

The Effectiveness of Problem-Solving Training on Coping Behavior and Academic Adjustment in Students with Learning Disabilities

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The paragraph stating “Several studies have emphasized the close relationship between coping behavior and academic adjustment” presents correlational evidence but does not explain the theoretical mechanism linking these variables. The authors should incorporate an established theoretical model (e.g., transactional stress theory, self-regulation theory, or social-cognitive theory) to justify the expected causal pathway.

In the final paragraph of the Introduction, the authors state that “relatively few studies have examined its simultaneous effects on coping behavior and academic adjustment among students with learning disabilities.” This claim requires a more systematic literature review. The authors should explicitly identify previous intervention studies, summarize their findings, and demonstrate the precise research gap addressed by the current study.

In the Methods section, the sentence “The target population consisted of all students with learning disabilities in Tehran during 2026” raises concerns regarding external validity. The authors should specify the districts, schools, centers, and recruitment settings involved, as the current description is too broad to allow replication.

In the Results section, the sentence “The obtained effect sizes for both variables indicate a substantial impact of problem-solving training” is correct, but the authors do not interpret the magnitude of the reported partial η^2 values (.554 and .569). These values represent very large effects and warrant discussion regarding their practical significance and plausibility in light of the intervention duration.

In the Discussion, the paragraph beginning “The observed improvement in coping behavior can be explained through the theoretical foundations of problem-solving training” offers plausible explanations but remains speculative. The discussion would be strengthened by directly linking the observed outcomes to measured intervention processes rather than inferred mechanisms.

A major editorial concern appears in the Conclusion section. The opening sentence states: “Overall, the findings indicate that impulsivity in adults with ADHD is influenced by both neurocognitive and emotional-regulatory mechanisms.” This content is entirely unrelated to the present study on learning disabilities, coping behavior, and academic adjustment. It appears to have been mistakenly copied from another manuscript and must be completely replaced.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The participant selection procedure described in “Students who demonstrated higher levels of maladaptive coping and lower levels of academic adjustment relative to the screening sample means were considered eligible” introduces a potential selection bias. The rationale for using below-average academic adjustment and maladaptive coping as inclusion criteria should be justified, as this may artificially inflate intervention effects through regression toward the mean.

In the sentence “Sample size was determined based on the quasi-experimental nature of the study, a 95% confidence level, a moderate effect size, and a statistical power of 0.83,” no actual power analysis procedure is reported. The authors should identify the software used (e.g., G*Power), specify the effect size assumption, and report the exact parameters employed in the calculation.

The inclusion criterion “formal diagnosis or educational identification as a student with a learning disability” lacks diagnostic specificity. The manuscript should clarify whether diagnoses were based on DSM-5 criteria, psychoeducational assessments, educational records, or clinical evaluations, and who made the diagnoses.

In the Measures section, the authors describe the Children’s Coping Behaviors Questionnaire but do not report reliability coefficients calculated from the current sample. Reporting only previous validation studies is insufficient. Cronbach’s alpha (or McDonald’s omega) values for the present sample should be provided.

Similarly, for the Academic Adjustment Scale, the sentence “Subsequent studies have confirmed the reliability of the instrument” is not enough. Reliability and validity indices derived from the current participants should be reported to establish measurement quality within this sample.

In the Intervention section, the authors state that the program consisted of “eight weekly sessions lasting 60 minutes each.” However, no session-by-session protocol is presented. A detailed table describing objectives, content, activities, homework assignments, and learning outcomes for each session should be included either in the manuscript or as supplementary material.

The statement “The program was adapted to the developmental and educational needs of students with learning disabilities” requires elaboration. The authors should explain how the adaptation was performed, who reviewed the protocol, and whether content validity was evaluated by experts.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors indicate that assumptions were tested using Kolmogorov–Smirnov, Levene’s, and Mauchly’s tests. However, the actual test statistics and p-values are not reported. These results should be presented in a dedicated assumptions table to allow readers to verify model appropriateness.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, but no confidence intervals are reported. Given the relatively small sample size ($n = 15$ per group), 95% confidence intervals would provide a more informative estimate of variability and treatment effects.

The repeated-measures ANOVA results in Table 3 report significant main effects of Group for both dependent variables. Because baseline means appear highly similar (e.g., coping behavior: 121.46 vs. 122.13), the authors should explain how such strong group effects emerged and clarify whether these effects primarily reflect post-intervention differences. Reporting estimated marginal means would improve interpretation.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.