

The effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on parent-child conflict, academic stress and academic self-efficacy in secondary school girls

Ali Rowshanizadeh^{*}1, Hoda Ghamar,[†] Marzieh Hosain Zadeh[‡]

Received Date: 27/04/2023

Accepted Date: 21/09/2023

Pp: 41-50

Abstract

Introduction: The aim of this research was the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on parent-child conflict, academic stress and academic self-efficacy.

Methodology: The present study was a semi-experimental study with a pre-test-post-test and follow-up design with a control group. The statistical population of the research was female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city in 1401. A total of 30 people were selected and included in the study by targeted sampling through screening. The selected samples were divided into two groups (15 randomly selected samples in each group). One of the groups, the other group was the experimental group, which received the treatment in eight weekly ninety-minute sessions, and the other group, which was the control group, did not receive any intervention. Data were collected using the Academic Stress Assessment Questionnaire by Godzella (1998), the Parent-Child Conflict Questionnaire by Asadi Younesi et al. (2011), and the Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire by Patrick et al. (1997). The data was analyzed using ANOVA and SPSS24 software.

Findings: The results showed that after the intervention, in the experimental group, the level of parent-child conflict, academic self-efficacy increased and academic stress decreased significantly ($p < 0.05$).

Key Words: acceptance and commitment therapy, parent-child conflict, academic stress and academic self-efficacy, female students of Ahvaz city.

¹ - Assistant Professor of philosophy of education, Islamic Azad University, Ilam, Iran.

^{*}Corresponding Author: rowshani.education@yahoo.com

[†] - Master's degree in educational psychology, Ahwaz. Iran.

[‡] - Master's degree in educational psychology, Ahwaz. Iran.

Introduction

Among the different age stages, the adolescent stage is affected by the fundamental biological and psychological changes that accompany it, and it is more necessary to study it, a stage where successful growth and comprehensive handling of its developmental tasks are related to various types of functional capabilities such as academic self-efficacy. And not having academic stress and conflict with parents is needed. Although having psychological and interpersonal abilities such as academic self-efficacy and the absence of parent-child conflict and academic stress is absolutely necessary to have a good performance in performing various tasks during adolescence, especially academic tasks. However, the results of theoretical and experimental researches show the fact that affected by the developmental changes and functional difficulties of this period, many teenagers are deprived of having these abilities, which is the reason for the occurrence of a wide range of malfunctions. has provided them with education (Walter et al., 2017). Academic self-efficacy is one of the variables that influence the academic performance of people in the youth department. Academic self-efficacy refers to a person's judgment about his ability to organize and perform various planned educational tasks. According to cognitive theories, self-efficacy is the main determinant of thoughts, feelings, and behavior in stressful situations. People with high self-efficacy attribute their failure to low effort rather than low ability; On the other hand, people with low self-efficacy attribute their failure to low ability.

Therefore, students with high academic self-efficacy, compared to students with lower self-efficacy, have more confidence that they can complete educational assignments, so academic self-efficacy is one of the related concepts or self-efficacy, which is the belief of students about the ability to reach a certain level of the assignment. It refers to (Haji Lakhari et al., 2013). Another variable influencing the academic performance of people in adolescence is academic stress. Stress is one of the inevitable facts of human life that has many effects on the body and mind of people. Student life is also a stressful situation and stage. Among academic stress, it is one of the important categories that can affect the mental and physical health of students. Also, high levels of stress can lead to sleep disorders, digestive disorders, headaches, depression and even turn to drugs and reduce students' ability to learn course material. This is where the role of schools in reducing academic stress and training an efficient workforce is highlighted. Officials should try to identify the effective factors in increasing academic stress and try to control it (Shadi et al., 2018). Family conditions, including the quality of relationships between parents and children, are also more important. Research has shown that parents' parenting methods are related to adolescents' adjustment. Therefore, the parent-child conflict that can be seen in some relationships is a category that can affect the social adjustment of teenagers. In this regard, many behavioral and social science experts believe that children's adjustment and behavioral problems are

the product of inappropriate quality of family interactions, lack of emotional support from parents, and conflict between parents and children. In other words, the mere existence of conflict can be seen as a natural process in the path of family growth and it is not possible to completely eliminate conflict. What can make the conflict between parents and teenagers dangerous and challenging is the attitude that parents and especially teenagers have towards these conflicts. In other words, teenagers may attribute conflict with their parents to their lack of work and mistakes or see it as the result of parents' inability to establish intimate relationships (Nargisu et al., 2012). Therapy based on acceptance and commitment is one of the new expanded models whose key treatment processes are different from traditional cognitive behavioral therapy. Its underlying principles include: accepting or willing to experience pain or other disturbing events without trying to control them; Action based on value or commitment combined with the desire to act as specific meaningful goals that lead to healthy functioning. This method includes experimental experiences and exposure-based exercises and methods such as mental care (Kakavand et al., 2014).

Acceptance and commitment therapy was created by Hayes in 1986, this method is part of the third wave of behavioral therapies and emerged following the second wave of these therapies such as cognitive behavioral therapy. Treatment based on acceptance and commitment is a research program under the name of communication system theory, in this treatment, it is first tried to increase the psychological acceptance of the individual about mental experiences (thoughts and feelings) and decrease the ineffective control actions (Kirim et al., 2015). The main goal of therapy based on acceptance and commitment is to increase psychological flexibility, which means the ability of a person to consciously communicate with the present despite all the feelings, thoughts, memories and physical sensations that he experiences at the moment and to perform behaviors in the service of the goals and values of the person's choice. (Hayes et al., 2013). In fact, in this treatment, clients are encouraged to accept their unpleasant feelings and thoughts and to consider the context in which the behavior occurs and the function it serves. Although the increasing use of the treatment method based on acceptance and commitment has been created in clinical and research situations, there are few studies that examine the exact effectiveness of these methods and their impact on psychological variables, especially in the case of the current research variables.

The lack of these researches is felt especially for students who make up a large part of the country's population and usually few programs are prepared for them. Despite conducting numerous studies regarding the effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on various fields, especially a

wide range of psychological problems and in non-clinical fields such as workplace stress, prevention and health maintenance, the researcher in a critical review of the research background came to the conclusion that The effectiveness of these treatments on the problems and students who were involved in parent-child conflicts, academic stress and academic self-efficacy has not been investigated. Now, on the one hand, considering the need to apply appropriate psychological treatment for this group in order to prevent the spread of the possible effects of these problems to other functional areas, and on the other hand, considering the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy in improving the mental health components of different groups, and finally, lack of Conducting a research in order to investigate the effectiveness of these therapeutic approaches on parent-child conflicts, academic stress and academic self-efficacy, the main question of the research is whether treatment based on acceptance and commitment on parent-child conflict, academic stress and academic self-efficacy of secondary school girl students. Are the second city of Ahvaz effective? And if the answer to this question is positive, the next question is, which of the mentioned variables is the most effective treatment based on acceptance and commitment? Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on parent-child conflict, academic stress, and academic self-efficacy in secondary school girls in Ahvaz. Therefore, the following hypotheses are examined:

- ۱- Acceptance and commitment therapy has an effect on parent-child conflict in secondary school girls in Ahvaz city.
- ۲- Acceptance and commitment therapy has an effect on academic stress in secondary school female students in Ahvaz city.
- ۳- The treatment of acceptance and commitment has an effect on academic self-efficacy in secondary school girls in Ahvaz city.

Research question

What are the challenges and opportunities of decentralization of high school curriculum with an emphasis on multiculturalism and cultural heritage?

Methodology

This research is an applied research in terms of its purpose and based on the method of data collection, it is semi-experimental study. The statistical population of this research was the female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city in 1401, and a total of 30 people were selected and included in the study by the purposeful sampling method through screening. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The academic stress assessment questionnaire was designed by Godzella (1998) in the form of 51 items and its

scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale (from never to most of the time). Godzella (1998) reported the concurrent validity of the stress questionnaire using the answers of 290 students. The levels of stress (mild, moderate, severe) and their answers to the questions of the stress questionnaire were investigated and studied with the help of analysis of variance. The validity and reliability of this scale has been reported as acceptable in Iran by Abdul Khalaki et al. (2007). The parent-child conflict questionnaire was created by Esdi Younesi et al. This scale has 92 questions, each question has two parts. The first part measures the frequency of conflict and the second part measures the intensity of conflict. Questions are graded in each section separately and based on a five-point Likert scale. Esadi Yonesi et al. (2010) obtained an alpha coefficient of 0.96 for the internal consistency of the conflict frequency section and an alpha coefficient of 0.98 for the conflict intensity section. Also, the retest coefficient of this scale was 0.72 for the conflict frequency section and 0.74 for the conflict intensity section. The academic self-efficacy questionnaire was created by Patrick et al. (1997), it has 5 items that reflect students' perception of their competence in doing class assignments. The questions are scored between (1) and (5) from completely agree to completely disagree. Hashemi Sheikh Shabani (1380) has reported the reliability of this scale with Cronbach's alpha and Spearman-Brown classification as 0.65 and 0.59, respectively. The construct validity of this scale has been proven in many studies.

Findings

Descriptive findings include the mean and standard deviation of acceptance and commitment treatment scores on parent-child conflict, academic self-efficacy and academic stress in female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city, in the experimental and control groups, separately in the previous stages. The test and post-test are presented in Table 1

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of parent-child conflict, academic self-efficacy and academic stress in the experimental and control groups, separately in the pre-test and post-test phases

Variable	group	Number	pre-exam		Post-exam	
Parent-child conflict	Control	15	mean	Standard deviation	mean	standard deviation
			171.36	15.60	170.20	14.98
Academic self-efficacy	the experiment	15	172.11	17.34	166.44	12.30
	Control	15	10.17	3.92	10.62	3.99
Academic stress	the experiment	15	9.16	2.10	12.67	4.55
	Control	15	101.22	10.74	100.74	9.71
	the experiment	15	100.86	10.60	97.69	9.34

The results of the statistical assumptions of the analysis include the linearity of the relationship, multiple non-collinearity and the homogeneity of the

Biannual Journal of Education Experiences, Vol 7, No 2, Summer and Autumn 2024

regression slope as follows. In this research, the pre-test of parent-child conflict, academic self-efficacy and academic stress were considered as auxiliary variables (covariates) and their post-tests were considered as dependent variables. The linearity of the relationship between each dependent variable and its covariate was tested. The relationship between pre-test and post-test of parent-child conflict was equal to $r=0.721$, academic self-efficacy was equal to $r=0.541$, and academic stress was equal to $r=0.782$. According to the obtained data, the assumption of linearity is established for the variables of parent-child conflict, academic self-efficacy and academic stress. The correlation between the pre-tests of all three variables and their components was obtained in a range between 0.59 and 0.63 ($p<0.001$). According to the obtained correlations, it can be said that the assumption of multiple non-collinearity between auxiliary variables (covariates) has been met. The results of Levin's test to check the homogeneity of variances in parent-child conflict ($F = 2.16$ and $P = 0.120$), in academic self-efficacy ($F = 3.01$ and $P = 0.214$), in academic stress ($F = 3.19$ and $P = 0.080$), non-significant. They have. As a result, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is confirmed. The results of the homogeneity of the regression slope showed that there is no significance between auxiliary variables (pre-tests) and dependent variables (post-tests) at the factor levels (experimental and control groups). Therefore, the assumption of regression homogeneity has been met. Table 2 shows the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test to check the assumption of normality of the distribution of variables.

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov results for checking the assumption of normality of distribution of variables

Pre-exams	Z Kolmogorov-Smirnov	level of significance
Parent-child conflict	1.07	0.089
Academic self-efficacy	1.21	0.099
Academic stress	0.76	1.101

As can be seen in Table 2, the significance level of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is

greater than 0.05, so the assumption of normal distribution of the variables has been met. To check the research hypotheses, the results of the multivariate covariance analysis on the average post-test scores of the test and control groups are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The results of multivariate covariance analysis on the average post-test scores of the test and control groups.

title of exam	Value	F value	Df hypothesis	Df error	level of significance	Effect size	Power of the test
Pillais Trace	0.716	9.45	2	27	0.001	0.910	1.000
Wilks Lambda	0.420	9.45	2	27	0.001	0.910	1.000
Hotelling's Trace	12.39	9.45	2	27	0.001	0.910	1.000
Roy's Largest Root	12.36	9.45	2	27	0.001	0.910	1.000

The contents of Table 3 show that there is a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of dependent variables at the $P \geq 0.001$ level and it can be said that at least in one of the dependent variables (parent-child conflict and academic self-efficacy and stress) education) between the two groups, there is a significant difference. In order to find out this difference, two covariance analyzes were performed in Mankwa's text. According to the calculated effect size, 91% of the total variances of the experimental and control groups are caused by the effect of the independent variable. Also, the statistical power of the test is equal to 1.00, which means that the test was able to reject the null hypothesis with 100% power. Table 4 shows the results of the research hypotheses test.

Table 4. The results of covariance analysis on the average scores of parent-child conflict and academic self-efficacy and academic stress of the experimental and control groups.

The dependent variable	sum square	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squared	F value	level of significance	Effect size	Power of the test
Parent-child conflict	145.37	1	145.37	17.45	0.00	0.922	1.000
Academic self-efficacy	236.91	1	236.91	12.16	0.00	0.931	1.000
Academic stress	70.49	1	70.49	10.89	0.00	0.911	1.000

According to the contents of Table 4, the F value for the parent-child conflict variable was 17.45, which is significant at the $P = 0.000$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was confirmed and it can be said that the treatment of

acceptance and commitment on the parent-child conflict in the female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city in the experimental group compared to the control group. Also, according to the contents of Table 4, the F value for the academic self-efficacy variable was 12.16, which is significant at the $P = 0.000$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was confirmed and it can be said that the treatment of acceptance and commitment on academic self-efficacy in the female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city in the experimental group compared to the control group. Also, according to the contents of Table 4, the F value for the academic stress variable was 10.89, which is significant at the $P = 0.000$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 3 was confirmed and it can be said that the treatment of acceptance and commitment on academic stress in the female students of second secondary school in Ahvaz city in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Discussion and conclusion

Considering that, the purpose of this research was the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on parent-child conflict, academic stress and academic self-efficacy in female students of the second secondary school in Ahvaz city, therefore identifying this effect based on the fact that the aforementioned variables are important indicators of performance. Education has been important. The results of this research showed that education based on acceptance and commitment caused a significant increase in academic self-efficacy scores and a significant decrease in parent-child conflict and academic stress scores in the experimental group compared to the control group, in other words, the students who participated in group education compared to the students who did not receive this training, they obtained better grades in academic self-efficacy, parent-child conflict, and academic stress in the post-test stage, and this result indicates that education based on acceptance and commitment It has caused the students to become more self-efficacious in their studies and reduce their academic stress and parent-child conflict. The results showed that treatment based on acceptance and commitment leads to improvement of academic self-efficacy. This treatment gives the person the opportunity to observe, describe and describe his emotional states and abilities without a judgmental view, and the therapist's focus is to guide the client towards complete awareness by accepting responsibility by himself, so that he and Know and accept your abilities fully. The therapist encourages people to fully experience thoughts and emotions related to a thought, feeling, relationship and behavior, without suppressing them and making value judgments about them. Repeatedly working with the content of thoughts and avoidance tendencies will gradually cause a change in the general view in relation to negative thoughts and emotions. In other words, people realize that reaching a kind of decentralized communication and developing a different perspective towards thoughts and emotions is the main factor in the effectiveness of this approach, and it is this factor that destroys the ability to get out of the trap of low self-efficacy. Takes. Also, the results showed that this educational approach had a significant role in reducing the parent-child conflict

of teenagers and greatly reduced the amount of this conflict in the experimental group. Therapy based on acceptance and commitment, through increasing the level of acceptance and functional commitment of the parties to each other and clarifying their communication values, has an effective role in improving the quality of interpersonal relationships and solving problems in this communication format. In this educational program, the teacher used various factors to reduce the parent-child conflict and strengthen the dialogue between them. Also, the results showed that this treatment led to the reduction of students' academic stress. In this therapy, the goal of placing a lot of emphasis on people's desire for internal experiences was to help them experience their disturbing thoughts as just a thought and to become aware of the dysfunctional nature of their current program and instead of responding to it, Do what is important to them in life and in line with their values. In this therapy, people learn to accept their feelings rather than distance themselves from them. Therefore, acceptance and commitment therapy tries to teach people to experience their thoughts and feelings, instead of trying to stop them, people are asked to work towards their goals and values and thoughts and feelings. Experience yourself. Academic stress can be reduced by using this treatment. The results of this research were in line with the research of Darudgar and Salari (2006), Bakhtiarpour (2016), Nowrozi et al. One of the limitations of this research is the lack of enough time to follow up the treatment results. Also, considering that this research was conducted in the same age group in Ahvaz city and on girls, one should be cautious in generalizing the results to the age groups of regions and boys. It is suggested to investigate the effect of this treatment method in both genders and other spaces, and also to compare the effect of this method with other treatment methods

References

- Abdul Khalaki, M., Sokrati, V., Thanks, O., Gravand, F., & Tulabi, S. (2008). Neuroticism, academic stress and mental well-being: Examining the patterns of modulating and mediating effects. *Research in Psychological Health*, 2(2), 63–78. (in Persian).
- Asadi, Y. M. R., Mazaheri, M. A., Shahidi, S. H., Tahmasian, K., & Fayyaz Bakhsh, M. A. (2012). Construction and validation of a parent-adolescent conflict questionnaire (adolescent's form). *Journal of Family and Research*, 12(8), 43–70. (in Persian).
- Bakhtiarpour, S. (2016). The relationship between parent-child conflict and family emotional atmosphere with academic performance in the first year high school students of Karun city. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 2(43), 45–53. (in Persian).
- Haji Lakhari, A., Marouti, Z., & Fathi, F. (2013). The relationship between personality traits, intelligence beliefs, achievement goals and academic self-efficacy in female high school students. *Personality and Individual Differences Quarterly*, 3(4), 75–92. (in Persian).

Hayes, S. A., Orsillo, S. M., & Roemer, L. (2013). An acceptance-based behavioral therapy for individuals with generalized anxiety disorder. *Cognitive and Behavioral Practice*, 20(3), 264–287.

Juncos, D. G., & Paiva-Pona, E. (2018). Acceptance & commitment therapy as a clinical anxiety treatment & performance enhancement program for musicians: Towards an evidence-based practice model within performance psychology. *Music & Science Journal*, 1(1), 1–17.

Juncos, D. G., Heinrichs, G. A., Towle, P., Duffy, K., Grand, S. M., Morgan, M. C., & Kalkus, E. (2017). Acceptance & Commitment Therapy for the Treatment of Music Performance Anxiety: A Pilot Study with Student Vocalists. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8(1), 986–992.

Kakavand, A., Bagheri, A., & Shirmohammadi, F. (2014). The effectiveness of therapy based on acceptance and commitment on reducing stress in elderly men with cardiovascular disease. *Journal of Psychology of Aging*, 1(3), 169–178. (in Persian).

Karimi, R., Rezaei, M., Rahrovi, M., Mossadegh, K., & Abipour, J. (2016). The effectiveness of treatment based on acceptance and commitment on reducing depression with addiction. *Journal of Disability Studies*, 6, 265–269. (in Persian).

Nargiso, J. E., Becker, B., Wolff, J. C., Uhl, K. M., Simon, V., Spirito, A., & Prinstein, M. (2012). Psychological, peer, and family influences on smoking among an adolescent psychiatric sample. *Journal of Substance Abuse Treatment*, 42, 310–318. <https://doi.org/xxxx>

Nowrozi, M., Zargar, F., & Akbari, H. (2016). The effectiveness of education based on acceptance and commitment on reducing interpersonal problems and experiential avoidance of students. *Journal of Behavioral Science Research*, 15(2), 168–174. (in Persian).

Shadi, M., Peyman, N., Taghipour, A., & Tehrani, H. (2018). Predictors of the academic stress and its determinants among students based on the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Fundamentals of Mental Health*, 20(1). (in Persian).