

# Parent Management Training to Decrease Disruptive Behavior in Children

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**Abstract:** Disruptive behaviors that persist until middle childhood will develop into a worse behavior. One of the causes of disruptive child sedentary behavior is the overly punishment style of maternal discipline and inconsistent consequences. Therefore the mother needs a treatment to improve mother's ability in dealing with children with disruptive behavior. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of parent magement training (PMT) to decrease disruptive behavior on children. PMT is the training for mothers in dealing with disruptive behavior children by consistently apply the behavior modification and discipline style. The PMT consists of instruction, reinforcement technique, modeling, role play, feedback and evaluation. Disruptive behaviour of each sample was measured by using CBCL scale. This research was designed to use subject pretest-postest control group. The subject of the research were 10 mothers who have children aged 6-11 years old with disruptive behaviour. The result of analysis data showed that mother, who was given PMT has been able to reduce the disruptive behaviour on the children. The implication of this research is mothers who take part in PMT can improve their ability to handle children with disruptive behavior..

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Children are different from adults. While children tend to have an egocentric mindset, adults are able to think more empathically and socially. Therefore, throughout the development of children, disruptive behavior often appears in children (Muro, 2011). Many studies show that as many as 23% of toddlers have disruptive behavior, and this behavior usually peaks when a child is 2 years old (O'Brien, 1996). Matthys and Lochman (2010) mention that disruptive behavior in children usually does not last long. As they grow up, disruptive behaviors such as refusing orders, tantrums, and aggressiveness will decrease. In fact, there are many cases showing a significant increase in disruptive behavior in children, both in the school and family environment. Similarly, The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) notes an increase in crime rates committed by children throughout 2015 (Setyawan, 2014). The data in Aceh itself also shows an increase in the number of crimes committed by children throughout 2015 reaching 1,326 cases. One of the phenomenal cases in Aceh is NF case, an eleven years old child, which is a student of the Madrasah Ibtidayah Negeri (MIN), Keunaloi, District of Seulimum, Aceh Besar. NF

passed away after being violated by four of her classmates (Yunis, 2015).

Disruptive behavior is the behavior of children refusing caregivers. It can be in either passive or active form. The passive form is shown by ignoring the commands of the parents while the active form is shown by rejecting the parents' commands with anger or commonly called deviant (Matthys&Lochman, 2010). Disruptive behavior also includes behavior that hurts others such as hitting other children, using harsh words, and calling the name of another child with certain unpleasant names (Parke &Slaby, 1983).

Normal disruptive behavior at a certain age can continue to develop at a later stage. The development of such behavior indicates the abnormality and needs to be attended and treated by the experts (Matthys&Lochman, 2010). Untreated disruptive behavior will continue to occur persistently. Thus, it indicates abnormal behavior and needs attention from experts who can handle it (Ettinger, 2008). The treatment needs to be undertaken in cases of disruptive behavior as early as possible by providing immediate treatment when disruptive behavior is detected in preschool or elementary school stage (Kazdin, 2005).

The development of disruptive behavior is caused by a number of factors: biological or genetic, environment, and family factors. In terms of biological factor, Kazdin (1995) states that aggressiveness and anti-social behavior are usually passed down from the previous generation of children's parents. Furthermore it is said that the temperament of children plays a significant role in the development of disruptive behavior. (Tschann.Kaiser, Chesney, Alkon, & Boyce, 1996).

For environmental factor, there are many factors that might influence the development of disruptive behavior such as financial issue, parents' death, and social isolation (Schroeder & Gordon, 2002). A harsh environment such as cruel treatment and child abuse are also factors which can form and develop disruptive behavior (Lier, Sar, Muthen, & Crijnen, 2004).

In the case of family factor, parents play an important role in the development of disruptive behavior such as depression experienced by parents (Querido, Eyeberg & Calzada, 2004). Kazdin (2005) asserts that the developments of disruptive behavior resulting in a risk of worse behavior in children are caused by the interactions between parents and children and ineffective parental discipline. The impulsiveness and explosiveness in disruptive children require deeper direction from parents at home. Children with disruptive behavior who receive directions inconsistently are unable to control behavior that is appropriate for their age. Children also have a risk of developing worse behaviors (Scahill, Sukhodolsky, Bearss, Findley, Hamrin, Carrol, & Rains, 2006).

Here are some forms of intervention to overcome disruptive behavior with different focus of goals: children, parents and the environment (Schroeder and Gordon, 2002). For children, the intervention can be in the form of social skills training and cognitive skills training. This training is based on the assumption that disruptive behavior is the result of learning wrong behavior or the child has not mastered the social skills needed to interact with others. The training shows good results in improving children's social skills, but there is no clinically significant evidence that the training can change disruptive behavior if carried out without involving other treatments (Taylor, Eddy & Biglan, 1999).

Interventions involving parental involvement are Parent Management Training (PMT). It is an intervention carried out for parents based on the assumption that disruptive behavior in children is related to parental behavior towards children, negative interactions between parents and children, as

well as inconsistent and inappropriate parenting processes (Bijou, 1984; Patterson, 1998).

PMT is a training program developed by Kazdin entailing the interventions in which parents are taught social learning techniques to change the behavior of their children (Kazdin, 2005). The principles of operant conditioning and modeling are implemented in everyday life (Kazdin, 2005).

Kazdin (2005) added operant conditioning is a type of learning that emphasizes on control. It is believed that consequences of the environment give rise to a behavior; the consequences have a major influence on behavior that occurs in the future. There are four principles of operant conditioning. The first one is reinforcement which is a presentation of consequences after the behavior appears so that the likelihood or probability of the behavior increases. The second one is punishment. It is the presentation of an unpleasant event after the behavior appears so that the probability or probability of the behavior decreases. The third one is extinction, which does not strengthen the behavior after the behavior appears so that the likelihood or probability of the previous behavior decreases. The final principle is stimulus controls and presence discrimination, reinforcing a behavior that arises with one stimulus, but not another behavior. This procedure increases the likelihood or probability of increasing expected behavior and eliminating other behaviors.

Kazdin (2005) revealed that PMT training programs are effective for dealing with behavioral problems in pre-school age, middle child to adolescent age. The idea that PMT can reduce disruptive behavior and increase adherent behavior in children is based on the results of the previous study (Josephson in Scahill, Sukhodolsky, Bearss, Findley, Hamrin, Carroll, & Rains, 2006). Research shows that PMT is one of the most extensively studied treatments to reduce child behavior problems through increased involvement with children, parental attention and praise for alternative behaviors that arise, improved parent-child communication, shorter instructions, and providing reinforcement when the desired behaviors are achieved (Enabrink, Hogstrom, Forster, & Ghaderi, 2012). Likewise, the study of Kling, Forster, Sundell, & Melin (2010) tested the effectiveness of PMT for parents of children with problem behavior aged 3 to 10 years also shows that PMT reduced problem behavior in children compared to the group that was not given treatment.

Based on the phenomenon, the preliminary study, and the literature, one way to reduce the level of disruptive behavior is to improve parental management through Parent Management Training

(PMT). This research focuses on training to improve management of parents aimed at increasing the ability of parents to discipline and control the children and react to children's disruptive behavior. With the growth of management capabilities in parents, it is expected that the child's disruptive behavior will decrease. Therefore, it needs to be investigated to determine the effectiveness of PMT in reducing children's disruptive behavior.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Disruptive behavior or behavior shown externally is a behavior problem directed at another person or the outside world (Achenbach & Edelbrock, 1981). Achenbach (1981) mentions that there are two criteria of disruptive behavior: (a) Delinquent behavior by breaking rules such as running away, playing with fire, stealing, not going to school (ditching), using alcohol and illegal drugs, and committing vandalism; and (b) Aggressive behavior such as fighting, destructive behavior, insubordination, showing off, rebelling, threatening others, and being a bully in school.

Parent Management Training (PMT) is a treatment procedure where parents are trained to change their children's behavior at home. Procedures are based on the principles of social learning used to develop positive behavior, prosocial behavior and reduce deviant behavior (Kazdin, 2005). Kazdin (2005) notes that effective discipline in PMT is characterized by three skills, namely: (a) tracking and classifying problematic behaviors; (b) ignoring trivial coercive events in which parents do not pay attention on children's behaviors which are considered disturbing; and (c) using an effective consequence.

The basic assumption of management training is training as an intervention used to change parental behavior and train parents to change the behavior of children based on operant conditioning theory. Kazdin (2005) states that there are 4 principles in operant conditioning: (a) Reinforcement, which is a consequence that is given immediately after the behavior appears. The consequences given will cause the behavior to repeat; (b) Punishment, which is a consequence that is given immediately after the behavior appears. The consequences that are given will cause the behavior to decrease; (c) Extinction is to nullify the consequences that are usually given immediately after the behavior appears, causing the behavior to decrease; and (d) Stimulus control and discrimination in order to provide reinforce if the expected behavior appears, but not to other behaviors.

This procedure increases the expected behavior and reduces or eliminates the behavior that is not expected to reappear.

## 3 RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted using a quantitative research approach. The research method used was an experimental study using a between-subjects design with a pretest posttest control group design. It is a study involving a control group and an experimental group in which the experimental one is treated while the control one is not treated then the results of the two groups are compared (Myers & Hansen, 2006).

The selection of research subjects was carried out by screening the mother of the child (subject) who was recommended by the school principal and the school counselor as many as 65 people from 2 different schools in Langsa. After being given a child behavior checklist (CBCL) made by Achenbach (in Mash & Wolfe, 2005; Schroeder & Gordon, 2002), 30 mothers who met the criteria of having children- boys and girls- with moderate and high disruptive behavior were marked with a T score of 60 to 100. Of the 30 mothers, there were 13 mothers who met the criteria of the research subjects: mothers having children with disruptive behavior that are in the moderate to high category marked by T scores of 60 to 100, mothers having a maximum of high school education, having a maximum of 2 children, and mothers with a maximum age of 40 years. However, of 13 mothers, there were only 10 people who are willing participate in the research.

Questionnaires developed by Thomas Achenbach consisting of 33 items, subject worksheets, and observations were used to collect data for this study.

## 4 RESULT

In this study, measurements were carried out twice; before the treatment of parent management training was carried out (pretest) and after the parent management training was carried out (posttest). Based on the Wilcoxon test analysis of pretest scores, the posttest scores in the experimental group obtained Z scores = -2.023 and scores  $p = 0.043$  so that  $p < 0.05$ . Based on the analysis of the Wilcoxon test, it is known that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest in the experimental group after Parent Management Training (PMT). This means that after the PMT was conducted, the

experimental group experienced a decrease in disruptive behavior in their children.

Table 1: Wilcoxon Test of Pretest and Posttest for Experimental Group

<i>Test Statistics<sup>b</sup></i>	
Z	-2.023
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.043

The results of the Wilcoxon test analysis of pretest scores and posttest scores in the control group obtained a score of  $Z = -0.447$  and a score of  $p = 0.655$  so that  $p > 0.05$ . Based on the Wilcoxon test analysis, it is known that there is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest in the control group after the implementation of PMT. This means that children in the control group continue showing disruptive behavior.

Table 2: Wilcoxon Test of Pretest and Posttest for Control Group

<i>Test Statistics<sup>b</sup></i>	
Z	-0.447
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.655

The results of the Mann-Whitney test posttest score in the experimental and control groups obtained a score of  $Z = -2,694$  and a score of  $p = 0,000$  so that  $p < 0.05$ . Based on the Mann-Whitney test analysis, it is known that there is a difference between the posttest in the experimental group and the posttest in the control group. This means that there is a decrease in disruptive behavior in the experimental group after PMT while the control group does not experience a decrease in the disruptive behavior of their children.

Table 3: Mann-Whitney Test of Posttest for Experimental and Control Group

<i>Test Statistics<sup>b</sup></i>	
<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>	0.000
<i>Wilcoxon</i>	15.000
Z	-2.694
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008

## 5 DISCUSSION

There are several matters that can explain the results of this study. First, the intervention in the form of parent management training is given to the mother. The central life of children at the age of middle childhood is within family environment. Mother

spends the most time with children, thus, she is the primary caregiver of children carrying out an important role in children’s growth, development, and formation of discipline (Huston & Ripke, 2006). Parent management training helps mothers develop their ability to handle children when they behave positively or negatively. Parent management training is based on the general view that problematic behavior is inadvertently developed and maintained at home by maladaptive parent-child interactions. There are several parent-child interactions that trigger the existence and persistence of aggressiveness or disruptive behavior. These patterns directly reinforce negative behaviors such as using commands to children frequently and ineffectively, harsh punishments, and failing to provide the right consequences for appropriate behavior (Patterson, 1996). When parents behave inconsistently and unpredictably, it shows that parents do not pay attention to children. On the other hand, when children show some disruptive behavior (whining, throwing things), parents respond. This condition has an impact on children to maintain the disruptive behavior, but it might increase the punishment that parents give to their children.

Mothers usually focus only on negative behaviors by giving negative consequences to such behaviors. Meanwhile, positive behaviors that rarely appear are ignored. This condition might cause negative behavior to increase while positive behavior might decrease. Through parent management training interventions, mothers are taught to focus on the positive behavior of children and use negative consequences on the negative behaviors of children that arise so that the positive behavior of children continues to increase. Therefore, by participating in the intervention of parent management training, which is based on the principles of operant conditioning learning theory, the consequences given by mothers on the behavior shown by children will become more precise and consistent. This can be seen in the implementation of parent management training at home to children. Mothers can provide appropriate positive consequences for children when positive behavior appears, thereby increasing positive behavior to reappear.

Second, the subjects involved in this study are those less than 41 years old and those having a minimum level of high school education so that the level of understanding, motivation and active participation during PMT contribute to the success of the training and ease the participants to implement what they have learned to their children at home. This is in line with the opinion of Kling,

Forster, Sundell, & Melin (2010) mentioning that each individual has different character from one another such as educational background, age, motivation and active participation in training. These indicators will help the parent management training participants in achieving the success of training.

Third, the parent management training process runs smoothly according to the established procedures. The training is carried out by practitioners who are experienced and competent in conducting parent management training so that it results in the effectiveness of its running process. In addition, the research subjects were cooperative, willing to take the parent management training to completion, were present on time at each intervention session and enthusiastic about the intervention process so that the intervention could proceed accordingly. This is in accordance with the opinion of Kazdin (2005) believing that in order to master techniques and develop parents' strategies in dealing with disruptive behavior of children, the participants should participate in each training process without missing a single meeting. This is because every meeting in the training has a closely related continuity. So, if the participants leave one meeting, it will be difficult to understand the material at the next meeting.

Qualitatively, this study reveals several results. First, there is a positive change in the subject of research after the intervention of parent management training. This can be seen from the decreasing frequency of negative behaviors although they do not disappear yet. These conditions go hand in hand with the increasing frequency of positive behavior compared to the time before the mother was given an intervention. Of the four techniques taught, almost all techniques are carried out by the subject in dealing with children's behavior at home. The decrease in the frequency of the emergence of negative children's behavior and behavior changes towards the positive direction is more significant in younger children.

This is in line with the opinion of Kazdin (1997) mentioning that parent management training interventions are more effectively applied to younger children than older children or teenagers. This is because parents are easier to implement discipline in younger children. Older children and adolescents spend more time outside the home than at home so that the role of parents becomes more minimal and the role of peers becomes more dominant. This condition makes behavior changes in older children or teenagers need to involve not only parents but also peers.

These results indicate that the goal of parent management training that has been previously established in order to reduce the disruptive behavior of children through the techniques taught in parent management training has been achieved. In addition, parent management training has also provided effective changes in children so that children's behavior becomes more positive.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research on PMT to reduce children's disruptive behavior, it can be concluded that PMT can reduce disruptive behavior of children. However, there are some limitations in this study. The observation on techniques that mothers implement to children is still limited as the observation was only done for 3 days before and 3 days after the intervention was given. Besides, no followup observations were made after the study was completed so it is unknown whether the implementation of the parent management training technique is still carried out appropriately. Furthermore, the intervention is only given to mothers. In fact, disruptive behavior does not only appear at home but also at school. In order to reduce children's disruptive behavior at school, it needs the support from the school environment, in this case, the teacher. The technique used to create the cooperation between the homeroom teacher and the mother was giving a paper containing a certain number of tokens on the behavior of children at school. This way was not effective in reducing the disruptive behavior of children at school due to the homeroom teachers' inconsistency in giving the paper to be delivered to the mothers. Therefore, the intervention of parent management training needs to be carried out by the teacher in the classroom setting so that the process of assessing and the consequences can be directly given to the child.

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