Individualism And Mental Health (A study of people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Iran)

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Abstract

Introduction: Mental health is one of the axes of health assessment of different communities and plays an important role in ensuring the dynamics and efficiency of each community. Mental health is the balanced and coherent behavior of the community, the recognition and acceptance of social reality and the ability to adapt to it, and the flourishing of intrinsic talents.

Objective: The goal of the researcher in this study was to examine the relationship between individualism and mental health among the people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province. This research was done in 2017.

Method of research: Survey method was used in this research. The questionnaire was applied as the method of data collection. On the basis of population; sample size was 616 people, who were selected by multi stage random sampling.

Conclusion: The result of the research showed that there is relationship between individualism and mental health, in other words, this relation is significant and negative, if the rate of individualism is more, the rate of mental health is less in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Iran, and vice versa.

Key words: mental health, individualism, Kohgiluyeh, Boyer-Ahmad.

Introduction

Mental health is one of the axes of health assessment of different communities and plays an important role in ensuring the dynamics and efficiency of each community. The World health Organization defines health as complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not just the absence of illness and disability. Mental health is the balanced and coherent behavior of the community, the recognition and acceptance of social reality and the ability to adapt to it, and the flourishing of intrinsic talents. Promoting mental health in society can improve the quality of life (1). Mental health is considered as one of the determinants of the general health of individuals, which means the sense of goodness and self-efficacy, self-reliance, competitive ability, interdependence, and self-actualization of potential intellectual, emotional and psychological well-being.... Mental health plays an important role in ensuring the dynamism and efficiency of each community. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in the next two decades, the world will see major changes in the epidemiology of diseases and health needs of people, so that non-communicable diseases such as mental illness will quickly replace infectious and contagious diseases and are at the forefront of the causes of disability and early death. Currently, around 450 million people worldwide suffer from mental, neurotic and behavioral problems, and mental disorders account for more than 1% of deaths (2). As human thoughts influence behavior, they can be effective in mental health. A major challenge over the third world is the influx of foreign culture and appearance of alienation that has caused decline of authentic culture and identity. Today, the west's modernity influences all areas of third world countries, and has affected behaviors and tendencies of individuals; western modernity has changed

people's thinking and the ideas of the new generation and has caused the ideas of the new generation to be different from their forebears (3). In recent years, the ideas of modernity have penetrated the people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmed in different ways (especially through mass media) and have transformed the traditional and organic life of the people. The positive functions of modernity cannot be ignored, but its negative consequences have affected the general morale and public health and challenged people's lives.

Giddens considers modernity to be a way of life or a particular social organization that has evolved since the 18th century in Europe, and its influence gradually became global. (4) The effects of modernity have so happened in the recent decades that society has undergone major changes and it has had serious repercussions for some people. In turn, these changes and economic and social changes have led to significant changes among young people, insofar as they talk about the globalization of culture (5). One of the effects of modernity is the spread of individualism in society. What should be considered in the explanation and analysis of individualism is the consideration of its various dimensions. Positive individualism is considered one of the most important indicators of development and at the same time the development implications of "self-esteem", "self-development", "accountability"," Individual autonomy", etc., and negative individualism, is the way to comprehensive development (6). Negative individualism is selfishness and self-orientation, in which the individual sacrifices everything and, by giving their total focus to self-interest, seeks everything to gain personal advantage, which, according to Tocqueville's belief, "it dries the seed of each virtue "(7).

Negative individualism may cause a lot of damage. For example, in the family, it mayweaken a family institution. Children place less importance on parents' views, new values are emerging, and leisurely forms of expression appear to be in conflict with family considerations in some cases (8). Thomas and Zananiki are among the people who have studied familial disorganization and they believe the cause of it, is individualisstic attitudes against collectivism. They believe that the unstructured family should be seen in light of some of the new values of pleasure, new self-focused values, new types of individualism, and new forms of sexual attraction (9). Hoffstad believes that in collectivist cultures people feel deeply attached to their group and community. In these communities, group decisions are preferred to individual decisions, and individuals' behavior is checked against the rules, goals and values of the group. However, in some individualist cultures, personality and desires and emotions are more important   (10).

Lensky is among those who saw the process of individualism and the emphasis on individual rights in the light of democratic world views. According to him, the process of political and educational institutions in the modern society has had a direct impact on the structure of the family. It believes, one of the important causes of the fall of traditional family authority can be related to the democratic worldviews of the new societies, which tend to emphasize individual rights rather than group responsibilities . The process of democracy, as it transformed the traditional roles of political, economic, and educational institutions, also changed the role of the family. The last factor in this process is the emergence of more diverse options and choices now available to people. According to Jokar (1393), in a study entitled "Modernity, Lifestyle Change, and Reducing Population in Iran," believes that the arrival of modernity (the tendency towards secularism, modern rationalism, humanism, individualism, materialism, etc.) reduces the population. Belief, promotion of consumerism , increasing age of marriage and divorce, and general problems in Iran (12). Mahmoudi and Mombeyni (1392) in a study entitled "Investigating Some Factors Affecting Individualist Practices" believe that current individualism reduces public participation and disruptions in society and among the general public (13). Vosoughi and Mirzai (2008) in a research entitled "Individualism, Reflection on Dimensions and Indicators" has shown that individualism is synonymous with isolation, narcissism and selfishness, and its manifestation is found in selfish individualism, which is the basis of the disorder of social order and development (14). Accordingly, the goal of the researcher in this study is to examine this hypothesis; "There is a meaningful relationship between individualism and mental health among the people of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province", in other words, the researcher wants to know is there any relationship between the tendency to individualism and mental health between the People in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer -Ahmad province or not?

Material and Methods

According to the subject, the research method was survey. The multistage sampling method used in this study, was through the Cochrane formula. 616 samples were selected according to the sampling structure. The tool of data collection in this research was questionnaire; the researcher used GHQ standardized questionnaire of 28 questions of Goldberg and Hiller. The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated by three methods: Cronbach's alpha, Cronbach's, was , 70%, 90% and 93% respectively. The validity of this questionnaire was correlated with the total score and factor analysis. And the researcher used 9 self-made questionnaires of individualism for measuring the rate of individualism. The Validity of the variable of individualism was obtained through content method. The researcher, by referring to experts and other advisers, to examine the questions and the issues and eliminated the shortcomings, and the individualism's reliability was obtained through the use of Cronbach's alpha. The researcher first compiled 50 questionnaires distributed among the respondents, and then analyzed them by SPSS software. Cronbach's alpha was 70%, which indicates that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

Data analysis: According to the nature of the information, in the data analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percent, and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation coefficient test, were used.

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha for GHQ (Mental Health) and Individualism Questionnaires

n	variables	Cronbach's alpha	The number of questions
1	GHQ Questionnaire	93%	28
2	Individualism Questionnaire	70%	9

Findings

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for individualism and mental health between the samples

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Individualism	616	1.80	9.00	4.54	1.41
Mental health	616	9.25	27.75	18.76	3.26

On the basis of the above table, mean of the score for the individualism is 4.54, and Std. deviation is 1.41 , while these values for mental health are 18.76 and 3.26.

Table 3: The Pearson correlation test for relationship between mental health and individualism

Test	N	Value	Sig.
Pearson correlation	616	-0/164	0.001

The above table shows that the significance level (sig.) in the test is 0, 001, N is 616 and the intensity of this relationship is equal to -0/164 . Considering that the significance level (sig.) is less than 0.05 (P<0.05), there is a significant relationship between tendency towards individualism and mental health. Therefore, the above hypothesis, "there is a significant relationship between the tendency toward individualism and the mental health of the people of the province". The relationship between tendency towards individualism and mental health is reversed: the greater the individualism among the people means the lower the mental health in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Iran, and vice versa, the less individualism means the more mental health of the population, and on the basis of the intensity of the relationship between these two variables (-0/164) it can be said that intensity of this relationship is weak.

Discussion and Conclusion

On the basis of the results of testing this hypothesis, it has been proved that there is an inverse and significant relation between individualism and mental health in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, Iran. In other words, the more individualism is among the people means the lower the mental health and vice versa, if the rate of individualism be less, the mental health of the people be more. The result of this test is consistent with Mahmoudi and Mamangi (2013), Sabouri and Moeed Far (2010) and Vosoughi and Mirzai (2008). Although positive individualism leads to development, which focuses on self-belief, self-actualization, self-confidence, individual autonomy, all of which have a positive value burden, but on the other hand, the development of individualism, the relationship between children and parents, and the reduction of the sense of belonging to Family norms are shaped in person. That is, the children will be inferior to the parents in different areas, such as leisure time, husband's choice, aspirations and personal and privacy goals, and the relationship and structure of the relationship between children and parents will be changed, thereby weakening these relationships and reducing the relationships of children.   With parents and others, leads to individual isolation and ultimately hurts the mental health of the person.

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