

Developing a Nonviolent Communication Training Program and Evaluating its Effectiveness on the Social Adaptation and Academic Self-Efficacy of Aggressive Male Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to develop a nonviolent communication training program and evaluate its effectiveness on the social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students.

Methods and Materials: The research method included a qualitative section using thematic analysis with a deductive approach and a quantitative section with a quasi-experimental design, including a pre-test, post-test, control group, and a two-month follow-up period. The statistical population in the qualitative section consisted of articles, books, and dissertations related to nonviolent communication theory, and in the quantitative section, it included aggressive male students in the second grade of elementary school (ages 9 to 12) in the city of Isfahan during the 2023-2024 academic year. A total of 36 aggressive male students were purposefully selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups (18 students per group). The experimental group received the nonviolent communication training program over ten 75-minute sessions spanning ten weeks. The Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) (Eysenck & Wilson, 1975), the Social Adaptation Questionnaire (SAQ) (Sinha & Singh, 1993), and the Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (ASEQ) (Jinks & Morgan, 1999) were used in this study. Data were analyzed using mixed analysis of variance with SPSS software version 23.

Findings: The results indicated that the nonviolent communication training program has sufficient content validity according to experts. Additionally, this program significantly impacts the social adaptation ($P < 0.0001$; $\eta^2 = 0.56$; $F = 43.07$) and academic self-efficacy ($P < 0.0001$; $\eta^2 = 0.51$; $F = 35.78$) of aggressive male students.

Conclusion: The nonviolent communication training program can be used as an effective method to improve the social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students.

Keywords: Nonviolent communication training program, social adaptation, academic self-efficacy, aggression.

1. Introduction

Childhood is one of the most crucial stages of life, during which an individual's personality is established and shaped. Many behavioral and social disorders and incompatibilities later in life are due to insufficient attention to this sensitive period and the lack of proper guidance in the process of growth and development (Borowski et al., 2023). This neglect leads to a lack of adaptation and conformity with the environment and the emergence of various deviations in different dimensions of individual and social development for the child (Mota et al., 2020).

Among all educational levels, elementary school is of particular sensitivity and importance. In this period, children's cognitive foundations for learning various concepts and developing different physical, social, psychological, cognitive, and various talents are laid. In other words, elementary education is the cornerstone and foundation of children's educational activities for subsequent levels (Liu et al., 2022). Not all childhood experiences are pleasant; children, alongside the great feelings from their first mid-childhood experiences, also experience negative emotions. Due to limitations in conceptualizing and verbally expressing their experiences, they need support in daily issues and difficult situations (Lin et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2021).

The impacts of childhood problems are not limited to this period but can persist for years, sometimes even into adulthood. Research has shown that peer friendships or rejection during childhood have unique consequences for adaptive growth in adulthood. For instance, peer friendships lead to higher levels of general self-esteem in adulthood, whereas peer rejection and lack of friendships are associated with symptoms of psychological harm in adulthood (Taylor et al., 2023).

One of the most common problems among elementary school children is aggression. According to common psychological views, aggression is considered behavior intended to cause pain or injury to someone who does not wish to be harmed. For elementary school children, aggressive behavior is manifested as physical or verbal aggression (Wu et al., 2018). Aggressive behavior in childhood is associated with numerous negative outcomes, such as short-term and long-term academic, social, and emotional problems for children (Zulauf et al., 2018).

The occurrence of aggression in elementary school children leads to their social interactions gradually being

seriously damaged and facing reduced social adaptability (Wu et al., 2018). Adaptation is defined as an effort to encompass potentially stressful situations and is a method by which an individual adapts themselves to the environment and strengthens their physical and psychological health (Lin et al., 2021). According to Montella-Castina et al. (2018), social adaptation pertains to the interactions between the individual and the environment and describes the individual's ability to perform professional and social roles (Ota et al., 2020). Social adaptation helps individuals align their goals, interests, and values with those of the group they belong to, facilitating their entry into the group (Rakhmonovna & Ashrafovna, 2021). Consequently, social adaptation skills create the ability to establish mutual communication with others according to societal norms, allowing individuals to use constructive communication skills even in stressful and challenging situations, thereby perceiving fewer psychological and communicative tensions (Corradi & Levrau, 2021).

In addition to reducing social adaptation, aggression causes changes in a child's behavior in the academic environment and decreases variables related to education, such as academic self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their abilities to organize and execute the necessary actions to achieve desired outcomes (Amitay & Gumpel, 2015). Self-efficacy is a key component that motivates an individual to undertake activities or exercises (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). It is also defined as the ability to evaluate one's personal abilities, referring to students' confidence in their ability to perform academic tasks such as preparing for exams. Self-efficacy beliefs impact academic performance by increasing students' motivation and perseverance (Supervía et al., 2022). Academic self-efficacy, or the confidence in one's ability to overcome academic challenges, is recognized as an important characteristic (Kahraman & Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2021). It is defined as the perceived capability to perform the necessary tasks to achieve academic goals (Doménech-Betoret et al., 2017). Academic self-efficacy is a significant predictor of academic outcomes and progress and is associated with persistence in facing challenging material (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016). Students with high levels of academic self-efficacy attribute their academic failures more to lesser efforts rather than lower abilities, while those with low academic self-efficacy attribute their academic failures to their lower abilities (Sadi & Uyar, 2013).

To address psychological, behavioral, emotional, academic, and social problems of students, various educational interventions are used. One such intervention that has been highlighted in various fields is nonviolent communication training. Research results (Givehchi et al., 2017; Holmström, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2022; McMahon & Pederson, 2020; Pirhadi Tavandashti et al., 2024; Rezaei et al., 2019; Srihata & Kitcharoen; Taylor et al., 2023; Wacker & Dziobek, 2018; Yang & Kim, 2021) indicate that the nonviolent communication model leads to reduced aggressive, self-harming, and violent behaviors and increased self-management skills, empathy, meaning-seeking in life, and constructive interactions with others. Nonviolent communication is also known as compassionate communication. It has been suggested as a useful tool for communication in various environments and with different populations worldwide (Srihata & Kitcharoen). Some people use it to find love and empathy with themselves, while others use it to achieve deeper intimacy in relationships. Nonviolent communication is a promising example of a communication concept to address difficult encounters, as it acknowledges the feelings, needs, and desires of each individual and is designed to resolve conflicts (Wacker & Dziobek, 2018). Nonviolent communication helps individuals establish relationships with others that foster the flowering of kindness within them. It also guides people to reconstruct the way they express themselves and listen to others by focusing on four stages: observations: accurately observing what happens in a situation; feelings: expressing feelings based on what has been observed; needs: linking expressed feelings to a need; requests: making specific requests in this regard (Pirhadi Tavandashti et al., 2024).

Regarding the necessity of the present study, it can be said that childhood problems, in addition to disrupting the child's performance and abilities, predispose them to further problems and disorders in the future. Since emotional and behavioral patterns are more difficult to change in adulthood, early diagnosis of mental health problems in childhood is one of the preventive public health issues. Reviewing the history of adults with mental problems has shown that these individuals had a troubled childhood or experienced some emotional and behavioral disturbances at some point during their development. The growing attention to childhood problems is because a significant portion of society consists of children and adolescents who will play a role in the community as adults in the future. Moreover, as children and adolescents undergo developmental processes, their psychological problems transition to maturity and

adulthood, making their psychological problems more challenging to treat over time. Therefore, considering the discussed topics and the research gap (the lack of a nonviolent communication training package for aggressive male students), the main issue of the present study is to develop a nonviolent communication training package and evaluate its effectiveness on the social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The research method in the qualitative section (development of a nonviolent communication training package) was thematic analysis using a deductive approach, and in the quantitative section, it was quasi-experimental with a pre-test, post-test design with a control group and a two-month follow-up period. The statistical population in the qualitative section included articles, books, and dissertations related to nonviolent communication theory, and in the quantitative section, it included aggressive male students in the second grade of elementary school (ages 9 to 12) in the city of Isfahan during the 2023-2024 academic year. The sample size was selected using purposive sampling. One of the six education districts of Isfahan (District 6) was chosen, and six boys' elementary schools were visited. Teachers of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades were asked to identify students with signs of aggression. Seventy-seven students were identified. The Aggression Questionnaire was administered to these students to confirm the presence of aggression. From those identified with aggression (scoring above 45 on the Aggression Questionnaire), 40 were selected based on their scores and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups (20 students in each group). Online clinical interviews were also conducted with these students. The experimental group received the nonviolent communication training package in ten weekly 75-minute sessions in groups of five. The control group received no intervention during the study and awaited future interventions. There were two dropouts in the experimental group and two in the control group. After completing the sessions, a post-test was conducted, and a follow-up was done two months later to ensure the stability of the results. Inclusion criteria were age 9 to 12, enrollment in the second grade of elementary school, scoring above 45 on the Aggression Questionnaire, and student and parental consent to participate in the study. Exclusion criteria included more than two absences, lack of cooperation,

failure to complete assigned tasks, and unwillingness to continue in the study. Ethical considerations included obtaining consent from the students and their parents and informing them of all intervention steps. The children in the control group were assured they would receive the interventions after the study if they wished.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Aggression

The Aggression Questionnaire, developed by Eysenck and Wilson in 1975, is a 30-item tool that measures aggression in students. Scoring is as follows: Yes = 2, Don't know = 1, No = 0. Items 3, 8, 9, 12, 15, 19, 23, 24, and 27 are reverse-scored. The maximum score is 60, and the minimum is zero. Users can categorize scores, considering scores above 45 as indicative of aggression. Content validity was reported as satisfactory by Eysenck and Wilson (1975, as cited in Ganji, 2012). They estimated the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 0.83. Zamani (2011) calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire as 0.74 in a study involving 50 boys aged 10 to 16 from Shiraz orphanages and reported content validity as 0.81. In this study, the reliability of this questionnaire was calculated as 0.82 using Cronbach's alpha (Hamidikian et al., 2023; Shokoohi Yekta & Motamed Yeganeh, 2024).

2.2.2. Children's Social Adaptation

The Social Adaptation Questionnaire by Sinha and Singh (1993) was used to measure social adaptation. By separating and removing the emotional and academic adaptation domains with a total of 40 questions, the remaining 20 questions were used for social adaptation. This questionnaire is designed as a yes/no format, distinguishing well-adapted students from poorly adapted ones. Scoring assigns 0 for responses indicating adaptation and 1 for responses indicating maladaptation. Scores range from 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating lower social adaptation and vice versa. Sinha and Singh (1993, as cited in Khankhani-Zadeh & Bagheri, 2012) reported reliability using split-half, test-retest, and Kuder-Richardson 20 methods, with coefficients of 0.94, 0.96, and 0.92 for the emotional dimension, 0.93, 0.90, and 0.92 for the social dimension, 0.96 for the educational dimension, and overall reliability of 0.95, 0.93, and 0.94. Construct validity was also reported as satisfactory (Rezaei et al., 2019). The reliability of this questionnaire was calculated as 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS.

2.2.3. Academic Self-Efficacy

The Academic Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, developed by Jinks and Morgan (1999), includes 30 items and three components: ability, effort, and context. Items are rated on a four-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree), with items 4, 5, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, and 23 reverse-scored. The maximum score is 120, and the minimum score is 30. The overall reliability coefficient was reported as 0.82, with subscale reliability coefficients of 0.78, 0.70, and 0.66 for ability, context, and effort, respectively (Jinks & Morgan, 1999). Content validity was also reported as satisfactory (0.91). Fakharian et al. (2021) reported the reliability of this questionnaire as 0.74 using Cronbach's alpha and satisfactory construct validity (0.72) (Fakharian et al., 2020). The reliability of this questionnaire was calculated as 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS in the present study.

2.3. Intervention

2.3.1. Nonviolent Communication Training Package

Session 1: Introduction and Establishing Guidelines

The first session focuses on introducing participants to each other, establishing a foundation for an educational relationship, and obtaining a confidentiality commitment to create a safe and trustworthy environment. The rules of group sessions, such as maintaining confidentiality, punctuality, regular attendance, and providing a phone number for urgent contact, are explained. The purpose of nonviolent communication training is outlined in detail, and participants' questions are addressed to ensure clarity and understanding.

Session 2: Observation Without Evaluation

Participants are introduced to the concept of precise observation. They learn to differentiate between observation and evaluation and practice listening to others deeply and without judgment. Participants are guided to perform observation without evaluating or judging and to rewrite sentences that combine observation with judgment into nonjudgmental observations.

Session 3: Understanding Emotions

In this session, participants learn to name both pleasant and unpleasant emotions, understand and express their feelings, and differentiate between emotions and thoughts. They practice expressing their emotions without judgment and managing their feelings. Participants identify sentences that convey emotions accurately.

Session 4: Recognizing Needs

Participants are taught to identify basic human needs and express their own needs correctly. They discuss solutions for satisfying these needs and understand that emotions stem from unmet needs. Participants learn to take responsibility for their feelings and link them to their needs, identifying sentences where the speaker takes responsibility for their emotions.

Session 5: Making Requests

Participants learn to articulate their requests clearly and differentiate between a request and a demand. They discuss how fulfilling needs can enrich life and identify sentences that meet the criteria for making proper requests. Examples are used to illustrate these differences.

Session 6: Understanding Communication

This session focuses on building connections with friends and identifying ways to enhance relationships. Participants learn about empathetic communication and effective communication strategies, providing suitable examples to illustrate these points.

Session 7: Conflict Resolution

Participants discuss peaceful conflict resolution and the conditions necessary for negotiation and interaction. They learn and apply the steps of conflict management in daily life, practicing conflict resolution skills to improve their ability to handle disputes constructively.

Session 8: Developing Empathy

Participants define empathy and differentiate it from sympathy. They work on improving and strengthening empathy, reconstructing their ways of self-expression, and understanding the importance of honest expression and empathetic reception in relationships.

Session 9: Teaching Values and Ethical Virtues

In this session, participants learn to respect others, collaborate with friends, and define compassion. They discuss the concept of wholehearted forgiveness and work towards social self-awareness and self-management. Participants take responsibility for humanity and related skills.

Session 10: Review and Summary

The final session involves reviewing the steps of nonviolent communication covered in the training. Participants complete a post-test questionnaire to evaluate their progress. The session summarizes key learnings and reinforces the application of nonviolent communication skills in everyday life (Givchchi et al., 2017; Holmström, 2023; Kim & Kim, 2022; McMahon & Pederson, 2020; Pirhadi Tavandashiti et al., 2024; Rezaei et al., 2019; Srihata

& Kitcharoen; Wacker & Dziobek, 2018; Yang & Kim, 2021).

2.4. Data analysis

After obtaining the necessary permits and conducting the sampling process, the selected students (40 students) were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups (20 students in each group). The students in the experimental group received the nonviolent communication training package in ten weekly 75-minute sessions in groups of five. The control group received no intervention during the study. There were two dropouts in the experimental group and three in the control group, resulting in a final sample size of 36 students (18 in the experimental group and 18 in the control group).

The development of the nonviolent communication training package involved thematic analysis using a deductive approach as follows:

In the first stage, the psychological, emotional, and affective needs of aggressive students, the psychological, social, and emotional characteristics of this group of students, and the theoretical foundations of nonviolent communication were studied and specifically collected. The researcher reviewed and thoroughly examined related articles, dissertations, and published books in the first stage. In the second stage, the content collected in the first stage was categorized (coded) into conceptual-content subgroups focused on needs and issues. In the third stage, the conceptual-content subgroups formed in the second stage were transformed into 15 skill domains needed for these students, based on theoretical foundations and components of nonviolent communication. These domains included separating observations from judgments and evaluations, observing without evaluating and judging, reconstructing how to listen to others, listening (attentively, deeply, actively) without judging others, understanding feelings, identifying and expressing feelings without judgment, managing feelings, accepting responsibility for feelings (linking them to needs), recognizing and relying on common basic human needs, expressing clear requests, communicating, enhancing communication skills, peacefully resolving and managing conflicts, creating and nurturing empathy, reconstructing how to express oneself and self-awareness, social awareness, and self-management. Ultimately, the nonviolent communication training package for aggressive students was initially developed based on educational techniques extracted from the sources. In the

fourth stage, the initial training package was presented to 10 psychologists and therapists, who were asked to study and provide feedback on the structure, process, and content of each session through a survey questionnaire accompanying the training package. Additionally, an open-ended feedback form was provided for specialists to offer suggestions and corrective comments to enhance the content, structure, and process of the training package for aggressive students, which was completed. In the fifth stage, the specialized feedback from 10 experts was reviewed, and their corrective comments were incorporated into the training package. The final training package was prepared. In the sixth stage, the training package and the final survey questionnaire, including the calculation of the experts' agreement coefficient regarding the process, structure, and content of the nonviolent communication training package, were re-presented to the 10 specialists. If experts still had corrective comments, they were implemented case by case in the training package. To assess internal validity, the experts' agreement coefficient regarding the process, structure, and content of the training package was calculated as 0.89. For external validity, the package was preliminarily tested on four aggressive male students using a pre-test-post-test design. The results indicated that the nonviolent communication training package significantly changed the mean scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy in aggressive male students. The training package improved

the mean scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy in aggressive male students.

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. In the descriptive statistics section, mean and standard deviation were used, and in the inferential statistics section, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the normality of the dependent variable distribution, the Levene test for data homogeneity of variance, the Mauchly test for sphericity assumption, mixed analysis of variance to test the research hypothesis, and the Bonferroni post hoc test for comparing mean scores at different stages. SPSS software version 23 was used for data analysis.

3. Findings and Results

Demographic findings showed that the students in the study were aged 9 to 12 years, with the mean age of the experimental group being 11.05 years and the control group being 10.74 years. Additionally, students were in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades, with the highest frequency in the experimental group being in the fifth grade (8 students, 44.44%) and in the control group being in the fourth grade (7 students, 38.88%). The mean and standard deviation of the dependent variables in the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages for both experimental and control groups are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation of Social Adaptation and Academic Self-Efficacy in Experimental and Control Groups

Variables	Groups	Pre-Test M (SD)	Post-Test M (SD)	Follow-Up M (SD)
Social Adaptation	Experimental	9.50 (2.17)	12.77 (2.96)	12.50 (2.52)
	Control	10.16 (2.54)	9.83 (2.30)	10.16 (2.06)
Academic Self-Efficacy	Experimental	63.11 (13.04)	71.05 (14.89)	69.94 (14.46)
	Control	62.77 (7.09)	61.83 (7.60)	62.05 (7.19)

Before presenting the results of the mixed analysis of variance, the assumptions of parametric tests were assessed. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that the assumption of normal distribution was met for social adaptation ($P = .20$, $F = 0.10$) and academic self-efficacy ($P = .20$, $F = 0.12$). Additionally, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test,

which was not significant, indicating that the assumption was met for both social adaptation ($P = .49$, $F = 0.39$) and academic self-efficacy ($P = .30$, $F = 0.36$). The results of Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was met for social adaptation ($P = .42$, Mauchly's $W = 0.94$) and academic self-efficacy ($P = .21$, Mauchly's $W = 0.88$).

Table 2

Mixed Analysis of Variance for Within-Subjects and Between-Subjects Effects on Social Adaptation and Academic Self-Efficacy

Variables	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	η^2	Power
Social Adaptation	Time	53.02	2	26.51	33.96	<.001	.50	1
	Group	63.78	1	63.78	27.26	<.001	.46	1
	Time × Group	67.24	2	33.62	43.07	<.001	.56	1
	Error	53.07	68	0.78				
Academic Self-Efficacy	Time	261.40	2	130.70	22.61	<.001	.40	1
	Group	912.92	1	912.92	20.47	<.001	.39	1
	Time × Group	413.63	2	206.81	35.78	<.001	.51	1
	Error	392.96	68	5.78				

The results of the mixed analysis of variance show that the time factor (changes in the three stages of pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) had a significant impact on the scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students. The effect size indicates that this factor explains 50% and 40% of the variance in social adaptation and academic self-efficacy scores, respectively. Additionally, the group membership factor (nonviolent communication training package) significantly affected the scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy. The effect size shows that this training explains 46% and 39% of the variance in social adaptation and academic self-efficacy

scores, respectively. Furthermore, the interaction effect of type of training and time factor significantly impacted the scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy. The effect size shows that the interaction explains 56% and 51% of the variance in social adaptation and academic self-efficacy scores, respectively. This indicates that the nonviolent communication training package had a significant impact on social adaptation and academic self-efficacy in different evaluation stages. Table 3 presents the pairwise comparison of the mean scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy based on the evaluation stage using the Bonferroni post hoc test.

Table 3

Pairwise Comparison of Mean Scores of Social Adaptation and Academic Self-Efficacy Based on Evaluation Stage

Variables	Comparison Stage	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
Social Adaptation	Pre-Test vs Post-Test	-1.47	0.26	<.001
	Pre-Test vs Follow-Up	-1.50	0.20	<.001
	Post-Test vs Follow-Up	-0.03	0.13	.900
Academic Self-Efficacy	Pre-Test vs Post-Test	-3.50	0.72	<.001
	Pre-Test vs Follow-Up	-3.05	0.63	<.001
	Post-Test vs Follow-Up	0.44	0.19	.090

As shown in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test stage with the post-test and follow-up stages in the variables of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy. This means that the nonviolent communication training package significantly changed the post-test and follow-up scores of social adaptation and academic self-efficacy compared to the pre-test stage. Another finding from this table shows no significant difference between the mean scores of the post-test and follow-up stages. This can be interpreted that the significant changes in social adaptation and academic self-efficacy scores of aggressive male students observed in the post-test stage were maintained throughout the follow-up period.

The present study aimed to develop a nonviolent communication training package and evaluate its effectiveness on social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students. The results showed that the nonviolent communication training package had sufficient content validity according to experts. Additionally, this package significantly improved the social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students.

This training package was developed for the first time in the current study; thus, there is no directly aligned research. However, the first finding of the present study regarding the effectiveness of the nonviolent communication training package on social adaptation aligns with previous research.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

For example, Pirhadi Tavandishti (2022) confirmed the effectiveness of nonviolent communication training on empathy, meaning, self-regulation, and academic resilience of students (Pirhadi Tavandashti et al., 2024). Rezaei et al. (2019) confirmed the effectiveness of nonviolent communication training on mother-child interaction (Rezaei et al., 2019). Kim and Kim (2022) showed that an anger management program based on nonviolent communication significantly reduced aggression and anxiety and improved empathy in psychiatric inpatients (Kim & Kim, 2022).

To explain the present finding, it can be said that nonviolent communication focuses on two issues: empathy - listening with a lot of emotion and expressing oneself honestly by revealing what is important to oneself in a way that evokes emotion in others (Givehchi et al., 2017). Those who use nonviolent communication, also known as compassionate communication, describe all actions as an effort motivated by human needs. However, in meeting those needs, they strive to avoid using fear, guilt, shame, blaming, coercion, or threats. Nonviolent communication emphasizes expressing feelings and needs instead of criticism and judgment. It helps establish relationships with oneself and others that foster kindness. It also guides individuals to develop and utilize their expression and listening skills with a strong focus (McMahon & Pederson, 2020). For this reason, nonviolent communication is beneficial and effective at all levels of communication and in different situations. By focusing on mutual communication, social interactions, emotional and compassionate exchanges, expressing feelings and emotions instead of criticism and judgment, and teaching active listening skills, aggressive male students learn that the most fundamental relationships are based on nonviolence. This process helps aggressive male students establish more emotional and compassionate exchanges with others, improving their social interactions and, consequently, their social adaptation.

The second finding of the present study showed that the nonviolent communication training package improved the academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students. This finding aligns with previous research. For example, Givehchi et al. (2017) showed that nonviolent communication training reduced children's externalizing problems (Givehchi et al., 2017). Holmström (2021) reported that individual and couple therapy focused on emotions through nonviolent communication training reduced aggression among couples (Holmström, 2023).

To explain the present finding, it can be stated that nonviolent communication is based on verbal and

communication skills that enhance individuals' ability to be humane, even in difficult situations. Nonviolent communication helps individuals reconstruct how they express themselves and listen to others, replacing automatic reactions and habitual behaviors with conscious words and sentences, thus promoting individual and social responsibility (McMahon & Pederson, 2020). Therefore, the nonviolent communication model teaches aggressive male students to be sensitive to the individual and social needs of others and to act responsibly. This process gradually reduces their aggressive behaviors towards peers in educational settings and increases their academic self-efficacy, affecting other dimensions of self-efficacy such as academic self-efficacy. Additionally, the nonviolent communication model relies on concepts that, upon examining its theoretical foundations, can lead to enhanced academic self-efficacy. The model emphasizes constructive social interactions, compassionate verbal, emotional, and affectionate exchanges, the art of active listening, and avoiding aggression and violence in interpersonal interactions (Yang & Kim, 2021). These concepts naturally serve as the foundation for constructive communication and the self-efficacy of any individual. Without these processes, the formation of constructive social and environmental interactions as a foundation for social growth is impossible. Therefore, the nonviolent communication model can, by pursuing these concepts, improve mutual understanding among aggressive male students, reducing their aggression in social and environmental interactions. This process helps them establish constructive relationships with peers in academic settings, gradually developing a better attitude towards academic processes, improving their academic performance, and experiencing higher academic self-efficacy.

The present study, like other studies, has limitations. The first limitation was the study population being limited to aggressive male students in Isfahan. Additionally, the psychological, social, familial, economic, and educational conditions of these students' parents were not assessed or controlled in this study. Furthermore, due to the characteristics of the statistical population, random sampling was not used. Therefore, it is suggested that to increase the generalizability of the results, future research should be conducted in other cities, assessing the psychological, social, familial, economic, and educational conditions of the parents of aggressive male students and using random sampling methods.

Given the effectiveness of the nonviolent communication training package on social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students, it is practically suggested that education authorities and planners (especially the Deputy of Cultural Affairs) activate counselors and specialists in their psychological services centers and employ expert psychologists in aggression using the nonviolent communication training package to improve the social adaptation and academic self-efficacy of aggressive male students, thereby enhancing their individual performance and learning.

5. Limitations & Suggestions

In recent years, attention has been given to children's behavioral problems, yet many gaps and issues remain, emphasizing the importance of research in parent-child relationships and calling for more studies on parenting methods to address these disorders.

This study has limitations, including using convenience sampling and being conducted among parents and students in Isfahan city, so caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to other populations. Another limitation is the use of self-report tools. Based on the study results, it is recommended that educational courses and workshops on improving parenting styles be held by relevant institutions.

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Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. This study has an ethics code IR.IAU.KHUISF.REC.1400.350 from Islamic Azad University, Isfahan Branch.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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