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An Alternative Way in the Parent-Child Relationship: Mindful Parenting

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ABSTRACT	Review Article
It is known that the relationship established between parent and child will	
have an impact on the mental health of both the individual and the society.	
Many information, ways and methods can be followed to ensure that the	
relationship in question is healthy. Mindfulness-based studies, which we	
frequently encounter today, find a place in the parent-child relationship. In	
this study, the aim is to discuss the concept of "mindful parenting", which	
has not been widely studied in the national literature yet. In this way, it	
would be beneficial to state that there can be an alternative way in parent-	
child relationship. By benefiting from the studies on this subject, the concept	
has been dealt with theoretically and practically and presented in a review.	
It is thought that the introduction of the concept will contribute to the studies	
on conscious-mindful parenting in our country. Within the scope of the	
study, respectively; the definition of the concept of mindful parenting, what	
it is based on, its sub-dimensions, the measurability and evaluation of	
mindful parenting, its reflections on parents and children are discussed. At	
the last stage of the study, suggestions for researchers and practitioners were	
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Introduction

Parenting, which is one of the areas of responsibility in adulthood; In addition to its happiness and joyful aspects, it can also contain disappointments, worries and failures (Bornstein, 2002). These negative experiences and emotions can cause the parents to experience stress (Crnic & Greenberg, 1990).

This process, called parenting stress, appears in the physical and mental reactions of the parents in the face of the duties and responsibilities that come with having a child, and it puts the parents under pressure and forces them (Deater-Deckard, 1998; Kaner, Bayraklı, & Güzeller, 2011). Considering that the family is a system in which the parent-child relationship is established and maintained; It is possible to predict that these feelings and situations experienced by the parent will affect not only the parent but also the entire system. Parenting stress; It causes negative parental behaviors such as hostility, controlling (Leinonen, Solantaus & Punamäki, 2003), being punishing (Vostanis et al., 2006). It can be said that mothers who spend more time with their children experience parenting stress more intensely. The process is stressful and tense in relation to anxiety since pregnancy (Duncan & Bardacke, 2010), anxiety experienced during breastfeeding in the first postpartum period, sleep patterns that are different from normal, and the mother's time for herself (Perez-Blasco, Viguer & Rodrigo, 2013) may become. Although the mentioned studies are conducted on mothers, parenting is a situation involving the father, and therefore it can be predicted that fathers also experience similar stress.

Negative parental attitudes and behaviors may negatively affect the child's physical and mental health and may lead to the child's anxiety and/or rejection of the parent (Bögels & Brechman-Toussaint 2006).

Positive parental behaviors, in contrast to negative parental behaviors, contribute to the development of the child's skills such as emotion regulation and empathy (Davidov & Grusec, 2006). It has been revealed that parental sensitivity and compassion among positive parental behaviors may be related to mindful parenting (Geurtzen et al., 2015).

According to Flavell (1976), the concept of mindfulness, which has its origins in Buddhism, consists of two elements: monitoring and regulation (as cited in Akın, Abacı & Çetin, 2007) and includes controlling attention by being aware of the now. Describes a mental process (Hanh, 1976; Teasdale, Segal & Williams, 1995). Conscious-awareness, which includes attitudes and qualities such as non-judgment, initial spirit, acceptance, staying in the moment, letting go, patience and compassion, is developed through various exercises and practices (Siegel, 2010).

The reflections of mindfulness in parenting have been with the concept of "mindful parenting". In this context, the main purpose of the research is; It is an examination of the concept of mindful parenting. Research on the definition of the concept, its theoretical basis, dimensions, evaluation, and its effects on parents and children are discussed.

Methodology

In this study, which was prepared as a review; In line with the stated purpose, first of all, general information on the concept of mindfulness is given, then mindful parenting, the foundations of mindful parenting, sub-dimensions of the concept, how mindful parenting is evaluated and its effects on the parent-child relationship are discussed based on international literature taken. Since it is focused around a certain concept, it can be said that the study is a thematic review (Herdman, 2006).

Mindful Parenting

Mindful parenting means that parents act with an understanding of the here and now, avoiding especially negative judgments and evaluations, while also being consciously paying special attention to their child and their own parenting (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn 1997; McCaffrey, Reitman & Black, 2017). Mindful parenting can be expressed as an alternative form of parent-child relationship (Bögels & Restifo, 2014). Parenthood; While it can be a process in which joy, pride, love, satisfaction and many other positive emotions are experienced, it can also be a situation that can cause stress, anxiety and burnout. When the resources that keep the individual strong begin to decrease; restlessness, physical and mental fatigue may occur (Belsky, 1984), and this situation may become undesirable by the parent. Mindful parenting helps parents to approach their parenting one step more healthy (Bögels & Restifo, 2014).

Including mindfulness elements in the parent-child relationship and working on them helps to meet the needs of the child as well as providing the parent's unconditional selfacceptance (Duncan, Coastworth & Greenberg, 2009). It can be said that parents who adopt and practice mindful parenting have a more accepting, emotional exchange and harmony, sensitive and compassionate relationship with their children (Coatsworth et al., 2018). Since the importance of trust, compassion, sensitivity and emotional sharing in the parent-child relationship cannot be denied, and since mindful parenting includes these features, it can be said that it actually has functional effects for both the parent and the child. Mindful parenting is one of the recommended ways for parent-child relationship in establishing a safe and healthy bond (Siegel & Hartzell, 2003). Establishing a strong relationship of trust and sharing sincerely allows the parents to get away from their worries and relax (Bazzano et al., 2013; Bögels, Hellemans, Van Deursen, Römer, Van der Meulen, 2013; Haydicky, Shecter, Wiener & Ducharme, 2015), while at the same time, the child's positive attitude is positive. It also facilitates the experience of emotions (Bögels, Hoogstad, Van Dun, de Schutter & Restifo, 2008; Haydicky et al., 2015; Neece, 2014; Singh et al., 2007; Van der Oord, Bögels & Peijnenburg, 2012; Van de Weijer- Bergsma, Formsma Bruin & Bögels, 2012).

The Basics of Mindful Parenting

Mindfulness studies have their origins in Buddhist practices dating back centuries (Goldstein, 2002). According to Kabat-Zinn's (2003), mindfulness is actually a capacity that exists in every human being and can be developed. This capacity is found in everyone, but it gets smaller over time unless it is used, but it can be developed with various practices. With mindfulness, the individual realizes that there can be a change with a new experience in the next moment to be lived, and while focusing only on what is happening at the moment, he manages to avoid avoidance and carelessness from the present (Goldstein, 2002; Kabat-Zinn, 2003).

Individuals automate their behaviors, thoughts and evaluations along with their experiences (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). It may not be possible to fully understand what is happening or not for the individual who acts without being aware of the fact that flexibility, openness to innovations can be viewed from a different perspective with automation. Considering that this situation may also be reflected in the interactions in the parent-child relationship; It would be beneficial for the parents to have a holistic view while evaluating their current parenting experiences, to realize the needs of the child and to radically change their awareness of their parenting (Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009). If the parent does not observe and pay attention to the needs, desires and feelings of the child, that is, if they do not have a child-oriented approach; It can be said that it is trying to take full control of the child.

A mindful parent will be able to recognize and accept the child's needs by increasing the level of mindfulness through various practices, and the established parent-child relationship

will have a more positive quality (Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009). Mindful parenting; It is structured on the view of how these daily mindfulness activities can be carried out conveniently and easily in parenting (Kabat-Zinn & Kabat-Zinn, 1997). The concept has a quality consisting of five dimensions for the evaluation and development of the relationship between the parent and the child (Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009).

The Five Dimensions of Mindful Parenting

Mindful parenting, a new concept in the parent-child relationship; It includes five dimensions: (a) listening with full attention, (b) accepting yourself and the child without judgment, (c) emotional awareness of yourself and the child, (d) self-regulation in parenting, and (e) compassion for yourself and the child (Duncan, 2008). Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009):

(a) Listening with full attention. The fact that the parent is physically in the same environment with the child, being right next to him may not show that he really listens to the child. He may be engaged in a different action now and there, and his attention may be divided. The child can understand that he is really being listened to when the parent directs his full attention to him. Listening with full attention; It helps to understand and meet the physical and spiritual needs of the child by enabling to hear what is not said in what is said. In this way, mindful parents become sensitive to both the content of their children's speech and their children's tone of voice, facial expressions and body language; they can also use these clues effectively to successfully identify their children's needs and wants. Protecting the child from dangers from the first stages of life, encouraging the child to share, providing facilitation in conflict resolution, etc. From all angles, it is a very important dimension to listen with full attention, to say the right word.

(*b* Accept yourself and your child without judgment. Parents convey some of the characteristics and competencies that are valid and unrealistic for the child to their children through their own actions and verbal expressions in a way that reflects what they want (Goodnow, 1985). In mindful parenting, on the contrary, the parent accepts both himself and his child without judgment. Of course, the expression of acceptance here does not mean that every behavior, thought and attitude will be approved. When necessary, parents take some initiatives for discipline and guidance. Acknowledging the situation by being clearly aware of what is going on also means accepting that the parent-child relationship will be difficult from time to time and conflicts may arise.

(c) Emotional awareness of self and child. The positive and negative emotions experienced by the parents affect their behavior and interaction with their child (Dix, 1991). In this process, focusing on what emotions he is experiencing, as well as focusing and realizing the emotions her child is experiencing, forms the basis of mindful parenting. Thanks to the high level of emotional awareness, the parent can realize the negative feelings that may be directed towards the child or come from the child and make effective choices. Emotional awareness is very important as a feature that will support introspection and tolerance.

(d) Self-regulation in parenting. It does not mean that the parent does not prevent or ignore negative thoughts, feelings and behaviors, it means that when faced with any negativity, he stops and thinks, gives himself time and makes choices with awareness. This situation emerges as a necessity in mindful parenting. Thanks to this aspect of mindful parenting, parents also gain skills such as teaching their children how to make sense of, express and share their emotions (Gottman, Katz & Hooven, 1997).

(e) Compassion for self and child. Considering that parenting is a role that can be easily judged by both the parent and others, there is no need for compassion. Parents who can sometimes describe themselves as inadequate, unsuccessful, incompetent parents or whose parenting is negatively evaluated by their environment can have a softer, more flexible and more forgiving perspective about their own parenting efforts thanks to this feature. While self-

compassion in parenting provides avoidance of self-blame when parenting goals are not achieved; It also helps to protect from these stress factors. By preventing parents from criticizing themselves and their children ruthlessly, focusing on the process and their efforts rather than the result, they can be aware of these and gain more acceptance of themselves and their children. It is believed that self-compassion will bring compassion to others.

Evaluation of Mindful Parenting

Regarding mindful parenting, Duncan (2007) developed the "Interpersonal Mindfulness in Parenting Scale". The developed scale consists of 10 items and 3 sub-dimensions (awareness and attention centered on the present moment, non-judgment, unresponsiveness).

Jones et al. (2014) "Bangor Mindful Parenting Scale", which is a 4-point Likert type developed to measure the level of mindful parenting, consists of 15 items and 5 sub-dimensions. The sub-dimensions in question are; These are "acting with awareness", "non-reactive", "non-judgmental", "observing" and "defining". The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .79 for mothers and .78 for fathers. It was adapted to Turkish culture by Türsel (2019), and data were collected from parents of children with Pervasive Developmental Disorder within the scope of the study. It was concluded that the scale, which has 13 items and one sub-dimension in its adapted version, is Cronbach's alpha.74.

"Mindfulness In Parenting Questionnaire (MIPQ)" was developed by McCaffrey, Reitman, and Black (2017) as another measurement tool for mindful parenting, and the scale was adapted to Turkish culture by Gördesli et al. (2018) carried out by The scale, which allows to determine the conscious-aware parenting levels of mothers and fathers with children between the ages of 2-16, consists of two sub-dimensions: "parental self-efficacy" and "being present with the child".

The Effects of Being a Mindful Parent on the Parent-Child Relationship

In the literature, there are studies showing that mindfulness in parenting is an important determinant of the quality of parent-child interaction and positive results are obtained (Coatsworth, Duncan, Greenberg, & Nix, 2010, Coatsworth et al., 2018; Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2009; McCaffrey, Reitman & Black, 2017; Medeiros, Gouveia, Canavarro & Moreira, 2016).

In their research on mothers and children up to 18 months after birth, Potharst et al. (2017) mindful parenting education in reducing stress and mother's hostility towards the baby; it has also shown to be effective in increasing self-compassion, well-being, sensitivity, trust, and love. It can be said that conscious-aware parenting skills may be a factor in reducing parental stress of mothers with children between the ages of 3-6 and with different education levels (Kumalasari & Fourianalistyawati, 2020).

Studies on children and adolescents and their parents reveal that mindfulness in parenting is an important determinant of the quality of parent-child interaction and positive results are obtained (Coatsworth, Duncan, Greenberg, & Nix, 2010, 2018; Duncan, Coatsworth & Greenberg, 2008). 2009; McCaffrey, Reitman & Black, 2017; Medeiros, Gouveia, Canavarro, & Moreira 2016). In their study on mothers with higher conscious parenting skills and their adolescent children, Lippold et al. (2015) accepted the new needs that emerged during adolescence; They found that mindful mothers were more adaptable, and accordingly, adolescents saw their mothers less overly controlling.

Again, in a study conducted with adolescents and their parents, the relationship between emotional availability to parents and mindful parenting was examined, and it was revealed that both variables were related to each other and contributed positively to adolescent subjective well-being (Benton, Coatsworth & Biringen, 2019).

The results of 6 articles investigating the effects of mindful parenting programs on children, in which parents of children without any clinical diagnosis and showing normal development participate; It has been found that mindful parenting is effective but its effect on children's psychosocial functioning is limited (Kil & Antanocci, 2020).

When the relationship between parenting stress and mindful parenting is examined in the study conducted on parents of children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder diagnosed and aged 5-12; It has been shown that as the level of mindful parenting increases, parenting stress decreases (Elgendy, El Malky & Ebrahem, 2020).

Conscious Awareness-Based Positive Support Program applied to mothers of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder was found to be effective in increasing mothers' mindful parenting levels (Singh et al., 2020).

In a study conducted with overweight and normal weight child-adolescents and their mothers, it was found that mothers with overweight children were more critical of their parenting skills and perceived their children's overweight as their own failure (Gouvela, Canavarro & Moreira 2020). In the same study, it was stated that mothers with overweight children were less sensitive to their children and had a low awareness of their children's emotions. The importance of parents' recognizing the child's emotion, being aware of it and reacting accordingly on emotional eating/nutrition has been demonstrated.

Duncan, Coatsworth, and Greenberg (2009) stated that after parental behaviors supported by mindful parenting practices, the parents' concerns and accusations against themselves decreased and their unrealistic expectations for the child decreased. Considering the studies examining mindful parenting and various variables together, it is concluded that stress and depression decrease as the level of mindful parenting increases in terms of parenting stress and psychopathology (Beer, Ward & Moar, 2013; de Bruin et al., 2014). It can be said that the psychological well-being of mothers will also increase by increasing mindful parenting skills (Susanti, 2017).

Result and Discussion

In this study, which examines the concept of mindful parenting, its theoretical background, dimensions, evaluation and its effect on parents and children, it is concluded that the concept of mindful parenting can be an alternative way in today's parent-child relationship.

It is believed that mindful parenting will facilitate the resolution of conflicts in the parent-child relationship by showing care and attention to the child, supporting the positive aspects of the child. Being a mindful parent appears to be a useful attitude in order for the parent to be actively involved in the child's life and at the same time to overcome the difficulties experienced in the parenting process.

When the studies in the literature are examined; It can be said that there is a mindful basis in a current concept and theoretical infrastructure of mindful parenting. The concept consists of 5 dimensions: listening attentively, accepting ypurself and the child without judgment, emotional awareness of yourself and the child, self-regulation in parenting, and compassion for yourself and the child. With the developed scales, the level of conscious-aware parenting can be measured for both parents.

It can be said that the effects of mindful parenting on parents and children are positive, but more research is needed. For example, in a study conducted with mothers in the postpartum period, 94.5% of the mothers who participated in the study stated that they believed that a mindful parenting intervention would be beneficial in the postpartum period (Fernandes, Canavarro & Moreira 2020).

In the studies, data were obtained by mostly going through the mother-child interaction, and the applications were mostly made on mothers and their children. However, it is known

that the father also plays a role in the child's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development (Day & Lamb, 2004). It has been revealed that the active participation and awareness of the father has a significant effect on family and life satisfaction (Ljubetic & Ercegovac, 2019). In the context of father-child interaction, fathers spend a long time with their children in social activities such as games (Pekel-Uludağlı, 2017). In this process, it is thought that all the attention directed to the child, accepting the actions, feelings and thoughts of the child without judgment, the father's compassion and emotional awareness of both himself and his child, and the father's self-regulation skills will strengthen the relationship between the child and the child.

A conclusion drawn from behavioral intervention programs for parents; It is about how they can effectively manage their children's behavior without focusing on the mother's stress (Yu et al., 2019). If the mother who learns effective behavior management cannot do this, she may feel under obligations and burdens. In this case, programs that increase mindful parenting skills can be prepared by considering the needs of not only the child but also the parent. In mindful parenting programs, parents learn how to care for both themselves and their children more effectively (Bögels & Restifo 2014; Hwang & Kearney 2015).

In addition to the studies carried out abroad recently, there are studies in Turkey, albeit a small number. The studies in question included an intervention program (Işık, 2020), were conducted on parents with a child diagnosed with pervasive developmental disorder (Türsel, 2019), and examined the mediating role of parental mindfulness in the relationship between mothers' perceived rejection from their mothers and their level of well-being (Arıcı-Özcan, Yakut & Islamoglu, 2019) can be said. As a result, the mindful of the parent; It is a parenting style that supports the needs of the parent and helps him/her to cope with the problems, at the same time, it is a form of parenting that affects the healthy development of the child, especially the positive reactions of the child, to clarify the boundaries in order to protect the child from possible harmful situations, and to establish positive and qualified relations between the parent and the child. Smith & Dishion, 2013).

Recommendations

It is thought that the preparation of programs to increase mindful parenting skills will be effective and beneficial in order to prevent mental disorders such as intense stress, anxiety and depression experienced in the early stages of parenthood and to strengthen the parent-child relationship. Parenting includes not only mothers but also fathers, considering this situation, inclusion of fathers as much as possible in future studies may enable the detection of new results. In future research, it is thought that by organizing qualitative and quantitative research on mindful parenting in Turkey with parent and child participation, in-depth information about the concept and by making the parent-child relationship more functional with intervention programs that can be developed, first the family system and then the society can be beneficial.

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