

## **Effectiveness of an Educational Program Upon Primary School Teachers' Knowledge and Attitude Toward Conduct Disorders: A Quasi-Experimental Design**

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### **Abstract**

*Background: Conduct Disorder (CD) is the most severe type of disruptive behavior disorder and is one of the most common psychiatric disorders in childhood and adolescence. A child or youth who is diagnosed with CD shows a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior that significantly impairs their everyday functioning at home or at school or leads other people to conclude that the child is unmanageable.*

*Objective (s): The aims of the current study are to assess primary school Teachers' Knowledge and attitudes toward Conduct Disorders and to evaluate the effectiveness of educational program.*

*Materials and methods: A quasi-experimental study was carried out through the application of pre-trial and post-trial in groups (study and control) from the period (1st December 2022 to 22nd January 2023) through the implementation of the educational program upon primary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward conduct disorders among children in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf city. A total of 75 primary school teachers were selected by a "non-probability" (purposive) sample from a candidate school and included in the present study.*

*Results: The mean score of teachers' knowledge was 0.29, and attitude was 2.36 at the pre-test. while, at the post-test, the mean score of teachers' knowledge was 0.78 and attitude was 3.8.*

*Conclusion: The study concludes that this educational program aims to improve teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards Conduct disorders. This conclusion is supported by statistical approaches that demonstrate improvement in teachers knowledge and attitudes toward conduct disorders in the study group compared to the results of the control group.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Conduct Disorders, Teachers and Knowledge.

### **Introduction**

DSM-5-TR defines and explains Conduct disorder as a repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age- appropriate societal norms or rules are violated. It is manifested by the presence of at least three out of its 15 criteria in the past 12 months, with at least one criterion present in the past six months. These criteria include: aggression to people and animals, destruction of property, deceitfulness or theft, serious violations of rules, lack of remorse or guilt, callous/lack of empathy, unconcern about performance and shallow or deficient affect (1).

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Schools play an important and formative role in the areas of children's cognitive, linguistic, emotional, social and moral development. There is now growing recognition that schools play an important role in promoting mental health. Teachers are an influential group that has addressed the nature of personal growth in the educational process. This makes it possible to shape and transform legitimate behavior (2).

The quality of childhood life solely depends on the type of environment. School and neighborhood (4), Some teachers are unaware of the impact of their behaviors upon children. It is possible that teachers are also unaware that their punishment is a form of child abuse that has serious damaging consequences on the development of children. They may perceive punishment as a means of molding and shaping children's behaviors. Teachers may also lack alternatives in dealing with children who misbehave in schools (5).

Difficulty in school is an early sign of potential conduct disorder problems. While the child's IQ tends to be in normal range, they can have trouble with verbal and abstract reasoning skills and lack behind their classmates. Consequently, they feel as if they do not "fit in." The frustration and loss of self-esteem resulting from this academic and social inadequacy can trigger the development of conduct disorder (6).

### **Objective of The Study:**

1. To assess Primary School Teachers' knowledge and attitude toward conduct disorders.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of educational program on Primary School Teachers' knowledge and attitude toward conduct disorders.

### **Materials and Methods:**

A quasi-experimental study was carried out through the application of pre-trial and post-trial in groups (study and control) from the period (1st December 2022 to 22nd January 2023) through the implementation of the educational program upon primary school teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward conduct disorders among children in Al-Najaf Al-Ashraf city. A total of 75 primary school teachers were selected by a "non-probability" (purposive) sample from a candidate school and included in the present study. The study instrument consists of three parts: Part I was a socio-demographic characteristics sheet consisting of 7 items, which included age, gender, marital status, level of education, years of experience, information about conduct disorders, and training courses about conduct disorders. Part III: Primary school teachers' knowledge toward The conduct disorder questionnaire was developed and adapted from Zeyad<sup>7</sup>. The knowledge scale consists of 35 items distributed into six main domains of knowledge: General information about conduct disorders, signs and symptoms, causes, types, treatment, and the teacher's role towards children with conduct disorders. Part IV: Primary school teachers' attitude about conduct disorders was developed and adapted from Kavitha<sup>8</sup>. The attitude scale is a 5-point Likert scale consisting of 15 statements (7 positive items and 8 negative items). Data are analyzed through the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 26.0, the Statistical analysis system, and Excel.

**Results:**

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Study Sample (N = 70)

Demographic data	Rating and Intervals	Groups			
		Study		Control	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Age groups (Years)	<= 30	8	22.86	8	22.86
	31 - 40	14	40	12	34.29
	41 - 50	6	17.14	9	25.71
	51 and More	7	20	6	17.14
Gender	Males	14	40	20	57.14
	Females	21	60	15	42.86
Marital Status	Single	4	11.43	8	22.86
	Married	29	82.86	23	65.71
	Divorced	1	2.86	1	2.86
	Widowed	1	2.86	3	8.57
Level of Education	Diploma	15	42.86	15	42.86
	B.Sc.	20	57.14	20	57.14
Years of Experience	<= 5	11	31.43	11	31.43
	6 - 11	6	17.14	13	37.14
	12 - 17	6	17.14	1	2.86
	18 - 23	3	8.57	2	5.71
	24 and More	9	25.71	8	22.86
Do you have information	Yes	18	51.43	3	8.57
	No	17	48.57	32	91.43
Training course	Yes	12	34.29	3	8.57
	No	23	65.71	32	91.43
<b>Total</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

%= percentage, freq. = frequency, C.S: comparison significance, p- value= probability value, df degree of freedom, NS= non-significance, HS= high significant, and S=significant.

Table 1 illustrates the statistical distribution and difference between the study and control groups by their socio-demographic data. This table explains that most of the teachers in both groups are those in the age group (31–40) years old. In addition, the table shows that the high percentages of participants in both groups (60%) are females in the study group and (57.14%) are males in the control groups.

Concerning the level of education, 57.14% of both the study and control groups have a B.Sc., while marital status is 82.86% in the study group and 65.71% in the control group are married. Regarding the years of experience in their field, the table shows that 31.43% of the sample in the study group have less than 5 years of experience. and the control group has 6–11 years.

Regarding participation in training courses, 65.71% of the study group and 91.43% of the control group had no training course. Regarding the information of our sample toward Conduct Disorders, 51.43% of the study group had information, and 91.43% of the control group had no information..

Table 2: Evaluation of the Study and Control Group Knowledge Regarding Conduct Disorders at the Pre-Test and Post-Test Level

Main studied domains	Group	Period	Knowledge Level						Mean of score	Assess.
			Poor		Fair		Good			
			F	%	F	%	F	%		
General Information about CD	Study	Pre	21	60	14	40	0	0	0.31	Poor
		Post	1	2.86	9	25.71	25	71.43	0.73	Good
	Control	Pre	28	80	7	20	0	0	0.26	Poor
		Post	32	91.43	3	8.57	0	0	0.21	Poor
Signs and Symptoms of CD	Study	Pre	22	62.86	13	37.14	0	0	0.26	Poor
		Post	1	2.86	9	25.71	25	71.43	0.75	Good
	Control	Pre	16	45.71	18	51.43	1	2.86	0.32	Poor
		Post	20	57.14	14	40	1	2.86	0.28	Poor
Causes of CD	Study	Pre	26	74.29	8	22.86	1	2.86	0.25	Poor
		Post	2	5.71	8	22.86	25	71.43	0.76	Good
	Control	Pre	18	51.43	17	48.57	0	0	0.30	Poor
		Post	11	31.43	22	62.86	2	5.71	0.39	Fair
Types of CD	Study	Pre	22	62.86	13	37.14	0	0	0.25	Poor
		Post	2	5.71	4	11.43	29	82.86	0.77	Good
	Control	Pre	18	51.43	17	48.57	0	0	0.27	Poor
		Post	18	51.43	17	48.57	0	0	0.27	Poor
Treatment of CD	Study	Pre	19	54.29	16	45.71	0	0	0.30	Poor
		Post	0	0	7	20.00	28	80	0.86	Good
	Control	Pre	22	62.86	13	37.14	0	0	0.24	Poor
		Post	22	62.86	13	37.14	0	0	0.24	Poor
Teacher's role towards Children with CD	Study	Pre	10	28.57	23	65.71	2	5.71	0.41	Fair
		Post	1	2.86	7	20	27	77.14	0.80	Good
	Control	Pre	15	42.86	19	54.29	1	2.86	0.31	Poor
		Post	15	42.86	19	54.29	1	2.86	0.31	Poor

Poor (mean of scores 0-0.33), Moderate (mean of scores 0.34-0.67), good (mean of scores 0.68and more)

Table 2 demonstrates the means of scores and assessment of the study group's responses to the questions related to conduct disorders (pre-test assessment); it shows that the study group recorded poor knowledge, except in Domain 6 (the teacher's role towards children with conduct disorders), which was fair. This table also shows excellent improvement in the study group's post-test knowledge.

While the scores and assessment of the control group responses to the questions related to conduct disorders (pre-test assessment) show that the control group recorded poor knowledge, The result was the same in the post-test for poor knowledge except for Domain 3, which was fair.

Table 3: Overall Evaluation of the Study and the Control Group Knowledge Level Regarding Conduct Disorders at the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Main studied domains	Group	Period	Knowledge Level						Overall Mean of Scores	Assess.
			Poor		Fair		Good			
			F	%	F	%	F	%		
Overall Teachers' Knowledge	Study	Pre	25	71.43	10	28.57	0	0	0.29	Poor
		Post	0	0	5	14.29	30	85.71	0.78	Good
	Control	Pre	25	71.43	10	28.57	0	0	0.28	Poor
		Post	26	74.29	9	25.71	0	0	0.29	Poor

Poor (mean of scores 0-0.33), Moderate (mean of scores 0.34-0.67), good (mean of scores 0.68and more)

Table 3 shows the overall assessment of study group knowledge regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test. It was a poor (0.29) mean score, and the post-test was a good (0.78) mean score, while for the control group, the table result shows that the overall assessment of the control group knowledge regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test was a poor (0.28) mean score, and the post-test was also a poor (0.29) mean score.

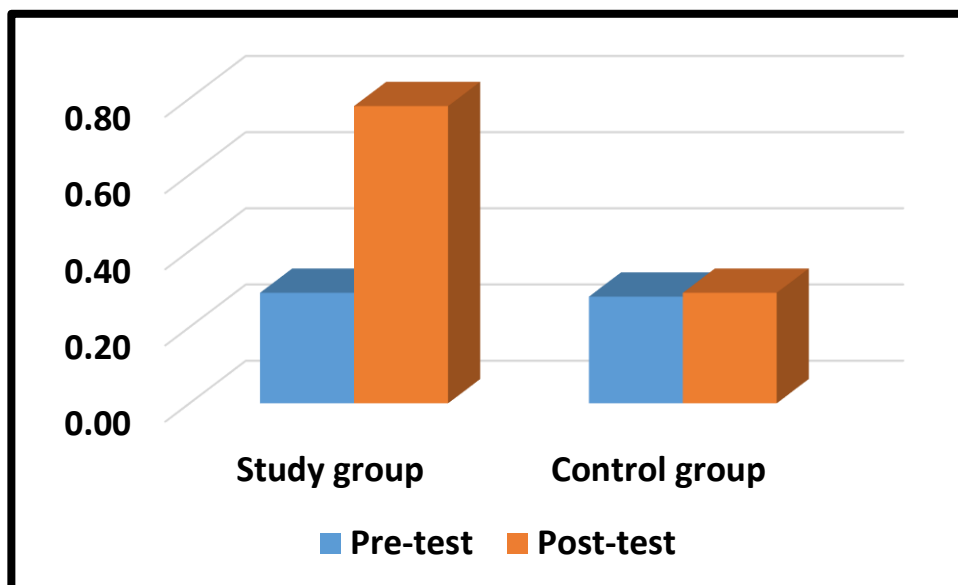


Figure 1: Overall teachers' Knowledge at two Periods of measurement (Pre-test and Post-test) according to the Statistical Mean in the study and control groups

Table 4: Overall Evaluation of the Study and the Control Group Attitude Level Regarding Conduct Disorders at the Pre-Test and Post-Test

Main studied domains	Group	Period	Attitude Level						Overall mean of Scores	Assess.
			Unfavorable		Moderately favorable		Favorable			
			F	%	F	%	F	%		
Overall teachers' attitude	Study	Pre	17	48.57	18	51.43	0	0	2.366	Moderately favorable
		Post	2	5.71	6	17.14	27	77.14	3.844	Favorable
	Control	Pre	22	62.86	13	37.14	0	0	2.255	Unfavorable
		Post	18	51.43	16	45.71	1	2.86	2.366	Moderately favorable

Unfavorable (mean of scores 0-2.33), Moderately favorable (mean of scores 2.34-3.67), favorable (mean of scores 3.68 and more)

Table 4 shows the overall assessment of the study group attitude regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test. It was a Moderately favorable (2.36) mean score, and the post-test was favorable (3.84) mean score, while for the control group, the table result shows that the overall assessment of the control group attitude regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test was unfavorable (2.25) mean score, and the post-test was Moderately favorable (2.36) mean score

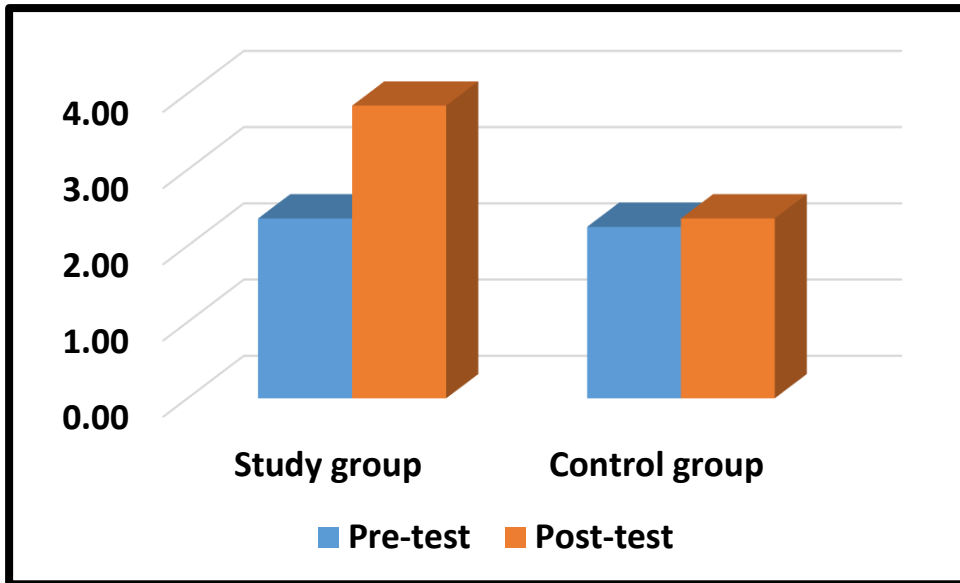


Figure (2): Overall teachers' attitude at Two Periods of measurement (Pre-test and Post-test) according to the Statistical Mean in the study and control groups

### Discussion:

Table (2) demonstrates the means of scores and assessment of the study groups responses to the questions related to conduct disorders (pre-test assessment); it shows that the study group recorded poor knowledge, except in Domain 6 (the teacher's role towards children with conduct disorders), which was fair. This table also shows excellent improvement in the study group's post-test knowledge.

While the scores and assessment of the control group responses to the questions related to conduct disorders (pre-test assessment) show that the control group recorded poor knowledge, The result was the same in the post-test for poor knowledge except for Domain 3, which was fair.

This finding was consistent with the study conducted by Kavitha<sup>8</sup>, which found in the study group that the pre-test mean score of knowledge was 10.5 and the post-test mean score of knowledge was 20. while the attitude mean score at the pre-test was 43, and the attitude mean score at the post-test was 60.2. Also, the findings of the study agree with Divya<sup>4</sup>, who found that the pre-test knowledge mean score was 20.6. while the post-test mean was (24.03). which indicates the effectiveness of the computer-assisted teaching program in increasing the knowledge of the school teachers regarding conduct disorder.

Another study was conducted in India (9), which found the mean score of knowledge of primary school teachers in the pre-test was 14.82 and in the post-test was 22.75.

While for attitudes, Table (4) shows the overall assessment of study group attitudes regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test. It was a Moderately favorable (2.36) mean score, and the post-test was favorable (3.84) mean score, while for the control group, the table result shows that the overall assessment of the control group attitude regarding conduct disorders at the Pre-test was unfavorable (2.25) mean score, and the post-test was Moderately favorable (2.36) mean score.

This result agrees with Kavitha<sup>8</sup>, who found that the pre-test mean score of attitude for the study group was 43.0 and the post-test mean score of attitude was 60.26. Also, this result is congruent with Khalil<sup>10</sup>, which found that 75% of the study sample had an unfavorable attitude.

The results of the current study demonstrated the effectiveness of the educational program in increasing teachers' knowledge and improving their attitudes toward conduct disorders.

### **Recommendation:**

It is necessary to involve teachers in training courses to identify pupils with conduct disorders and behavioral problems in the classroom in order to increase teachers' knowledge about these disorders and provide students with an optimal education, in addition to the necessary referral of them to specialized health centers for evaluation.

### **Conclusion:**

The study concludes that this educational program aims to improve teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards Conduct disorders. This conclusion is supported by statistical approaches that demonstrate improvement in teachers knowledge and attitudes toward conduct disorders in the study group compared to the control group.

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