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<p>Abdelkrim Benmostefa</p>	<p>RESEARCH ARTICLE </p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Reframing the Cultural Adaptation of Evidence-Based Parenting Interventions in Non-Western Contexts: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis of the Incredible Years (IY) Program in Algeria</h2> <p>Dr . Department of Psychology and Education, Dr. Moulay Tahar University of Saïda Algeria Email: <a href="mailto:Abdelkrim.benmostefa@univ-saida.dz">Abdelkrim.benmostefa@univ-saida.dz</a>; <a href="https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8922-8288">https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8922-8288</a></p>	
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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>This study provides a comprehensive and analytically grounded examination of the feasibility of adapting the <i>Incredible Years (IY)</i> evidence-based parenting intervention within the Algerian socio-cultural context. Drawing on a systematic synthesis of empirical studies published between 2012 and 2026, the research evaluates both the cross-cultural effectiveness of the program and the structural, cultural, and institutional determinants shaping its transferability to non-Western environments. The analysis is theoretically anchored in cognitive-behavioral therapy and social learning theory, and is further informed by the ecological validity model of cultural adaptation (Bernal et al., 1995). Adopting a descriptive-analytical and integrative review approach, the study critically synthesizes evidence from international and Arabic-language literature to assess patterns of program effectiveness and contextual adaptation strategies. The findings demonstrate that the IY program consistently produces significant reductions in disruptive child behavior, with reported improvement rates ranging from 30% to 50%, alongside sustained long-term outcomes across multiple contexts. Evidence from culturally adapted implementations in Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Iran, Malaysia, and Turkey underscores the central role of cultural congruence—particularly in language, values, and social norms—in enhancing both program acceptance and intervention efficacy. Within the Algerian context, the study identifies key enabling conditions, including the presence of child protection frameworks, increasing societal awareness of mental health, and cultural proximity to other Arab settings. However, critical constraints persist, notably the dominance of authoritarian parenting practices, limited institutional capacity for professional training, insufficient expertise in evidence-based interventions, and structural financial limitations. The study advances a context-sensitive conceptual framework for cultural adaptation, emphasizing the integration of socio-cultural and religious value systems into program design. It concludes by recommending the implementation of pilot experimental studies and locally grounded validation processes to ensure both ecological validity and sustainable scalability. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on the global transferability of evidence-based interventions and highlight the necessity of culturally responsive implementation models in non-Western contexts.</p>		
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## Introduction

In recent decades, the prevalence of behavioral and emotional disorders among children and adolescents has emerged as a critical public health and social concern across both developed and developing societies. Manifestations such as aggression, defiance, hyperactivity, and impaired emotional regulation are increasingly reported, with substantial evidence linking these outcomes to maladaptive parenting practices, including inconsistency, harsh discipline, neglect, and low parental responsiveness (Loeber, 1985; Webster-Stratton, 2000; Kazdin, 2017).

Epidemiological studies estimate that the prevalence of early-onset behavioral disorders—particularly oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder—ranges between 7% and 25%, with significant implications for long-term psychosocial development. These early behavioral difficulties are strongly associated with adverse life trajectories, including delinquency, substance abuse, and social exclusion (Loeber, 1985; Gardner et al., 2016). In parallel, global health data indicate that approximately one in seven adolescents experiences a diagnosable mental disorder, underscoring the urgent need for early preventive and family-based interventions (World Health Organization, 2021; Patel et al., 2018).

Within the Algerian context, emerging evidence points to a concerning increase in child maltreatment and intra-family violence. National reports indicate thousands of documented cases annually, reflecting both structural and socio-cultural challenges in child protection systems (Algerian Press Service, 2021). Complementary local research further suggests that dysfunctional parenting practices are significantly associated with the development of psychological distress and behavioral disorders among children and adolescents (Lakhadhari, 2020; Ouchikh, 2019). These findings highlight the critical need for structured, evidence-based interventions targeting parenting behaviors as a primary mechanism for early prevention.

In response to these challenges, evidence-based parenting programs have gained increasing prominence as effective tools for improving parental competencies and reducing child behavioral problems. Among the most widely validated interventions is *The Incredible Years (IY)* program, developed by Webster-Stratton, which has demonstrated robust effectiveness across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. Grounded in cognitive-behavioral principles and social learning theory, the program focuses on strengthening positive parent-child interactions, enhancing emotional regulation, and reducing coercive family dynamics (Webster-Stratton, 2000; Leijten et al., 2019).

Despite its extensive empirical validation and global dissemination, the implementation of the IY program in non-Western regions—particularly in Arab and African contexts—remains limited. This gap raises critical questions regarding the cross-cultural transferability of evidence-based interventions and the extent to which such programs require adaptation to align with local cultural, social, and institutional realities. Accordingly, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the feasibility, opportunities, and constraints associated with adapting the IY program within the Algerian socio-cultural context.

## Theoretical Background

A substantial body of interdisciplinary research has consistently emphasized the central role of the family environment in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development. In particular, the quality of parent-child interactions, parental responsiveness, and disciplinary practices have been identified as key determinants of children's psychosocial adjustment (Houzel, 2003; Kazdin, 2017). Empirical findings indicate that exposure to maladaptive parenting practices—such as authoritarian control, inconsistency, and emotional neglect—is strongly associated with a range of adverse outcomes, including anxiety disorders, depression, antisocial behavior, and personality dysfunction in later life (Lakhadhari, 2020; Sylvie et al., 2010).

Similarly, research conducted in diverse cultural contexts has demonstrated that dysfunctional family dynamics, including conflict, instability, and lack of emotional support, contribute significantly to the emergence of behavioral problems such as aggression, deceit, and social withdrawal among children (Abu Leila, 2002). These findings are further supported by recent studies highlighting the negative correlation between maladaptive parenting styles and adolescents' psychosocial adjustment, with overcontrol and inconsistency identified as critical risk factors (Abriam, 2023; Baghdadi & Boutaghan, 2022).

From a theoretical perspective, these relationships can be effectively explained through the lens of social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral frameworks, which emphasize the role of observational learning, reinforcement mechanisms, and cognitive restructuring in shaping behavior (Bandura, 1977; Webster-Stratton, 2000). Within this framework, parenting interventions are conceptualized as structured processes aimed at modifying both parental behaviors and cognitive patterns in order to promote positive child development outcomes.

Among the most influential programs derived from these theoretical foundations is *The Incredible Years (IY)* intervention model. This program integrates parent training, teacher support, and child-focused components to address behavioral problems through a systemic and multi-level approach. Its effectiveness has been extensively validated through randomized controlled trials and longitudinal studies, demonstrating significant improvements in parenting practices, reductions in disruptive behavior, and enhanced emotional competence among children (Webster-Stratton, 2000; Leijten et al., 2019).

However, contemporary research increasingly recognizes that the effectiveness of such interventions is contingent upon their cultural relevance and contextual adaptability. Programs developed in Western contexts may not be directly transferable to non-Western societies without appropriate modification, as differences in cultural values, parenting norms, and institutional infrastructures may significantly influence both program acceptance and outcomes (Bernal et al., 1995; Reed et al., 2022).

In this regard, the ecological validity model proposed by Bernal et al. (1995) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multidimensional nature of cultural adaptation. This model emphasizes the need to consider linguistic, cultural, contextual, and value-based dimensions when adapting psychological interventions across different societies. Consequently, the present study applies this theoretical lens to critically examine the potential for adapting the IY program within the Algerian context, with particular attention to both enabling conditions and structural constraints.

### Literature Review

A growing body of interdisciplinary research has consistently emphasized the central role of parenting practices in shaping children's behavioral, emotional, and psychosocial development. Early foundational work by Loeber (1985) established that maladaptive behavioral trajectories in childhood—particularly those associated with aggression and conduct disorder—are strongly linked to dysfunctional family environments. Subsequent empirical studies have reinforced this perspective, demonstrating that parenting styles characterized by inconsistency, harsh discipline, and low emotional responsiveness significantly increase the likelihood of adverse developmental outcomes (Kazdin, 2017; Lakhadhari, 2020). Recent research has further expanded this understanding by highlighting the complex relationship between parenting practices and psychosocial adjustment across different developmental stages. For instance, studies conducted in diverse socio-cultural contexts indicate that maladaptive parenting styles are negatively correlated with adolescents' emotional stability and social integration (Abriam, 2023; Baghdadi & Boutaghan, 2022). Similarly, Abu Leila (2002) demonstrated that dysfunctional intra-family dynamics, including conflict and lack of cohesion, contribute to the emergence of behavioral disorders such as aggression, deceit, and social withdrawal.

Within this framework, evidence-based parenting interventions have emerged as a critical strategy for mitigating behavioral problems and promoting positive child development. Among these, *The Incredible Years (IY)* program, developed by Webster-Stratton (2000, 2005), is widely recognized as one of the most empirically validated interventions. Grounded in social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral principles, the program focuses on modifying parental behavior through reinforcement mechanisms, modeling, and structured skill development.

A substantial body of empirical research—including randomized controlled trials and longitudinal studies—has demonstrated the effectiveness of the IY program in reducing disruptive child behavior and improving parenting practices. For example, Axberg and Broberg (2012) confirmed the successful transferability of the program from the United States to Sweden, while Helseth et al. (2016) reported sustained long-term effects on behavioral outcomes. Meta-analytical studies further support these findings, indicating that the program is particularly effective in socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts, where it contributes to both behavioral improvement and enhanced family functioning (Lijten et al., 2015; Leijten et al., 2019).

However, despite this strong empirical foundation, a growing body of literature suggests that the effectiveness of parenting interventions is not universally transferable across cultural contexts. Gardner et al. (2016) argue that the success of evidence-based programs is contingent upon their adaptability to local socio-cultural environments. Similarly, Reed et al. (2022), in a systematic review published in *The Lancet Psychiatry*, emphasize that cultural adaptation is a critical determinant of intervention outcomes, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. These findings are further supported by global mental health research, which highlights the importance of context-sensitive implementation strategies to ensure both effectiveness and sustainability (Murray et al., 2014; Patel et al., 2018). Empirical evidence from non-Western contexts provides additional support for the necessity of cultural adaptation. Studies conducted in Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia demonstrate that modifying program components to align with local cultural values, religious norms, and social structures significantly enhances both acceptance and effectiveness (Yaacob et al., 2022; Kabadayi et al., 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025; Al-Muhsen, 2023). Similarly, Wahdan et al. (2023) highlight that culturally adapted parenting interventions can reduce parental stress and improve family functioning in contexts involving children with developmental disorders. From a theoretical perspective, these findings are best understood through the ecological validity model proposed by Bernal et al. (1995), which conceptualizes cultural adaptation as a multidimensional process encompassing language, values, context, and delivery mechanisms. This model has been widely adopted in cross-cultural intervention research and provides a robust framework for analyzing the transferability of psychological programs across diverse settings.

Despite these advancements, a critical gap remains in the literature regarding the application of evidence-based parenting interventions in North African contexts, particularly in Algeria. Existing studies have largely focused on Western and selected Middle Eastern settings, leaving the Maghreb region underrepresented in empirical research. Moreover, local studies in Algeria have primarily examined the negative effects of parenting practices rather than the implementation and evaluation of structured intervention programs (Ouchikh, 2019; Lakhadhari, 2020).

In addition, structural challenges—including limited institutional capacity, insufficient professional training, and socio-cultural resistance to non-traditional parenting approaches—may further constrain the adoption of evidence-based interventions in the region. These constraints highlight the need for a contextually grounded analytical framework that not only assesses program effectiveness but also identifies pathways for culturally sensitive adaptation and implementation.

Accordingly, the present study contributes to the existing literature by addressing this gap through a systematic and theoretically informed analysis of the feasibility of adapting the IY program within the Algerian socio-cultural context. By integrating empirical evidence, theoretical frameworks, and contextual analysis, the study aims to advance the understanding of how evidence-based parenting interventions can be effectively transferred and localized in non-Western environments.

### **The Incredible Years (IY) Program**

*The Incredible Years (IY)* program is widely recognized as one of the most empirically validated and globally implemented parenting interventions designed to prevent and treat behavioral problems in children. Developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton, the program is grounded in the principles of social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral frameworks, emphasizing the role of reinforcement, modeling, and parent-child interaction patterns in shaping child behavior (Webster-Stratton, 2000; 2005). The IY intervention adopts a multi-component and systemic approach, comprising three interrelated modules: (i) parent training, (ii) teacher training, and (iii) child-focused intervention. This integrated structure allows the program to address behavioral problems across multiple ecological levels, thereby enhancing its effectiveness and sustainability. The core objectives of the program include strengthening positive parent-child relationships, improving family communication patterns, reducing coercive and disruptive behaviors, and promoting children's social and emotional competencies.

In practice, the program is typically delivered through structured group-based sessions over a period of approximately 12–16 weeks, incorporating interactive techniques such as role-playing, video modeling, and guided practice. These methods are designed to facilitate behavioral change through experiential learning and peer support, which have been shown to be more effective than purely didactic approaches in parenting interventions (Letarte et al., 2010).

**Empirical Evidence and Cross-Cultural Applications.** A substantial body of international research—including randomized controlled trials, longitudinal studies, and meta-analyses—has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of the IY program in reducing child behavioral problems and improving parenting practices. For example, longitudinal evidence from Norway indicates that the program produces sustained reductions in aggressive behavior, with effects persisting for up to four years post-intervention (Helseth et al., 2016). Similarly, meta-analytic findings suggest that the program is particularly effective among socioeconomically disadvantaged populations, where it contributes to both behavioral improvement and enhanced family functioning (Lijten et al., 2015; Lijten et al., 2019).

Evidence from European contexts further supports the program's transferability across institutional settings. Studies conducted in Sweden demonstrate significant reductions in oppositional and disruptive behaviors among children, confirming the program's applicability beyond its original U.S. context (Axberg & Broberg, 2012). However, while these findings highlight strong internal validity, they also raise important questions regarding the external validity and cultural transferability of the intervention in non-Western societies.

Recent research increasingly emphasizes that the effectiveness of parenting interventions is contingent upon their cultural adaptation. Empirical studies conducted in Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia demonstrate that aligning program content with local cultural values, religious norms, and social practices significantly enhances both acceptance and effectiveness (Yaacob et al., 2022; Kabadayi et al., 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025; Al-Muhsen, 2023). Similarly, research in Palestine indicates that culturally adapted versions of the program not only reduce child behavioral problems but also improve parental psychological well-being, particularly in high-stress contexts such as families with children with autism spectrum disorder (Wahdan et al., 2023).

Despite these promising findings, the geographical distribution of empirical research remains uneven. While considerable evidence exists for Western and selected Middle Eastern contexts, studies examining the implementation of the IY program in North African settings—particularly within the Maghreb region—are notably scarce. This gap highlights the need for context-specific research that accounts for cultural norms, institutional capacities, and socio-economic constraints.

### **Research Problem**

Despite the robust empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the IY program, its implementation in Arab and African contexts remains limited. Existing literature suggests that the success of evidence-based interventions is not solely determined by their theoretical robustness, but also by their compatibility with the cultural, social, and institutional characteristics of the target population (Bernal et al., 1995; Reed et al., 2022).

In the Algerian context, where traditional parenting norms, institutional limitations, and resource constraints may influence program implementation, the direct transfer of Western-developed interventions may be insufficient without systematic cultural adaptation. Accordingly, a critical research gap exists in understanding how such programs can be effectively localized and implemented within this socio-cultural environment.

**Research Questions**

In light of these considerations, the present study is guided by the following research questions:

- To what extent does the IY program demonstrate effectiveness in reducing behavioral problems among children across different cultural contexts?
- What are the key experiences and outcomes of adapting the program in Arab and Islamic societies?
- What structural and contextual opportunities support the implementation of the program in Algeria?
- What socio-cultural and institutional barriers may hinder the adaptation process?
- What culturally responsive mechanisms can be developed to adapt the program in accordance with the ecological validity model?

**Research Objectives**

This study aims to:

- critically evaluate the effectiveness of the IY program based on recent empirical evidence;
- synthesize existing experiences of cultural adaptation in non-Western contexts;
- identify structural opportunities for program implementation in Algeria;
- analyze key barriers to effective adaptation and scalability;
- develop a preliminary conceptual framework for culturally responsive adaptation of the program.

**Methodology**

The study adopts a descriptive-analytical and integrative review approach, based on a systematic analysis of empirical research published between 2012 and 2026. The selected studies include randomized controlled trials, quasi-experimental designs, and applied research examining the implementation of the IY program across diverse cultural contexts.

The analytical framework is guided by the ecological validity model of cultural adaptation proposed by Bernal et al. (1995), which conceptualizes adaptation as a multidimensional process encompassing linguistic, cultural, contextual, and structural dimensions. This framework enables a critical assessment of both the effectiveness and transferability of the program, with particular attention to its applicability within the Algerian socio-cultural environment.

**Interpretation and Discussion of Previous Studies on *The Incredible Years (IY) Program* :**

Study	Context and Sample	Methodology	Key Findings	Scientific Interpretation
Helseth et al. 2016	Norway - Families with children exhibiting behavioral problems	Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)	Reduction in aggressive behaviors; improvement in parenting skills; effects sustained for 4 years	These findings suggest that <i>The Incredible Years (IY)</i> program is grounded in behavior modification strategies based on positive reinforcement and observational learning, derived from social learning theory. This explains the long-term sustainability of its effects (Webster-Stratton, 2000, 2005, 2014). The results also support the effectiveness of long-term parenting interventions in preventing behavioral problems in

				children.
Lijten et al. 2015	Netherlands - 154 families from low socioeconomic backgrounds	Quasi-experimental study	Reduction in disruptive behaviors; improved family interaction	These results reflect the program's effectiveness even in disadvantaged social contexts, supporting the assumption that improving parenting skills can mitigate the impact of socioeconomic risk factors on child development. (Lijten et al. 2015)
Axberg&Broberg 2012	Sweden - 62 children diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder	Experimental study (two groups)	Significant improvement in disruptive behaviors; sustained improvement after one year	These findings indicate that the program is not only preventive but also therapeutic, particularly for children with diagnosed behavioral disorders, aligning with existing literature on the effectiveness of parent training interventions. (Webster-Stratton, 2000)
Yaacob et al. 2022	Malaysia - Families from Asian cultural backgrounds	Applied study following cultural adaptation	Improved parent-child relationships; reduction in disruptive behaviors	This study highlights the importance of cultural adaptation of psychological programs, as certain components of the program were modified to align with local cultural values, which led to increased acceptance of the program by families and enhanced its effectiveness. This finding confirms what was proposed by (Bernal et al, 1995) regarding the necessity of taking cultural specificities into account when transferring therapeutic programs across different societies.
Rahimi et al. 2025	Iran - Families of children with ADHD	Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)	Significant improvement in parenting skills; reduction in ADHD symptoms (p < 0.01)	These findings suggest that the program can effectively address attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder by training parents in positive discipline and reinforcement strategies, thereby improving behavioral regulation.
Kabadayi et al. 2025	Turkey - Families with preschool children	Experimental study following cultural adaptation	Improvement in positive parenting skills; reduction in aggressive behavior	These results support the hypothesis that the success of interventions in non-Western societies depends on their alignment with cultural and religious values, as reflected in the program's effectiveness after cultural adaptation.
Wahdan et al.	Palestine -	Applied study	Reduction in	These findings demonstrate that the

2023	Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder		parental stress; improved family interaction	program not only addresses children's behavioral issues but also enhances parental mental health by providing social support and coping strategies.
Al-Muhsen 2023	Saudi Arabia - Muslim Arab families	Applied study following cultural adaptation	Increased use of positive parenting practices; improved family relationships	This study emphasizes the importance of integrating religious values into psychological interventions in Islamic contexts, which enhances program acceptance and effectiveness.
Reed et al. 2022	Low- and middle-income countries	Systematicreview	60% of unsuccessful programs were due to inadequate training and supervision	These findings indicate that the success of parenting programs depends not only on program design but also on the availability of well-trained facilitators and supportive institutional infrastructure.

### Interpretation of Findings

The findings derived from previous studies provide a set of significant insights that help explain the effectiveness of *The Incredible Years (IY)* program across diverse cultural contexts.

First, the majority of studies consistently indicate that the program demonstrates high effectiveness in reducing behavioral problems among children. This effectiveness can be attributed to its strong theoretical foundation in cognitive-behavioral therapy and social learning theory, which emphasize the role of reinforcement and modeling in behavior modification (Webster-Stratton, 2000).

Second, the success of the program in non-Western societies appears to be closely linked to the process of cultural adaptation. Modifying program content to align with the cultural and religious values of the target population has been shown to enhance both family acceptance and intervention outcomes (Bernal et al., 1995; Yaacob et al., 2022; Al-Muhsen, 2023). This finding underscores the importance of contextual sensitivity when implementing psychological interventions across different cultural settings.

Third, the impact of the program extends beyond children to include improvements in parental mental health. Several studies have reported reductions in parental stress and enhanced psychological well-being, which, in turn, contribute to a more positive family climate and improved parent-child interactions (Wahdan et al., 2023).

Finally, the quality of professional training and supervision emerges as a critical determinant of program effectiveness. Evidence suggests that inadequate training and supervision can significantly undermine intervention outcomes, highlighting the need for well-structured implementation frameworks and qualified facilitators (Reed et al., 2022).

### Cultural Adaptation of *The Incredible Years (IY)* Program in Algeria According to Bernal's Model :

Cultural Adaptation Dimension	Description in Bernal's Model	Proposed Adaptation in the Algerian Context	Scientific Interpretation
Language	Use of language that is understandable and familiar to participants	Translation of the program into Arabic, simplification of psychological terminology, and the use of colloquial expressions when necessary	Linguistic adaptation enhances participants' comprehension and increases family acceptance, particularly in contexts where the original program language differs (Bernal et al, 1995).

Persons	Consideration of the cultural characteristics of program facilitators	Training Algerian psychologists to deliver the program, with the involvement of family counselors and social workers	Cultural congruence between facilitators and participants contributes to building trust and enhances the effectiveness of psychological interventions (Reed et al, 2022).
Metaphors	Use of culturally relevant examples and metaphors	Incorporating examples from everyday Algerian family life, such as extended family relationships and respect for elders	The use of culturally grounded metaphors facilitates the understanding and application of psychological concepts in daily life (Bernal et al, 1995).
Content	Integration of cultural elements and social values into the program	Integrating Islamic values such as compassion, patience, and kindness in parenting practices	Incorporating religious and cultural values increases the acceptability and effectiveness of psychological programs in Arab and Islamic societies (Al-Muhsen, 2023).
Concepts	Alignment of psychological concepts with cultural values	Reframing the concept of “positive discipline” to align with Algerian cultural norms, which may lean toward more authoritarian parenting styles	Adapting concepts to fit cultural values reduces resistance and enhances engagement with intervention programs (Yaacob et al, 2022).
Goals	Alignment of program objectives with societal values	Emphasizing family cohesion, respect for parents, and the development of positive parenting skills	Linking program goals to prevailing social values increases participants’ motivation and engagement.
Methods	Use of culturally appropriate teaching strategies	Utilizing group discussions, role-playing, and video materials reflecting Algerian social contexts	Interactive and practice-based training methods are more effective than purely theoretical approaches in developing parenting skills (Webster-Stratton, 2000).
Context	Consideration of social and economic conditions	Implementing the program in schools, child protection centers, and local community organizations	The success of psychological programs depends on the availability of supportive institutional infrastructures (Reed et al, 2022).

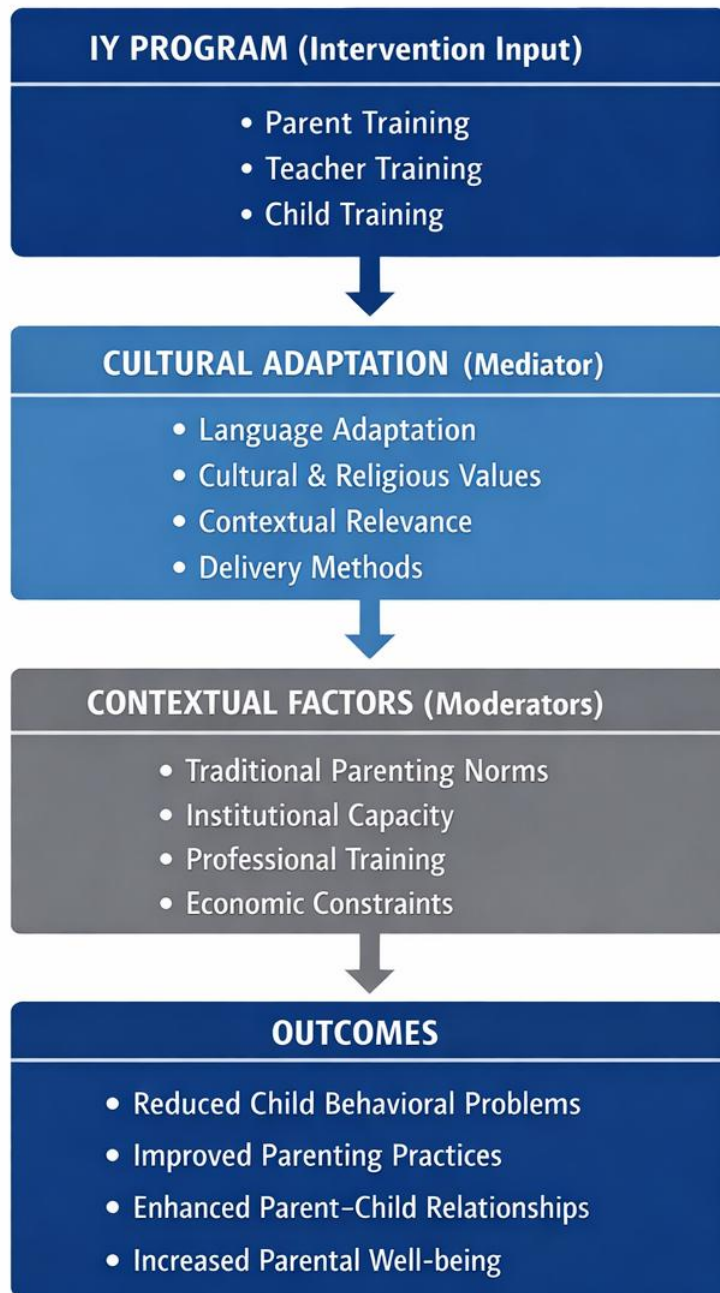
**Discussion of Table 2 Findings**

The findings presented in Table 2 indicate that the cultural adaptation of *The Incredible Years (IY)* parenting program within the Algerian context extends beyond mere linguistic translation to encompass a multidimensional process involving language, values, practices, and the broader social context. This perspective is consistent with the theoretical framework of Bernal’s model, which emphasizes that the effectiveness of psychological interventions is contingent upon their alignment with the cultural characteristics of the target population.

The results further corroborate the assumptions of the Bernal Model of Cultural Adaptation, which posits that the success of psychological interventions is closely linked to the degree of their cultural adaptation. In particular, linguistic adaptation was found to enhance participants’ comprehension, in line with the findings of (Bernal et al, 1995), who highlighted the central role of language in conveying culturally embedded meanings. Moreover, the results support the conclusions of (Reed et al, 2022), which underscore that cultural congruence between facilitators and participants fosters trust and improves intervention outcomes.

In addition, the integration of religious values into the program is consistent with the findings of (Al-Muhsen, 2023), which demonstrated that incorporating the religious dimension enhances the acceptability of psychological programs in Arab societies. Likewise, the results concerning the use of interactive training methods align with the work of (Webster-Stratton,

2000, 2005, 2014), which emphasized the superiority of interactive learning approaches over didactic instruction in promoting behavioral change.



**Conceptual Framework and Empirical Evidence**

This study proposes an integrative conceptual framework to explain the cultural adaptation and effectiveness of the *Incredible Years (IY)* parenting program within the Algerian socio-cultural context. The framework is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives: social learning theory, cognitive-behavioral theory, and the ecological validity model of cultural adaptation proposed by Bernal et al. (1995).

According to social learning theory, children’s behavior is shaped through observational learning, reinforcement, and modeling processes within the family environment. Cognitive-behavioral theory further emphasizes the role of parental cognitions, beliefs, and interaction patterns in influencing children’s behavioral and emotional outcomes. These theoretical foundations are extended by the ecological validity model, which conceptualizes cultural adaptation as a multidimensional process involving language, values, context, and delivery mechanisms.

**General Discussion**

The findings of the reviewed studies indicate that *The Incredible Years (IY)* program is among the most effective parenting interventions globally. This effectiveness can be attributed to its strong theoretical foundations in social learning theory and cognitive-behavioral therapy (Webster-Stratton, 2000).

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework illustrating the cultural adaptation and implementation process of the Incredible Years (IY) program in the Algerian context.

Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the success of the program in non-Western societies is largely dependent on the extent of its cultural adaptation. This conclusion is supported by studies conducted in Malaysia, Turkey, and Iran (Yaacob et al., 2022; Kabadayi et al., 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025), which demonstrated that culturally adapted versions of the program yield more favorable outcomes.

Within the Algerian context, insights drawn from Arab experiences may provide a valuable foundation for adapting the program in a manner that aligns with Islamic values and local cultural norms. Such alignment is likely to enhance family acceptance and engagement with the program.

However, the implementation of the program may face several challenges, including the prevalence of traditional parenting practices characterized by authority and physical punishment, as well as limited training resources and a shortage of specialists in evidence-based interventions.

Nevertheless, the growing interest in mental health and the presence of institutions dedicated to child protection represent significant opportunities for the successful implementation of the program in Algeria.

Building on these perspectives, the proposed framework conceptualizes the **IY** program as a structured intervention input that influences child behavioral outcomes through a set of mediating and moderating variables. The primary mediating mechanism is cultural adaptation, which includes linguistic adaptation, integration of cultural and religious values, contextual relevance of program content, and the use of culturally appropriate teaching methods. These factors determine the degree to which the program is accepted and effectively implemented within the target population.

At the same time, the relationship between the intervention and its outcomes is influenced by several contextual moderating variables, including traditional parenting norms, institutional capacity, availability of trained professionals, and economic constraints. These factors may either facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of the program in the Algerian context.

The expected outcomes of the framework include a reduction in children's behavioral problems, improvement in parenting practices, strengthening of parent-child relationships, and enhancement of parental psychological well-being. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the **IY** program is conceptualized as a function of the interaction between intervention design, cultural adaptation processes, and contextual conditions.

Empirical evidence strongly supports this conceptualization. A substantial body of international research demonstrates that the **IY** program consistently produces significant reductions in disruptive child behavior, with improvement rates ranging between 30% and 50%, and long-term effects sustained for several years following intervention. For example, Helseth et al. (2016) reported long-term behavioral improvements in Norway, while Axberg and Broberg (2012) confirmed the program's effectiveness in clinical populations in Sweden. Similarly, Lijten et al. (2015) demonstrated that the program remains effective even in socioeconomically disadvantaged contexts.

However, cross-cultural studies indicate that program effectiveness is not uniform across different societies. Research conducted in Malaysia, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia shows that culturally adapted versions of the program yield significantly better outcomes compared to non-adapted implementations (Yaacob et al., 2022; Kabadayi et al., 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025; Al-Muhesen, 2023). These findings highlight the critical importance of aligning intervention content with local cultural values, religious norms, and social practices.

Furthermore, evidence from Palestine (Wahdan et al., 2023) indicates that the program also contributes to reducing parental stress and improving overall family functioning, suggesting that its impact extends beyond child behavior to broader psychosocial outcomes. Conversely, systematic reviews (Reed et al., 2022) indicate that a significant proportion of unsuccessful intervention programs in low- and middle-income countries are associated with inadequate training, weak supervision, and insufficient institutional support.

Taken together, these findings confirm that the effectiveness of the **IY** program is contingent upon a combination of theoretical robustness, cultural adaptation, and contextual readiness. Despite strong global evidence, the application of such interventions in North African contexts—particularly in Algeria—remains limited, highlighting a critical gap in the literature.

Accordingly, this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by integrating theoretical models and empirical evidence to develop a context-sensitive framework for the cultural adaptation of parenting interventions. This framework provides a foundation for future empirical research, including pilot studies and randomized controlled trials, aimed at validating the effectiveness of the **IY** program within the Algerian socio-cultural environment.

## Conclusion

The findings of the present study provide strong evidence that *The Incredible Years (IY)* program constitutes a robust and effective evidence-based intervention for enhancing parenting practices and reducing disruptive behavioral problems among children. The synthesis of international empirical studies demonstrates not only the program's internal validity across diverse populations, but also its capacity for sustained long-term impact on both child behavior and family functioning.

Importantly, the analysis highlights that the effectiveness of the **IY** program is not universally transferable in a direct manner; rather, it is contingent upon the degree of cultural alignment and contextual adaptation. Evidence from non-Western settings consistently indicates that culturally adapted implementations yield significantly improved outcomes compared to standardized program delivery. This underscores the critical role of integrating socio-cultural values, linguistic considerations, and local parenting norms into intervention design.

Within the Algerian context, the study identifies both enabling conditions and structural constraints that shape the feasibility of program implementation. While increasing awareness of child mental health and the presence of institutional support structures create favorable conditions, challenges related to traditional parenting practices, limited professional training capacity, and resource constraints remain significant barriers. These findings suggest that successful implementation requires a carefully designed, context-sensitive adaptation strategy rather than direct program transfer.

Accordingly, this study advances a conceptual and analytical foundation for the cultural adaptation of evidence-based parenting interventions in Algeria. It recommends the development of pilot implementation projects and rigorously

designed empirical studies—particularly randomized controlled trials—to evaluate program effectiveness under local conditions. Such research is essential to ensure ecological validity, optimize intervention outcomes, and support evidence-informed policy development.

Overall, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on the global transferability of evidence-based interventions by demonstrating that program success is fundamentally dependent on the interaction between theoretical rigor, cultural adaptation, and contextual readiness. These insights provide a strategic framework for future research and practical implementation in Algeria and comparable non-Western settings.

#### **Declarations.**

##### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in full compliance with internationally recognized ethical standards for research in the social and behavioral sciences. As the research is based exclusively on a systematic review and critical analysis of previously published studies, no direct involvement of human participants or animals was required. All sources have been appropriately cited, and intellectual property rights have been strictly respected. The study adheres to the ethical principles outlined by the World Health Organization and aligns with the publication ethics guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

##### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there are no financial, personal, or professional conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research, analysis, or interpretation of the findings presented in this study.

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##### **Author Contributions**

The author confirms sole responsibility for all aspects of this research, including conceptualization, literature review, analysis, interpretation of findings, and manuscript preparation.

##### **Data Availability Statement**

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available published literature. All relevant sources are cited within the article. No new datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study.

##### **Informed Consent Statement**

Not applicable. This study does not involve human participants, personal data collection, or experimental procedures requiring informed consent.

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##### **AI Use Statement**

The author declares that artificial intelligence (AI) tools were not used to generate the scientific content, data analysis, or core interpretations of this study. Any language refinement, if applied, did not affect the originality, academic integrity, or intellectual contribution of the work.

##### **Consent for Publication**

Not applicable. The manuscript does not contain any individual person's data in any form.

##### **Research Transparency Statement**

The author affirms that this study has been conducted with transparency, rigor, and academic integrity. All sources have been appropriately acknowledged, and no form of plagiarism, data fabrication, or falsification has occurred.

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