

The Impact of Training of Skills to Improve Marital Relationship on Personal Well-Being of the Women

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ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Present study was aimed at investigating the impact of training of skills to improve marital relationship on increasing Personal well-being of the marital women in Tehran city in 2012. **Method:** Procedure was semi-experimental with pre-test & post- test with control group. Research society consisted of the entire marital women of Tehran City who had been referred to Education and training counseling center; seeking counseling services. Sampling (30 subjects) were randomly selected from among qualified volunteers and were randomly assigned in experimental and control groups. Training sessions were done in 9 sessions, each last two hours. At the end of sessions, both groups were asked to take the test again. Tool was: Personal wellbeing Index- Adult with 9 questions, reliability with Cronbach's alpha was. /70- ./85. In order to analyze the data, descriptive and inferential statistics (Analysis of covariance) was used. **Result:** Training of skills to improve marital relationship has increased Significantly Personal well-being in women in post- test and follow up ($p < . /001$). **Conclusion:** Taking into consideration the survey's data, it could be concluded that training the marital relations skills can be implemented to increase personal well-being of women.

Keywords: Skills to improve marital relationship, Personal well-being, women.

Introduction

The quality of the relationship between a man and wife is the strongest predictor of family strength and an effective communication which helps maintain the relationship between couples (Halford, J. A. N., and Matthew, 2007).

Satir believes the key elements in the behavior of family members are communication patterns. He believes a thriving family is well learned in making communication and sending messages. According to Satir, a normal family's

members have open and honest relationships with each other, who openly express their emotions instead of hiding their differences and accept them (Satir, translated by Birashk, 2001). Martial relationship is the process of exchanging verbal and nonverbal information between couples that includes skills to exchange information patterns within the marital system (Glading, translated by Farshad Bahari, 2007). It is crucial for both parties to value each other's traits, interests, and needs in order to establish and maintain healthy marital relationships and they should try to pay attention to each other's verbal, non-verbal, and emotional behaviors, as well as thoughts and actions, decisions, needs, and desires to provide an appropriate response (Newman, translated by Askari, 2009). Frisch (2006) argues that studying the personal and communal well-being and promoting it are the greatest scientific challenges of mankind after the growth and advancement in technology, medicine and wealth.

Despite improvements in health and well-being, there is no unanimous definition on personal well-being. While some consider personal well-being synonymous to happiness and emotional balance, others say this structure consists of certain constituents and factors such as the size and significance of life and the mental strength to bring happiness. Meanwhile, there are some who consider personal well-being as life satisfaction, sense of coherence and emotional balance in life (Karademas, 2006).

Diener, Luca & Oishi (2003) in defining well-being refers to the Theory of Activity and argues it is conditioned on the atmosphere and the surrounding milieu as a function of characteristics and general perceptions. The term Personal Well-Being (PWB) refers to how people make assessments of their own lives and the

assessment includes both cognitive judgment (life satisfaction) and affective judgment (positive feelings and emotions). Subjective Well-Being (SWB) reflects people's understanding of their behavior in terms of emotional and psychological-social functioning. Research on subjective well-being shows personality, motivation and a host of cognitive variables (perceived control, self-esteem and optimism) all have roles in life satisfaction (Cummins, Gullone & Lau, 2002). Personal well-being is an integral element of individual well-being. Studies have shown seven key areas in personal well-being: living standard, health, achievement in life, security, relationships, relationship with the community, and future security. These aspects are valuable in understanding the mental and physical conditions and in identifying factors which affect people's well-being. In general subjective well-being is measured with questions on people's feelings about themselves and PWI-A is one of the most popular questionnaires in this field (Agha Yousefi, Alipour, Sharif, 2011). Hallford et al (2007) in a study investigated the relationship between couples. The results indicated that effective communication helps couples maintain and improve relationships.

Victoria (2008) argues one of the best ways to improve marital relationships is by providing the ground for teaching communication skills to couple. Couples are often unaware of appropriate ways to talk and communicate with each other verbally and they lack the required skills in this field. He also considers emotional support as a very important aspect of effective communication in healthy relationships which is at the same time the constructive and invaluable part of romantic relationships as well and a strong predictor of resolving marital conflict.

Imhond (2007) in a study concluded that expressing love and affection which are more psychological in nature trigger improvement in relationship, because they can turn concerns of both parties into safety (quoted by Zehtab Najafi, 2009). Jarvis & et al (2005) believe that teaching communication skills tells people how to initiate and continue a relationship and also listen to the partner's talks proactively, express their thoughts and feelings easily and understand the partner's feelings and deal with the problems constructively(quoted by Bahari,2011). Kirby, Baucom, and Peterman (2005) found out that criticizing or blaming each other decreases satisfaction. Marchand &Hock (2000) showed that couples who were going through training on how to enrich relationship, reported higher levels of intimacy and positive communication, and they believe most marital problems are caused by ineffective communication and misunderstanding.

Given that many of marital conflicts can be traced in lack of communication skills and misconceptions of messages and lack of conversation skills, improper learning and character-formation in childhood, and in general differences in people's culture, values, feelings, ideas, knowledge, attitude, judgment, and belief. Hence treatment and educational strategies should focus on expanding the capabilities and life satisfaction of people. Given the importance of these therapies, which should focus on different aspects of life in any intervention and emphasize on promoting well-being, this research investigates the efficacy of training improvement of marital relations skills in increasing personal well-being.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Training marital relations skills is effective in improving personal well-being of women in Tehran.

Hypothesis 2: The effects of training marital relations skills to improve personal well-being of women in Tehran remain stable after a certain period of training.

Methodology

The research method was quasi-experimental of pretest post-test with control group. The study's statistical population consisted of all married women in Tehran, who had referred to Family Counseling Center (No. 2), District 9 of the Education Ministry in 2012 and had asked for counseling services. In order to take a sample through a general call, they were enrolled. The criteria for inclusion and exclusion for the study were: Having 20 to 45 years of age, having at least a high school diploma, no severe mental disorders, no personality disorders or chronic physical illness, not participating in other treatment programs at the same time, and not receiving individual counseling or drug therapy. 30 individuals were randomly selected from the volunteers and they were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Individuals within the age group 26 to 43 with a mean of 23.34 were high school graduates or bachelor's degree holders. Individuals in the control group were 23 to 45 years of age with a mean range of 32.2 years and were high school graduates or bachelor's or master's degree holders. For both groups, a pre-test was held before the session and a post-test session was held at the end of the sessions. In order to comply with ethical considerations, participants were coded and confidentiality as well as privacy principles were observed. The program for the experimental group was to improve

marital relationship skills and to the test group in 9 two-hour sessions – one session each week – but the control group received no education. The curriculum for this research was selected from the books which dealt with the reasons behind men's evasion from marital life and the role of women in men's commitment, getting rid of marital infidelity and healing the wounds. Each week some homework was assigned for practicing until the next week.

A brief description of the sessions is as follows:

First Session: Performing pre-test; describing how the task should be carried out; assessing purposes of education, introducing members to each other; outlining the group's rules and regulation and the number of meetings.

Second Session: How to talk about the sticking point? Expressing sex differences and listening to the sticking point, constructive communication techniques (exchange technique, disarming technique), the overall guidance in dialogue and conflict.

Third Session: Training to improve marital life based on Cohabitation Support Law (avoiding angry behavior, respectful judgment and selfish desires, incorporating guidelines to reach a mutual agreement, educating how to talk through mutual agreement).

Fourth Session: Training to improve marital life based on rules pertaining to attention, recognition and classification of five major needs of your spouse and yourself, learning to meet each other's emotional needs.

Fifth Session: What is the male perception of emotional connection? A few simple tips for husbands to understand, ten informative tips for improving relationships, and the characteristics of successful couples.

Sixth Session: Training the importance of sex in marriage, change in vision; recognize our inner voices (childhood message, social message, and home message).

Seventh Session: Teaching how to improve marital life based on the Time Rule (allocating sufficient time to pay thorough attention to the spouse while the children, friends of relations are not present, engaging in activities which address the most important needs of the parties, and avoiding the past mistakes and focusing on the present and future), and the importance of self-care.

Eighth Session: Teaching how to improve marital life based on the Honesty rule (showing feelings, whether positive or negative, informing the spouse of the daily routines and occurrences, honesty about the future).

Ninth Session: Summing up the sessions, answering questions, holding the post-test.

Tools

Personal Well-Being Index

A personal well-being scale with 9 items was designed by Cummins & Lau in 2002. Each item assesses the satisfaction the person has with the major aspects of life including living standards, personal health, achievement in life, personal relationships, personal security, ties with the community and the future security. The subjects should determine their satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the desired marks on an 11-degree Likert scale (0 = completely dissatisfied to 10 = completely satisfied). Cummins & Lau in 2006 revised the scale of personal well-being and added a new dimension to it. This dimension is related to spirituality and religion. Cronbach's alpha coefficients are reported to be ranged from 0.70 to 0.85. Reliability of the retest method in an interval of one to two

weeks was reported 0.84. The significant correlation of 0.78 between personal well-being and life satisfaction indices (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, (1985),

indicates convergent validity of personal well-being (Lau, 2006).

Statistical analysis

Table 1. Mean scores of personal well-being in control and experimental groups

Variable	experimental group			Control group		
	Pre test	post test	follow up	Pre test	post test	follow up
Personal well-being	51/86	77/33	75/21	53/66	58/86	52/26

Table 2. The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov to examine the data normality

Variable	group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		F	df	sig
	Experimental	.964	15	.768
	Control	.973	15	.905

Table 3. Results of Levene's tests to examine homogeneity of the variance within a data

Variable	Levene's test			
	F	df ₁	df ₂	sig
Personal well-being	.001	1	28	.979

Table 4. Results of ANCOVA to examine the impact of training marital relations skills in improving personal well-being of women in Tehran

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	sig	Eta square	observed power
Covariance	139128/3	1	139128.3	2170.166	0.000	0.987	1
Group	2557.633	1	2557.633	39.895	0.000	0.588	1
Error	1795/067	28	64.110				
Corrected	143481	30					

Table 5. Mauchly's Test to verify the assumption of sphericity

Whitin subjects effect	Mauchly W	Chi-square	df	sig
Personal well-being	.237	1.724	2	.421

Table 6. Results of F characteristics related to the repeated measurement analyses about Hypothesis 2

Source	SS	df	MS	F	sig
Group effect					
Sphericity Assumed	6512.133	2	3256.133	118.731	0.000
Greenhouse-Geisser	6512.133	1.134	5740.930	118.731	0.000
Huynh-Feldt	6512.133	1.167	5579.944	118.731	0.000
Upper-bound	6512.133	1.000	6512.133	118.731	0.000
Error Sphericity Assumed	767.867	28	27.424		

Greenhouse-Geisser	767.867	15.881	48.352
Huynh-Feldt	767.867	16.339	46.996
Upper-bound	767.867	14.000	54.848

Table 7. Results of Bonferroni test on the repeated measurement analyses of Hypothesis2

I	J	(I-J)	standard deviation	sig
Pre test	post test	-26.067*	2.447	0.000
	Follow up	-24.933*	2.094	0.000
Post test	Pre test	26.067*	2.447	0.000
	Follow up	1.133	0.774	0.495
Follow up	Pre test	24.933*	2.094	0.000
	Post test	-1.133	0.774	0.495

Results

Descriptive statistics indices such as: Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum and the Maximum were taken into concern.

Findings related to the research hypotheses testing: Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) and repeated measurement analyses. The results were reported significant at the P value less than 0.001 ($p < 0.001$). As shown in table 1 the mean scores of the entire control group in the dependent variable (personal well-being) during the post-test processes and following the pre-test show these changes. As indicated in table 2 and 3 the rate of F Shapiro and Levine level = 0.05α is not significant, so the assumptions was made on the normality and homogeneity of covariance data and inferences were made about the regression slope and it was decided that the use of test analysis of covariance to examine the hypotheses of covariance with presumption of variance homogeneity was permitted. Taking into consideration the data on Table 4, since the $F=39.895$ in the component of personal well-being, with degrees of freedom (1, 28) there is a significant level of 0.05α and also based on factors such as the Eta it could be said that 8.58 percent of the changes in the personal well-being variable results from the impact of training to improve marital

relationship skills. Statistical power of 1.00 indicates the sufficient sample size for analysis. The null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed with 95% certainty. In accordance with the table 5, the test result of Mauchly's Test is not significant, so it can be concluded that the assumption of sphericity is satisfied and so we can use the test results within a group without adjustment for degrees of freedom. According to Table 6 and 7, the statistical characteristics of the F at 731.118 within the period of time at the level $\alpha = 0.05$ is significant. And the results of follow-up test show that the post-test and follow-up scores of the personal well-being of the individual have increased compared with pre-test scores of the individual. The effects of training to improve marital relations skills to increase personal well-being of women in Tehran remain stable after a certain period of training.

Discussion

This study is carried out to examine the impact of training of skills to improve marital relationship on Personal well-being of the women In Tehran. The results of the study indicate a positive impact of training marital relations skills on the personal well-being of women (hypothesis 1). In other words, the difference between experimental and control

groups in the scores of personal well-being was significant. Follow-up study also showed a significant difference in the sense that the effects of education has been stable (Hypothesis 2). According to Karen (2002) ineffective communication causes misunderstandings, frustration, loneliness within the family and community and over time it can impair a person's self-esteem, it can cause feelings of helplessness and the psychological and social damage and the person's ability to deal with the problems of life would be decreased and would culminate in lower levels of well-being. Personal well-being includes the low level of satisfaction and it is an important structure which leads to depression, social isolation, and can cause lack of satisfaction, confidence, determination and a sense of purpose in life and also reduces mental and physical health. Many researches abroad have emphasized on the impact of positive relationships with others in reducing depression and anxiety and improving the mental health and well-being (Segrin & Rynes, 2009). In addition to the impact of family communication patterns on members of a family, they can also affect other relationships and social situations outside the home (for example, workplace, school, etc). In the study by Cohen, et al (2003) social people and those who have close and friendly relationships with others are reported to have higher levels personal well-being. According to Cummins, et al (2001) the human body has an internal system to monitor the retention of personal well-being. They believe that in stressful conditions, a vast range of cognitive and communicative strategies are able to restore the proper level of well-being (including extroversion, optimism, self-esteem and perceived control). Gordon, Arnette & Smith (2011) also found out that training communication skills has an impact on people's communication satisfaction as well as physical and mental health. Training to

improve communications skills teaches individuals to share their feelings and express their needs without fear and misunderstanding, which can in turn improve all aspects of their life and increase people's well-being and, satisfaction, and boost their optimism about the future life. Rafiee (2009) has also conducted a research entitled "Effectiveness of Training Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills on the Quality of Life and Psychological Well-Being of Infertile Women". Given that the personal well-being is defined as people's understanding of life in the domains of emotional behavior, mental functioning and mental health and refers to their judgment on the amount of life satisfaction, integrity, efficacy and satisfaction with specific aspects of life such as marriage and work, it seems that learning communication skills can provide the grounds for life satisfaction and joyfulness through changes in people's function

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