

## Effectiveness of a Mindfulness-Based Acceptance Training Package on the Attitude of Mothers of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Haleh. Ofoghi<sup>1</sup>, Sajad. Amini Manesh<sup>2\*</sup>, Mohammad. Mozafari<sup>3</sup>, Mohammadreza. Bardideh<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD student, Department of Psychology and Education of Exceptional Children, Fars Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Fars, Iran

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology and Education of Exceptional Children, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Shiraz Branch, Islamic Azad University, shiraz, Iran

<sup>4</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Firoozabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, shiraz, Iran

\* Corresponding author email address: sajadaminimanesh@gmail.com

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Monika Szczygieł <sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland monika.szczygiel@uj.edu.pl	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Abolghasem Khoshkanesh <sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Counseling Department, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. Email: akhoshkonesh@sbu.ac.ir <b>Reviewer 2:</b> Thseen Nazir <sup>1</sup> Professor of Psychology and Counseling Department, Ibn Haldun University, Istanbul, Turkey. Email: thseen.nazir@ihu.edu.tr

### 1. Round 1

#### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The abstract states, "The results showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental group, which received the mindfulness-based acceptance training package, and the control group in terms of overall attitude ( $p < 0.001$ ). While the significance level is reported, it would be beneficial to include the effect size (e.g., Cohen's  $d$ , partial eta squared) to provide a better understanding of the magnitude of the intervention effect.

In the discussion, it is stated that "mindfulness-based mothering acceptance training helps mothers stay in the present moment and align most of their behaviors with values related to various aspects of their lives." While this is a valid assertion, it would strengthen the manuscript if a more explicit connection to Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) or Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was made. A brief explanation of how these frameworks inform the intervention would provide more theoretical depth.

The findings indicate that the effect remained stable at follow-up ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, the manuscript does not specify the duration of the follow-up period (e.g., 1 month, 3 months). Including this detail would help assess the intervention's long-term effectiveness.

The study concludes that the intervention positively influenced maternal attitudes. However, potential mediators (e.g., reductions in parental stress, increases in emotional regulation skills) and moderators (e.g., socioeconomic status, education level) are not explored. Discussing these factors could provide deeper insights into the mechanisms driving the observed changes.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the introduction, it is mentioned, "Few studies have been conducted to explore public knowledge and attitudes in this field (Anand et al., 2023)." This claim needs more elaboration. Specifically, citing a systematic review or meta-analysis on mindfulness-based interventions for parents of children with ASD would help support the argument that this study fills an existing research gap.

The introduction states, "According to the latest statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the prevalence of autism in 2020 was 1 in every 54 live births." Given that CDC updates its autism prevalence data periodically, it would be beneficial to ensure that the most recent CDC estimates (2024) are cited for accuracy.

It is mentioned that "no intervention was applied to the control group." While this is a standard practice, it would be beneficial to discuss whether a placebo intervention (e.g., psychoeducation or support group sessions) could have been used to control for expectancy effects.

The study used the Parent Attitude Toward Special Needs Children Scale (Gonder, 2002). It would be useful to mention whether this scale has been validated for mothers of children with ASD in Iran or if any adaptations were made for cultural relevance.

The intervention is described as a "12-session, 120-minute mindfulness-based acceptance training package." It would be helpful to discuss whether any challenges were encountered in participant adherence or session completion rates. Additionally, providing a table summarizing the session content could improve readability.

Since participants were recruited from a single clinic, the external validity of the findings is limited. It would be beneficial to acknowledge this limitation explicitly in the discussion and suggest future research using multi-center or nationally representative samples.

In the discussion, it is stated that "the results of this study regarding the effect of the mindfulness-based mothering acceptance training package on increasing the positive attitude of mothers are consistent with some previous studies." However, a direct comparison with effect sizes from similar studies would strengthen the argument.

The conclusion asserts that "mindfulness-based therapy helps parents accept, be aware of, and observe their own feelings and thoughts." It would be valuable to further elaborate on whether changes in specific mindfulness components (e.g., non-judgmental awareness, self-compassion) were responsible for the attitude shifts observed.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.