32 mothers who referred to the school counselor due to inability to establish effective communication and inability to control their child's behavior, were selected using a voluntary and available sampling Method. Given that this study was conducted on the mothers of students who complained about their children's use of cell phones and their lack of control over their children's behavior, the Inclusion criteria were the request of mothers to hold meetings to teach how to treat their children. The exclusion criteria were that mothers participate in other educational and psychological classes and courses. In fact, if these mothers participated in educational classes other than the intervention of this research, they would be excluded from the research. Parenting Skills Training was held in 8 sessions for one hour, twice a week. Alabama Parenting Skills Questionnaire (Frick, 1991) and Parental Locus of Control Questionnaire (Campis et al., 1986) were used to collect and evaluate data. Data were analyzed using SPSS software and a t-test for dependent groups.

Instrument

- 1. Demographic Information Form:** This questionnaire was designed by the researcher and included questions about age, education, and number of children.
- 2. Alabama Parenting Questionnaire:** This questionnaire was developed by Frick (1991). It is a 42-item self-report tool that assesses five dimensions of parenting behavior,

including Involvement, Positive Parenting, Poor Supervision, Inconsistent Discipline, and Punishment. In a study conducted by [Dadds, Maujean & Fraser \(2003\)](#), internal reliability for completed parental scales was found to be acceptable (Cronbach's alpha coefficient between 0.64 and 0.88). In Iran, the reliability of the total score of the questionnaire has been reported .62 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and it has been reported for the subscales .53-.79 ([Avrand, Rafieipour and Hajalizadeh, 2017](#)). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total score of the questionnaire was obtained 0.68.

3. Parental Locus of Control Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by [Campis et al. \(1986\)](#) and has 47 self-report items with a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). This scale assesses five subscales, including Parental Influence, Parental Responsibility, Children's control over

Parents' Lives, Parents' belief in Destiny and Luck, and Parents' Control over Their Children's Behavior, which is used to gauge the Parental Locus of Control. The Parental Locus of Control Scale (PLOC) has a very good internal consistency with an alpha coefficient of 0.92 for the total score and an alpha coefficient for the subscales with a range from 0.56 to 0.77. This scale has good construct validity in correlation with directional prediction with overall self-efficacy, sense of adequacy, responsibility, extremes, rigidity for the child, and role constraints ([Campis et al., 1989](#)). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained 0.78.

Procedure: After the sampling process and completion of pre-test questionnaires by the participants, parenting skills training sessions were held in 8 sessions of 1 hour (two sessions per week) based on Positive Parenting Program sessions. After the sessions, the post-test was held. The content of the training sessions is stated below.

Table 1. Parenting Skills Training sessions based on the Positive Parenting Program

Sessions	Content	Targets	Homework
First session	Running the Alabama Parenting Skills Questionnaire and Parental Locus of Control as a pre-test Initial introduction and expression of the goals of the meetings, the method of holding, the days and hours of holding, and the necessity of observing the rules of the group, such as attending the meetings on time. In this session, after the initial introduction, parents are given more time to express their main concerns and expectations.	Familiarity with the rules and how to attend meetings, expressing concerns and issues	Creating a checklist of children's situations and behaviors that cause them to feel inefficient and out of control, practicing relaxation when angry
Second session	How to be a good parent, familiarity with the principles of parenting (such as expecting cooperation, communicating with the teen, being an active listener, being disciplined, and being consistent.	Learn the basics of parenting skills.	Practice a number of effective discipline techniques that are tailored to their child's behavior and mood, and practice reflective and active listening.
Third session	Provide information about the need for strong communication and emotional bond between parent and child, such as paying attention to the child's interests and using them to provide rewards when doing the desired behavior, paying attention to adolescents' sense of independence and importance to it, paying attention to adolescents' opinions in decision-making, and attending various family gatherings. Provide homework from the topics discussed (parents should use some of the techniques taught in relation to their child until the next session, and report in the next session).	Learn and practice how to communicate effectively with your children	Situations in which the adolescent behaves inappropriately and the mother's reaction to that behavior is determined, and more appropriate coping practices are practiced Provide opportunities for teens to be asked to participate and comment on family issues and decisions
Fourth Session	Examining the homework of the previous session, getting acquainted with parenting practices and the consequences of each, the reflection and impact of these practices on children's performance and behavior	Familiarity with parenting practices and the consequences of each	Parents in a real situation try to practice the principles of authoritative parenting and report the results.
Fifth Session	Reviewing homework done by mothers and discussing activities done from the previous session to date, and answering questions Expressing information about how to formulate rules regarding children, clarity and clarity of rules, articulating rules with determination, and at the same time maintaining parent-child relationships Provide homework in connection with the content of the meeting	Familiarity of parents with the correct way of drafting laws and supervising their implementation	Practice situations with mothers by clearly articulating rules and monitoring law enforcement
Sixth Session	Reviewing homework done by mothers and discussing activities done from the previous session to date, and answering questions Teaching children to use Premack's principle to encourage them to do their homework regularly, setting times for cell phone use with their children's consent, Provide homework	Learn the basics of encouraging children to do their homework properly and manage their time.	Mothers practice the principles and issues raised in the real situation and report the results. Relaxation exercise

Sessions	Content	Targets	Homework
Seventh session	Review homework done, communicate effectively with the teen, do joint activities, and relaxation exercises. Provide homework	Learn how to have a positive and efficient relationship with your children	Perform the principles and techniques taught in real conditions and report the results.
Eighth session	Review the homework done by the mothers and discuss the activities done from the previous session until now. Summarize what has been said since the first session, expressing questions and issues from mothers, and answering them. Final summarizing, holding post-test, and closing sessions	Summary and final questions and answers	-

3. Results

Participants in the present study included 32 mothers (with a mean age of 38 years), so that 7 mothers had a bachelor's degree, 21 mothers had a diploma, and 4 had lower education than a diploma. Tables 1 and 2 show

descriptive information about parenting skills and parental locus of control in the pre-test and post-test. Then, the results of the t-test of dependent samples are given to compare mothers' scores in the pre-test and post-test.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the components of parenting skills in the pre-test and post-test

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	SD	M	SD
Involvement	4.25	.65	4.40	.72
Positive Parenting	4.15	.68	5.95	.45
Poor Supervision	3.92	.53	1.5	.53
Inconsistent Discipline	4.05	.77	3.82	.57
Punishment	3.07	.52	2.70	.41

As can be seen in Table 1, the scores of the Involvement and Positive Parenting subscales of parenting skills increased in the post-test compared to the pre-test, and the

scores of Poor Supervision, Inconsistent Discipline, and Punishment have not changed.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics on the components of Parental Locus of Control in pre-test and post-test

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	SD	M	SD
Parental Efficacy	2.70	.41	4.85	.55
Parental Responsibility	2.51	.48	2.80	.53
Children's control	3.15	.85	3.10	.75
Parents' belief in Destiny	4.07	.81	3.75	.79
Parents' Control	2.80	.57	4.75	.25

According to the contents of Table 2, the scores of the subscales of parental self-efficacy, responsibility, and parental control over child behavior in the post-test

increased compared to the pre-test, and the scores of the subscales of child control on parental behavior and belief in luck and fate have not changed.

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test results for parenting skills components in mothers

Variable	Mean	SD	t	df.	sig.
Involvement	Pre-test				
	Post-test	0/69	.35	.803	31
Positive Parenting	Pre-test				
	Post-test	.63	.25	2.568	31
Poor Supervision	Pre-test				
	Post-test	1.68	.78	3.225	31
Inconsistent Discipline	Pre-test				
	Post-test	1.25	.65	.550	31
Punishment	Pre-test				
	Post-test	.59	.35	1.695	31

The results obtained in Table 3 show that among the components of parenting skills, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the component of positive parenting and poor supervision. Therefore, parenting

skills training has increased positive parenting and increased mothers' monitoring of their children's performance ($p<0.01$). At the same time, no significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test scores of other components.

Table 5. Mean, standard deviation, and t-test results for Parental Locus of Control components in mothers

Variable		Mean	SD	t	df.	sig.
Parental Efficacy	Pre-test	.81	.47	3.846	31	.001
	Post-test					
Parental Responsibility	Pre-test	.75	.38	.469	31	.663
	Post-test					
Children's control	Pre-test	.54	.32	1.334	31	.253
	Post-test					
Parents' belief in Destiny	Pre-test	.85	.44	.350	31	.815
	Post-test					
Parents' Control	Pre-test	.80	.47	3.542	31	.001
	Post-test					

The contents of Table 4 show that among the components of parental locus of control, there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the components of parental efficacy and parental control over child performance ($p<0.01$). At the same time, no significant difference was found between pre-test and post-test scores of other components. Therefore, teaching parenting skills has increased mothers' sense of self-efficacy and self-sufficiency and increased their control over their children's performance and behavior. Overall, it can be said that parenting skills training has increased parental supervision and control over children's performance and also increased parents' sense of self-efficacy.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In general, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of parenting skills training on increasing mothers' control over students' behavior and performance and improving parenting skills in mothers of female high school students.

The results show that parenting skills training has increased mothers' control over their children's behavior and performance. The scores of the involvement and positive parenting component also increased, and the scores of the components of inconsistent discipline and punishment decreased, but this amount was not significant. The results are in line with the research conducted by Arkan et al. (2020). In this study, it was found that parenting skills training has improved parent-adolescent relationships and mothers' performance in relation to children. Álvarez et al. (2019) also showed in their study that parenting skills training promotes and improves the relationship between parents and adolescents and reduces behavioral problems.

Shokoohi Yekta et al. (2012) also found in their study that teaching parenting skills through dialogue and problem solving causes parents have more control over their children's performance in enforcing the rules and creating law in the family. Also, various studies have shown that parenting skills training reduces behavioral problems and improves parent-child relationships (Shokoohi Yekta et

al., 2016; Azimifar et al., 2017).

The results also show that parenting skills training increases parental self-efficacy and increases parental control over children's behavior. The result was in line with the research conducted by Wulandari and Afiatin (2020), in which it was found that teaching parenting skills increases the sense of self-efficacy in parents. Stenason, Moorman, and Romano (2020) stated that parenting skills training reduces conflict, improves mothers' performance, and improves mothers' relationships with their children. Smith and Holden (2019) also showed in their research that holding parenting skills training courses for mothers improves parental involvement and communication with children and increases mothers' sense of self-efficacy.

Hajigholami and Alagheband (2013) also showed in their study that parenting education increases the sense of self-efficacy and increases the sense of parental control over their performance as a parent. It has also been shown in various studies that parenting skills training increases the parents' sense of self-sufficiency in their performance as a parent and also improves the parents' relationship with their children (Razavi & Sheibani, 2021).

In general, the results of the present study indicate the effectiveness of the parenting skills training program on parental control, increasing parental monitoring over children's performance, and increasing parents' sense of self-efficacy. The family is the first and most enduring factor that is known as a constructive and underlying factor for children's personality and behaviors, and even many psychologists believe that the root of many disorders in the early family upbringing should be sought (Hoghughi & Long, 2008; Allahyari, 2021).

Among family members, the mother is the one who has the most important role in the development and upbringing of the child (Mikaeili & Salmani, 2021). The quality and manner of parenting have a great impact on children's performance (Razavi & Sheibani, 2021). Parenting, like other skills, needs to be taught, and teaching these skills in various fields improves the performance of parents and increases the quality of parent-child relationships (Haji Gholami and Alagheband, 2013; Allahyari, 2021).

One of the limitations of the present study was that due to the outbreak of coronavirus and the need to follow health protocols, training sessions were held for a short time; therefore, it is suggested that in future studies and if the situation improves, training sessions be held with a longer duration and with a larger number of sessions. Also, considering that this study was performed on a number of parents from two secondary high schools and the sampling process was done in an available and voluntary manner, care should be taken in generalizing the results. Therefore, due to the effectiveness of parenting skills training, it is suggested that these trainings be done in other regions and cities, and other areas of parenting be considered. Also, it is suggested that similar training be provided for fathers, because parenting requires parental interaction and cooperation, and teaching these skills to fathers, along with mothers, will be beneficial.

5. Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

All ethical principles were considered in this article. The participants were informed about the purpose of the research and its implementation steps. They were also assured about the confidentiality of the research. They were free to participate in the research and could leave the study whenever they wanted, and the research results were provided to them if they wished.

Funding

This research did not receive any funding from funding organizations in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the design, implementation, and writing of all parts of the article.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to all the people who cooperated with us in this research.

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