



## Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Dialectical Group Counseling on the Adjustment between Mothers and Their Adolescent Daughters

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**ABSTRACT:** The aim of the present research is to evaluate the effectiveness of group counselling via dialectic method on the adjustment between mothers and their adolescent daughters in Esfahan City. This quasi-experimental study is of pretest-posttest type, with a control group. The statistical population has been all of the mothers in Esfahan and their adolescent daughters, who were selected through cluster sampling and were randomly placed in two control and experimental groups. The subjects of study were 30 mothers and daughters (60 in total), from among which, 15 mothers and daughters (30 persons) were put in the under training experimental group and 15 mothers and daughters (30 persons) were placed in the control group. In order to collect the data, the California Psychological Inventory test (personal-social adjustment questionnaire) was utilized which was completed (filled up) by mothers and daughters before and after training. The data has been analysed at descriptive and inferential levels (analysis of covariance), using SPSS software. Findings of this research through analysis of covariance revealed that dialectical behaviour therapy has an influence on increasing the mother-adolescent daughter adjustment.

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### INTRODUCTION

Human beings have a variety of needs and devote a part of their daily time and energy in trying to meet such needs. A sequence of need appearance and its fulfillment can be seen in every creature's life, which is called the adjustment process. In order to preserve themselves and satisfy their needs, all of the creatures attempt to become adjusted with the environment they are living in, and such an attempt is a dynamic and continuous progress in human beings.

Adjustment in humans has two aspects; adjustment of the person with himself/herself, and adjustment of the person with others. The inside and outside which humans should become adjusted with, are in fact two sides of the same coin which have really close and complicated relationships with each other. We have all encountered different challenges and problems at times in our lives. In the process of facing such difficulties, it is really comforting to have certain resources and skills which can help us handle the problems in the best possible way. The significant role of instruction in human beings' life has been evident since the ancient times, because accurate training can lead a person to felicity and learning knowledge and techniques of life. In the modern world, people need such skills and competencies that enable them to adjust with the issues of desirable life circumstances, and such skills are offered to people by the educational and training system.

One of the major problems of the individuals is the lack of necessary and fundamental communicative competencies while encountering problems and difficulties in everyday life. Many people are extremely weak in essential competencies for facing the life issues and this makes them vulnerable in dealing with daily life complexities and problems. Adjustment between parents and their adolescents is a controversial issue in adjustment debates nowadays. The transition to adolescence is accompanied with the adolescent's attempts for independence and autonomy as well as maintaining and promoting their position in family relations. Achieving such autonomy is a process that must naturally provide the adolescents' identification and their independent position in family. For this reason, in case the parents and other family members do not have an appropriate comprehension of the youth or adolescent's independence seeking nature or do not accept it, conflicts and disagreements start to appear in the relationships between adolescents and their families[1].

In some therapy approaches, teaching emotion control strategies, has dominated a portion of intervention in emotional problems. One of these approaches is the dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) which has an emphasis

on skill training, emotional accreditation and acceptance [2]. Various dimensions of such skill training include interpersonal effectiveness skills, mindfulness, emotion control, increasing frustration tolerance, and accreditation skills. Some studies have illustrated the efficacy of this method in treatment of emotional disorder [3]. With respect to the role of emotion control problems in adolescents and their relationship with their surrounding people, especially their parents, it seems that instruction and application of such skills can be efficient in decreasing the interpersonal problems of adolescents-parents.

Investigations of a research revealed that the optimum adjustment is obtained by those children who have a great sense of correlation and solidarity with their family members and specially their parents [4]. Moreover, family factors and parent-adolescent relationships play a significant role and have an essential impact on the adolescents' social adjustment and academic achievement [5]. In addition, another research results indicated that dialectical behavior therapy helps the person to cope better with grievous events by training such skills as frustration tolerance, and by increasing flexibility and offering new solutions as well as mitigation of the agonizing effects and conditions. In this regard, by making use of emotion control skills, the clients are assisted in better recognizing their feeling and analyzing each emotion without being weakened before it [6]. An Iranian research has also dealt with the evaluation of group cognitive-behavioral interventions in anger management, self-assertion and adjustment in adolescents with conduct disorder. This research illustrated that the adolescents participating in definite courses, achieved anger management and self-assertion skills, and the frequency and intensity of the anger outflow consequents, such as maladjustment behaviors decreased in them. The results also revealed that teaching self-assertion skill leads to the reduction of aggression in adolescents [7].

In an investigation of the comparison of the effect of teaching emotion regulation strategies via Gross model vs. dialectical behavior therapy in reduction of the symptoms of university-students' emotional problems, it was revealed that both methods led to reduction of interpersonal sensitivity symptoms, and it was also indicated that dialectical behavior therapy eventuated in the reduction of anxiety and depression symptoms in university students [2]. With respect to the role of emotion-control problems in adolescents and their relationship with their surrounding people, especially their parents, it seems that the instruction and application of such skills can be efficient in decreasing the interpersonal problems of adolescents-parents. Therefore, whereas much research has been done on solving this problem so far, but efficacy of the dialectical behavior therapy method on adolescents' adjustment has not been scrutinized. A question that arises is "Does dialectical behavior therapy method lead to increase in the adjustment between mothers and adolescents?"

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a quasi-experimental research as it has utilized a pretest, posttest, and control group. The statistical population was all of the second and third grades female students in Esfahan public guidance schools and their mothers in 2011-2012 academic years. The sampling has been done in multistage cluster sampling method; from among the 6 educational areas of Esfahan, 3 areas were randomly selected; thereafter, from among the schools of those areas, 3 schools were randomly selected and California Test was executed on the second and third grade students of these schools. Students with low adjustment score were recognized and then their mothers also participated in this test. At the end, 30 pairs of these students-mothers (60 persons) were randomly selected, 15 mothers and daughters (30 persons) were put in experimental group and 15 mothers and daughters (30 persons) were placed in control group.

**Research Instruments:** The California Psychological Inventory (personal-social adjustment questionnaire) has been utilized in the present research. This inventory was designed by Clark et al. In 1953. This scale was developed for measurement of different life adjustments, with two poles (extremes) of personal adjustment and social adjustment. The short form of this questionnaire has been used in the present study, with 180 two option (Yes-No) questions. It has 18 subscales, half of which are related to personal adjustment measurement and the rest are for social adjustment measurement. As a result of this test, a general score for personal adjustment, a general score for social adjustment and a total score from the combination of these two general scores are obtained. The construct validity, explains this questionnaire in correlation for each question method as a general score of 0.77 for personal adjustment, 0.72 for social adjustment and 0.93 for personal-social adjustment. The factors of personal-social adjustment have been obtained as the following, which are mentioned in an Iranian research written in Persian [8].

**Table 1.** Factors of California Personal-Social Adjustment Questionnaire

Scale	Cronbach's alpha	Bisection
Personal Adjustment	0.92	0.89
Social Adjustment	0.91	0.82
Personal-Social Adjustment (All)	0.95	0.93

**Research Procedures:** In the present study, first the adjustment levels of the subjects (mothers and daughters) were measured by the means of California questionnaire. Thereafter, dialectical behavior therapy methods were taught to the subjects in 10 session of 2 hour length, for generating more adjustment. After completion of the whole sessions, the questionnaire was filled up again by the subjects.

## RESULTS

The SPSS software has been utilized in the present research for data analysis. The statistical methods of this study have been descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation tables as well as inferential statistics including analysis of covariance method.

**Table 2.** Comparison of Mean Scores of the Evaluation of Dialectic Impact on the Adjustment of Mothers in the Two Groups

Group	Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Control	95.2	18.27	92.4	15.46
Experimental	90.53	17.5	124.66	19.18

As indicated in Table (2), the mean score of the experimental group was 90.53 in pretest phase, and it changed to 124.66 in posttest phase; while in the control group the mean score was 95.2 in pretest phase and 92.4 in posttest phase.

**Table 3.** Comparison of Mean Scores of the Evaluation of Dialectic Impact on the Adjustment of Daughters in the Two Groups

Group	Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Control	86.46	20.09	89.86	17.61
Experimental	80.33	19.89	111.86	19.84

As indicated in Table (3), the mean score of the experimental group was 80.33 in pretest phase, and it changed to 111.86 in posttest phase; while in the control group the mean score was 86.46 in pretest phase and 89.86 in posttest phase.

**Table 4.** Levin Test Results for the Assumption of Equal Variances of the Mothers in Society

Research Scale	F	DFb	DFw	Sig.
<b>Total Adjustment</b>	1.516	1	58	0.203

As can be seen from Table (4), the null hypothesis is confirmed for equal variances of scores of the two groups of mothers. It means that the assumption of equal variances of scores was confirmed in both experimental and control groups.

**Table 5.** Levin Test Results for the Assumption of Equal Variances of the Daughters in Society

Research Scale	F	DFb	DFw	Sig.
<b>Total Adjustment</b>	0.894	1	58	0.228

As can be seen from Table (5), the null hypothesis is confirmed for equal variances of scores of the two groups of daughters. It means that the assumption of equal variances of scores was confirmed in both experimental and control groups.

**Table 6.** Comparison of the Score Distribution of Research Variables with Normal Distribution

Research Scale	k-s-z	Significance (P)
Total Adjustment	1.20	0.109
Domination	1.35	0.051
Capacity for Status	1.32	0.056
Sociability	1.05	0.214
Social Presence	0.979	0.293
Self-Acceptance	1.25	0.076
Responsibility	1.18	0.118
Socialization	1.27	0.077
Self-Control	0.633	0.818
Tolerance	1.04	0.223
Good Impression	1.00	0.270
Communality	1.34	0.057
Well-Being	0.961	0.291
Achievement via Conformance	1.25	0.107
Achievement via Independence	1.22	0.099
Intellectual Efficiency	1.13	0.154
Psychological Mindedness	1.09	0.180
Flexibility	0.926	0.358
Femininity/Manhood	0.460	0.984

**Table 7.** Results of Covariance Analysis of the Impact of Group Membership on the Rate of Adjustment Scores of Mothers in the Two Groups

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.	Effect Size	Power
<b>Pretest</b>	1	7567.86	218.99	0.001	0.980	1
<b>Group</b>	1	9842.40	284.80	0.001	0.913	1

According to Table (7), there exists a significant difference between the mothers' mean scores based on their group (experimental and control groups) membership ( $P < 0.01$ ). Consequently, the first hypothesis is confirmed. The rate of this impact has been 91 percent. Therefore, dialectical therapy is effective and useful on mothers' adjustment. The statistical power equals one in here which indicates the statistical accuracy.

**Table 8.** Results of Covariance Analysis of the Impact of Group Membership on the Rate of Adjustment Scores of Daughters in the Two Groups

Variables	Df	MS	F	Sig.	Effect Size	Power
<b>Pretest</b>	1	8824.92	231.66	0.001	0.896	1
<b>Group</b>	1	5510.54	144.65	0.001	0.843	1

According to Table (8), there exists a significant difference between the daughters' mean scores based on their group (experimental and control groups) membership ( $P < 0.01$ ). Consequently, the Second hypothesis is confirmed. The rate of this impact has been 84 percent. Therefore, dialectical therapy is effective and useful on daughters' adjustment. The statistical power equals one in here which indicates the statistical accuracy.

## DISCUSSION

Dialectical Group Counseling affects the mothers' adjustment. According to Table (7), there exists a significant difference between the mothers' mean scores based on their group (experimental and control groups) membership ( $P < 0.01$ ). Findings of the present research are in parallel with other researches on investigation of the improvement of the parent-adolescent relationships and the adjustment between them, as well as the researches on investigation of the effectiveness of training dialectical behavior therapy skills. Results of one research indicated that dialectical behavior therapy helps the person to cope better with grievous events by training such skills as frustration tolerance, and by increasing flexibility and offering new solutions as well as mitigation of the agonizing effects and conditions. In addition, by making use of emotion control skills, the clients are assisted in better recognizing their feeling and analyzing each emotion without being weakened before it [6]. Findings of another research revealed that training anger management skills, including problem solving skills, soothing skills and keeping internal control skill can be effective in increasing adjustment between people [9]. In an investigation of comparison of teaching emotion regulation strategies via Gross model vs. dialectical behavior therapy in reduction of the symptoms of university-students' emotional problems, it was revealed that both methods led to reduction of interpersonal sensitivity symptoms, and it was also indicated that dialectical behavior therapy eventuated in the reduction of anxiety and depression symptoms in university students [3]. With respect to mindfulness skills, through concentration on themselves, their characteristics, and their strengths and weaknesses, the individuals acquired a degree of self-awareness and became able to turn their attention away from anything that was not useful or effective (like concentration on negative thoughts), and consciously think about the here and now without any judgments. By making use of the skills of accreditation to themselves and to others, they were capable of understanding their own feelings and thought, as well as those of other people and accepting themselves and their surrounding people the way they currently are and also they could transmit such comprehensions to them. Moreover, they could now listen actively, have verbal and non-verbal responses appropriate to the situation, communicate with the audience without any judgment, when their adolescent commits aggression and rebellion, they would use distress tolerance skills, and in condition they run into a problem with their adolescent, they would use problem solving skills to deal with those problems in the best way. Finally, through interpersonal efficiency skills, the subject mothers learnt self-assertion methods, courage and self-confidence skills, and practiced the appropriate communication methods in their groups. This way, they learnt how to communicate in an appropriate and efficient manner.

Dialectical Group Counseling affects the Daughters' adjustment. According to Table (8), there exists a significant difference between the daughters' mean scores based on their group (experimental and control groups) membership ( $P < 0.01$ ). Results of a research on the effect of the adolescent's relationship with their mother and friends, revealed that durable communicative problems with mother and friends, leads to maladjustment in the adolescents [10]. Another research was carried out on the effect of training cognitive-behavioral skills to mothers on the adolescent's aggression, whose result indicated that training cognitive-behavioral skills to mothers lead to an increase of anger management in the adolescents [11]. Still, findings of one other research illustrated that training emotion regulation method leads to the stable reduction of interpersonal sensitivity in university students, which was most probably due to the emphasis that the emotion regulation methods put on awareness, control and modification of negative emotions as a result of interpersonal

relationships, concentration on workshops and practical exercises, as well as setting up some group sessions and consequently the existence of effective interpersonal interactions [12]. Efficacy of this method is probably related to the use of accreditation skill; training this skill leads to acceptance of self and others' emotional problems and ultimately to facilitation of change. In addition, by combining mindfulness exercises with behavioral exercises in this method, people observe themselves and other people, with no judgment and are consequently better able to understand the reason for their behavior and those of others'. Therefore, they are able to improve their communications through the emphasis of emotion regulation method on awareness, control and modification of negative emotions as a result of interpersonal relationships. By fully learning such exercises, the skills turn to the automatic style of the mind. Finally, doing such exercises practically and in workshops, and setting up some group sessions, and the existence of effective interpersonal interactions, will lead to distancing of the individual from emotions, and to reduction of ruminations and generation of positive emotions and will ultimately contribute to the adjustment of the person.

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