

THE EXTENT OF PARENTS' OF AUTISM CHILDREN KNOWLEDGE OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION AS PERCEIVED BY THEM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification as perceived by them. Moreover, finding if there are any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to gender and affection duration. The sample of the study consisted of (139) parents with children of Autism disorder in public and private centers in Amman city responded to a test developed by the researchers. The findings of the study showed that the means ranged from (5.84-7.12) as methods of improving desired behavior ranked first followed by reducing undesired behavior. While, behavior modification principles came lastly. Moreover, there are significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to gender in all domains and the tool as a whole except for reducing undesired behavior methods as differences were in the favor of females. Meanwhile, there were no differences attributed to affection duration.

Key Words: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parents, Behavior modification

1. Introduction & Literature Review

Behavior problems are the most important issues occupying the thinking of parents and professionals, within its reasons as well as modification methods that can be used by parents and teachers. Moreover, using those methods make parents able to deal with their children of special needs especially autism children, and this means that those methods can be used with different ages and different disorders (Al-daher, 2004).

Autism Society of America (2012) defines Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as a complex developmental disability; signs typically appear during early childhood and affect a person's ability to communicate, and interact with others. ASD is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum condition" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. There is no known single cause of autism, but increased awareness and early diagnosis/intervention and access to appropriate services/supports lead to significantly improved outcomes.

Moreover, individuals with Autism are not heterogeneous in terms of characteristics and qualities. Perhaps the difference between an individual and an individual with autism spectrum disorder is greater than the similarities. But this does not mean the absence of General properties similar to individuals who have been diagnosed with autism. There are also a number of General characteristics that distinguish members of this group and help to diagnose, since this category is diagnosed by behavioral manifestations (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006).

In this sense, professional talked about providing those children with behavior modification services in their natural environments neglecting that the home is their most important natural setting, as with help of parents success can be made to help and assist those children (Al-Zureqat, 2007).

In this sense, Trembaly& Bemazzani (1995) studied a sample of (166) parents to help them in managing their children behavior. Three groups were used, the group who was trained was able to manage and modify their children behaviors.

Moreover, Hursh, Schumaker, Fawcett & Sherman (2000) investigated the effectiveness of written instructions was compared with the effectiveness of direct instructions (spoken instructions and feedback) for training the application of four behavior change processes (reinforcement, timeout, imitation training, and shaping). Twelve undergraduate students in a behavior modification practicum course took part in the study. An assessment at the end of the investigation showed the improved applications of the processes to be maintained or increased in 12 of the 24 possible occasions following direct instructions and in 18 of the 24 possible occasions following written instructions. The final mean levels of appropriate applications were about the same for both direct and written instructions.

Finally, Alsmadi & Alouwidi (2008) studied the parents' knowledge of behavior modification techniques and their training needs. They concluded that their knowledge is in its average level and there is a need to learn more skills in this field.

Therefore, this study is aiming to investigate the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification as perceived by them. Moreover, finding if there are any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to gender and affection duration.

2. Statement of Purpose

Lack of adaptive behavioral problems Lead to the negative effects on individuals with the disorder autism spectrum, it also limit their interaction with the surrounding community, placing them unacceptable in the social environment, educational interact with them. It is, of course, affect the performance of skills that academic, and the difficulty of acquiring the essential skills and therefore the urgent need to need to know the parents with mixed autism spectrum methods of behavior modification to become able to adjust the manners of their children of mixed autism spectrum. Therefore, the current study is seeking to answer the following main question: What is the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification as perceived by them?. With three sub questions:

- 1) Are there any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to affection duration?
- 2) What is the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification as perceived by them?
- 3) Are there any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to gender?

Significance the study

The significance of this study investigates the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to affection duration as well as training them to acquire the needed skills to deal with their children.

3. Method

Participants

The sample of the study is consisted of (139) parents with children of Autism disorder in public and private centers in the capital Amman. They sample were distributed as follows: males (77), females (62). Moreover, there were (93) parents with children suffering Autism from (1-8) years and (46) with children suffering Autism from (9-16) years.

Study Measurements

Parents test of knowing behavior modifying of Autism children: The test was developed by the researcher to investigate parents' knowledge of Autism behavior modification. The researchers reviewed many studies such as (Hundert, 1982; Hardowy & Martin, 1995; Al-khateeb, 2007) to develop (33) items test distributed into: behavior modification principles (11 items), improving desired behavior (11 items) and reducing undesired behavior (11 items).

Validity and reliability was checked through specialized raters and the use of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient totaling (0.85), each correct answer was given (1) while wrong answers were given (0), therefore, the total score is (33) and the lowest score is (0).

4. Findings & Discussion

Table: 1 showing frequencies and means according to gender and affection duration

	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	62	44.6
	Female	77	55.4
Duration	1-8 years	93	66.9
	9-16 years	46	33.1
Total		139	100.0

The First Question: What is the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification as perceived by them?

To answer this question means and standard deviations of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification were calculated as shown in table (2)

Table 2: means and standard deviations of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification

Rank	No	Domain	M	SD
1	2	Behavior modification principles	7.12	2.07
2	3	Improving desired behavior	6.33	2.11
3	1	Reducing undesired behavior	5.84	1.68
Total			19.29	4.32

Table (2) shows that the means ranged from (5.84-7.12) as methods of improving desired behavior ranked first with a mean of (7.12) followed by reducing undesired behavior with a mean of (6.33). While, behavior modification principles came with the lowest mean of (5.84). This can be explained that parents with autism disorder had acquired experience and knowledge of good in the methods and programs and modify behavior during the process of education through the pursuit of their children placed to detect their children through the continued use of the programs of behavior modification with Autism students in the centers and their need for these programs to control their behavior and adjusted the formation of some behavior can also be the interpretation of the knowledge of parents with autism disorder methods of behavior modification in all areas is that behavior modification is used in the field to control many of the behavior, add to this that the main rules adopted by many of the programs for the control of the manners of many students with autism disorder and thus find that their knowledge of programs to modify behavior suggest. This can be explained by the also receive parents with mixed autism spectrum continuous sessions in programs to modify behavior and how to deal with the behavior and control can be interpreted in the access of ways to increase the desired behavior on the first place in the knowledge of the parents is the awareness of parents of the importance of the working methods of the different strengthening its role in strengthening the behavior and continued focus on the importance of strengthening, as that was the area of methods to reduce conduct

unwanted occupies the second rank because it is already focus after the promotion in the methods of impunity because of little use methods of impunity to parents has been occupied impunity was ranked second, with regard to the third area which is the principles of behavior modification find it ranked third if it is the actions of the theory is not on the degree of importance for parents Things neglected them because the parents seek to address practical action whether strengthening or go unpunished or principles did not have a practical measures used by parents and focus on it.

This findings is in consistent with (Tremblay et al, 1995) study who concluded that the role of parents in behavior modification program is central in improving children's' cases.

The Second question: Are there any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha =0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to gender?

To answer this question means and standard deviations were calculated as well as T- test was used to clarify any differences between parents responses attributed to gender, table (3) presents the findings.

Table 3: Means, SD and t-test for parents responses attributed to gender

Domain	Gender	No	M	SD	T	F	Sig
Behavior modification principles	Male	62	6.55	1.28	2.409	137	019.
	Female	77	5.47	1.77			
improving desired behavior	Male	62	8.85	1.39	5.783	137	000.
	Female	77	6.21	1.77			
reducing undesired behavior	Male	62	6.95	1.70	1.651	137	104.
	Female	77	6.00	2.25			
Total	Male	62	22.35	2.21	4.523	137	000.
	Female	77	17.68	4.31			

Table (3) shows that there are significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha =0.05$) attributed to gender in all domains and the tool as a whole except for reducing undesired behavior methods as differences were in the favor of females. This can be explained that females more interested than males in taking care of their children and providing them with educational and life services and have knowledge of the methods of behavior modification through the ongoing follow-up to the programs of behavior modification and the ongoing work of the field with their children could be explained by the decline in the know methods to reduce conduct unwanted female and male is to focus on the working methods and strengthening the

continuing tendency to use in modifying the behavior of their children of mixed autism spectrum away from methods of impunity continued to warn against the use of it is in this spirit that I find that there is a low knowledge of the methods of weakening of behavior of both males and females. This findings is in consistent with (Tremblay et al, 1995) study who concluded that the role of parents in behavior modification program is central in improving children's' cases.

The Third question: Are there any significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to affection duration?

To answer this question means and standard deviations were calculated as well as T- test was used to clarify any differences between parents responses attributed to affection duration, table (4) presents the findings.

Table 4: Means, SD and t-test for parents responses attributed to affection duration.

Domain	duration	No	M	SD	T	F	Sig
Behavior modification principles	1-8yrs	93	5.74	1.78	779.-	137	439.
	9-16yrs	46	6.13	1.41			
improving desired behavior	1-8yrs	93	6.98	1.88	860.-	137	394.
	9-16yrs	46	7.50	2.53			
reducing undesired behavior	1-8yrs	93	6.43	2.36	586.	137	560.
	9-16yrs	46	6.06	1.29			
Total	1-8yrs	93	19.14	4.58	426.-	137	672.
	9-16yrs	46	19.69	3.68			

Table (4) shows that there were no significant statistical differences at the level of ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the extent of Parents' of Autism children knowledge of behavior modification attributed to affection duration. This means that all parents go for help since the beginning and seek to know all the methods that might help their children.

5. Limitations and Recommendations

Despite all efforts to overcome the hindrances in the way of present research process, there were number of limitations. The study is limited on the parents of Autism children treated in a private or public center in Amman city in the academic year 2015/2016 and that it is not generalized on the whole community of Jordan. It is recommended to conduct more studies within other special education categories, and to design and implement training programs in the field of behavior modification to meet the needs of parents and professionals. It is totally quantitative study, that it is recommended to conduct qualitative study.

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