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Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy on Resilience and Quality of Life in Mothers with Children with Learning Disabilities

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Extended Abstract

Aim

This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive treatment on the resilience and quality of life in mothers with children with learning disabilities. Specific Learning Disorder (SLD) is presented as a heterogeneous disorder with diverse cognitive characteristics affecting individuals with natural intelligence despite the presence of external factors such as sensory, movement, and mental disabilities, leading to poor performance in reading, writing, and mathematics (Bishara & Kaplan, 2016). Parents facing the possibility of their child having a learning disability may experience concerns about labels and referrals to special education schools (Mansson et al., 2015). Additionally, these parents are tasked with managing stress, utilizing adequate resources, and simultaneously providing high-quality parenting (Jones & Finch, 2020). Resilience is portrayed as the process of adaptation in challenging family situations, emphasizing the reinforcement of resourcefulness and self-confidence in dealing with difficulties (Suzuki et al., 2013). Resilient parents exhibit improved stress management and coping skills, particularly pertinent for families with children with learning disabilities (Gavidia-Payne et al., 2015). Parents of children with learning disabilities dedicate more time to caregiving and education, impacting their ability to engage in personal and social activities, ultimately contributing to a decrease in the quality of life (Villavicencio & Lopez-Larrosa, 2020). Thus, enhancing the quality of life in families may lead to improved performance across various family life domains and enhanced problem-solving abilities in response to stressors (Brown & Brown, 2014). Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) emerges as a treatment method to address the psychological, emotional, and communication aspects of individuals facing these challenges. MBCT aims to foster a changed perspective on thoughts, feelings, and emotions, encouraging full attention in the present moment and fostering an accepting and non-judgmental outlook (Kocovski et al., 2019). Clients undergoing MBCT learn to engage with irrational thoughts and feelings, focusing on altering thought content and viewing thoughts and feelings from a broader perspective (Williams et al., 2006). This research was conducted to determine the effectiveness of cognitive therapy based on mindfulness on resilience and quality of life in mothers with children with learning disabilities.

Methodology

The present study adopted a semi-experimental pre-test and post-test design with a control group and a two-month follow-up period. The statistical population included mothers of children with learning disabilities in Tehran during the first six months of 2020, utilizing purposeful sampling. The research sample comprised 40 mothers with children attending exceptional elementary schools, meeting specific criteria such as age, literacy level, absence of chronic physical problems, no concurrent

psychological interventions, and voluntary participation. Three schools in Tehran were selected, and the form of voluntary participation was distributed among mothers through face-to-face meetings adhering to health protocols. After identifying volunteer mothers, 40 were randomly selected based on entry and exit criteria. The Beach Center Family Quality OF Life Scale (BCFQLS) and the Connor and Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) were administered, and mothers were randomly assigned to test and control groups. The experimental group received mindfulness-based therapy for two months, while the control group did not receive this intervention. Post-intervention, both groups completed the questionnaires, and a follow-up was conducted after four weeks. Data were analyzed using covariance analysis and SPSS 24 software.

Findings

Mixed variance tests and F coefficients indicated a significant impact of the assessment stage on resilience scores and quality of life in mothers with children with learning disabilities ($P < 0.001$). The effect of the group membership factor (mindfulness-based therapy) on resilience scores and quality of life was also significant ($P < 0.001$), suggesting a notable impact of the type of treatment received. Furthermore, the interaction effect of the type of treatment and the time factor on resilience and quality of life scores was significant ($P < 0.001$), signifying a substantial impact of treatment at different evaluation stages. The study demonstrated a 68% and 67% impact on resilience and quality of life, respectively. Statistical power indicated high accuracy and sufficient sample size. Significant differences were observed in pre-test, post-test, and follow-up scores, indicating that mental awareness-based treatment significantly changed resilience and quality of life in mothers with children with learning disabilities.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the effectiveness of mindfulness-based therapy on resilience and quality of life in mothers with children with learning disabilities. The findings align with previous research, indicating that mindfulness-based therapy enhances emotional processing in individuals facing such challenges. This process enables mothers to better understand their emotional issues, fostering a realistic and accepting response to negative events. The application of cognitive therapy techniques based on mindfulness was shown to positively impact parents' resilience and quality of life. Based on these findings, it is recommended to incorporate mindfulness-based therapy in counseling centers to improve parents' resilience and quality of life. Additionally, self-taught techniques, including mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral approaches, can be disseminated through physical and electronic resources for parents.

Keywords: Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy, Quality of Life, Resilience.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, participants voluntarily took part in the research, and they could withdraw from the study if they did not wish to cooperate. The research objectives and researcher profiles were explained to the participants. Furthermore, no information that could reveal the identity of the participants was requested from individuals.

Acknowledgments

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Conflict of Interest

This research had no conflict of interest for the authors, and the results were transparently presented.

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