



The Effectiveness of the Floortime Method on Sensory Processing Sensitivity, Theory of Mind, and Social Skills in Children with High-Functioning Autism

Farideh Rahpeymay Nargesi¹, Mohamadparsa Azizi^{2*}, Fateme Baghermoradi¹, Majid Ebrahimpour²

1. M.A. in Exceptional Children Psychology, Sr.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Exceptional Children Psychology, Sr.C., Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: Parsaazizi111@gmail.com

Editor	Reviewers
Leila Youzbashi [✉] Department of sport science, Faculty of Humanities, University of Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran l.youzbashi@znu.ac.ir	Reviewer 1: Masoud Mirmoezi [✉] Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Tehran, Iran. Email: massoudmirmoezi@live.com Reviewer 2: Mohammad Reza Khodabakhsh [✉] Department of Psychology, Neyshabour Branch, Islamic Azad University, Neyshabour, Iran. Email :hodabakhsh@ut.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1 Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The paragraph beginning with “Sensory processing is a central concern in autism” provides a useful overview of Dunn’s model; however, it lacks a clear theoretical explanation connecting sensory processing dimensions to Floortime intervention mechanisms. The authors should expand this section by explicitly describing how developmental, relationship-based interactions are hypothesized to influence sensory registration, sensitivity, seeking, and avoiding patterns.

In the paragraph discussing theory of mind, the statement “Theory-of-mind difficulties are well documented in autism” is accurate but overly general. The literature review would be strengthened by including more recent empirical evidence and meta-analytic findings published after 2020 regarding theory-of-mind interventions and developmental social-pragmatic approaches in autism.

The paragraph beginning with “Social skills are also among the main areas of need for children with autism” would benefit from a more nuanced discussion of social functioning domains. The authors should clarify whether the intervention is expected to affect social reciprocity, social communication, peer interaction, adaptive social behavior, or all these constructs simultaneously, as they are conceptually distinct.

In the paragraph “Floortime is a relationship-based and developmentally oriented intervention,” the authors acknowledge that evidence for DIR/Floortime remains limited compared with behavioral interventions. However, the manuscript does not critically evaluate conflicting findings or methodological limitations identified in previous reviews. A more balanced presentation of the literature is necessary to avoid confirmation bias.

The session descriptions presented in the Intervention section appear highly structured and directive. For example, “The second and third sessions focused on recognition of basic emotions.” Since Floortime is fundamentally child-led and individualized, the authors should explain how these structured activities remained consistent with core DIR/Floortime principles.

In the Statistical Analysis section, the authors state that assumptions of MANCOVA and ANCOVA were tested. However, no actual results are reported. The manuscript should present the results of normality tests, Box’s M test, Levene’s test, homogeneity of regression slopes, and multicollinearity diagnostics to demonstrate the appropriateness of the analytical procedures.

Regarding Table 1, the posttest increase in sensory registration from 38.21 to 51.16 in the experimental group appears exceptionally large relative to the standard deviations reported. The authors should verify these values and discuss whether ceiling effects, measurement artifacts, or regression-to-the-mean effects could have influenced the findings.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

1.2 Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The final paragraph of the Introduction states that “few local studies have examined the simultaneous effects of Floortime on sensory processing, theory of mind, and social skills.” This claim should be supported by a systematic synthesis of existing Iranian and international studies. The novelty of the study would be clearer if the authors explicitly identified specific research gaps rather than making a broad assertion.

In the Methods section, the sentence “High-functioning autism was operationally defined according to the clinical diagnosis recorded in the participating rehabilitation centers” raises concerns regarding diagnostic rigor. The manuscript should specify which diagnostic instruments, clinical protocols, or multidisciplinary assessments were used to establish ASD diagnoses and whether diagnoses were verified by the research team.

The paragraph describing participant selection notes that “18 participants were assigned to each group.” Although Cohen (1988) is cited, no formal power analysis is reported. The authors should provide an a priori power calculation, expected effect size, alpha level, and statistical power to justify the adequacy of the sample size.

In the inclusion criteria paragraph, the criterion “no use of psychiatric medication” requires further clarification. The authors should indicate whether participants receiving medications for attention, anxiety, sleep difficulties, or other co-occurring conditions were excluded, and explain how medication status was verified.

The Instruments section reports Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the present sample; however, there is no information regarding cultural adaptation, translation procedures, construct validity, or previous psychometric evidence for the Persian versions of the Sensory Profile School Companion, TOM Test, and Autism Social Skills Profile. This information should be provided to establish measurement validity.

The paragraph describing the Floortime intervention indicates that the protocol was “adapted from Dehvari et al. (2022).” The authors should provide more detailed information regarding intervention fidelity, therapist qualifications, training procedures, supervision, and adherence monitoring. Without fidelity assessment, it is difficult to determine whether the intervention was implemented consistently.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the updated document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.