

The effectiveness of empowerment of couples group therapy on marital satisfaction of couples referred to Better Life Counseling Centre, in Tehran, Iran

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Abstract

This study examines the effectiveness of empowerment of couples' group therapy that focuses on marital satisfaction. A quasi-experimental study with pre-test, post-test control group was held for the couples referred to Better Life Counseling Centre in Tehran. Sampling method was available for 30 couples who met the criteria for entry into the study and for whom the basis of marital satisfaction was low. Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire, was chosen. They were randomly divided into two groups (15 couples) and control (15 couples). Couples in the experimental group received group training sessions to empower couples in 10 sessions and each session took 180 minutes. The control group did not receive any training and therapy. After the training sessions, post-test in both groups was held, and was conducted simultaneously. Data analysis was performed by covariance. Results of the analysis showed that education is effective in empowering couples group therapy in marital satisfaction and was effective in the experimental group.

Key words: Education empowers couples,
Marital satisfaction

Please cite this article as: Zahra Farahzadi and Zeinab Tasharofi. The effectiveness of empowerment of couples group therapy on marital satisfaction of couples referred to Better Life Counseling Centre, in Tehran, Iran. *World Family Medicine*. 2018;16(1):156-161
DOI: 10.5742/MEWFM.2018.93204

Introduction

Most approve marriage as a social custom to meet emotional needs, and mental and emotional commitment, and it can be the first emotional and legal commitment in adulthood.

Since the ratification of marriage is considered as a milestone in the development of character, the choice of partner is one of the most important decisions in life. Nowadays, the basic reasons for marriage have undergone changes since the past. In today's society, reasons for marriage are mainly expressed as for the acquisition of love and affection, having a partner in life, satisfaction of emotional & psychological need. (Berian-Eshtin 1990-Sohrab-translation 1382).

Marriage and family, in addition to supplying and satisfying the emotional, psychological, security, and sexual needs of couples also provides a focus for a healthy and safe environment that provides support for family members. Of course, that if the relationship between the couple and the whole family, healthy, warm and intimate would be away from tension (Oraki, Jamali, Farajolah, Firooz Jayei, 1391). In between, satisfaction, intimacy & harmony between couples are the most importance. Because of it can lead to happiness (Wilson & Oswald, 2005), well-being (Diener, Gohm, Suh & Oishi, 2002), and public health for couples (Lamb, Lee & Demarris, 2003), and also plays an important role in maintaining family, duties of parents and parenting play (Tung, Campbl & Foster, 2003).

Due to the pleasant feeling that occurs after satisfaction and with compatibility between couples the lack of satisfaction and compatibility between couples reduces them and causes negative phenomena such as divorce (Gottman & Levenson, 2000).

Several researchers (Bakhshh, Asadpour, Khodadadzadeh, 1386, Besharat, Tashak and Rezazadeh, 1385), and (Lourniso, 2009), have written on adverse effects of this discontent among couples in

creating feelings of depression, anxiety, loneliness and emptiness, low self-esteem and reducing the physical and mental health of couples, as well as its adverse effects in creating many problems for children, including depression, isolation, lack of social competence, poor academic performance and communication problems.

As a result of unfavorable roles of dissatisfaction and conflict between couples on their health and their children, many researchers look for appropriate solutions in numerous ways from educational and therapeutic measures to improve this important function which include accepted studies by Halford (2015), Brooks (2011), and Weigel (2006). Brooks (2011) in a study examined the role of marital education enrichment, relationship and intimacy between couples and showed that this treatment increases the satisfaction of couples with marriage. Weigel (2006) examined the affect of marital instruction on marriage satisfaction and showed this treatment has been effective in increasing marital satisfaction. Iran has also done research in this area by Parvin, Fatemi, Aminian and Rafiei Vardanjani (1393), Sepahvand (1393), Vakili (1392) and Sadeghi (1389) that can be referred to. Parvin et.al (1393) In a study entitled impact of life skills training sessions on marital satisfaction of women working in Hajar hospital in Shahrekord as nursing staff, found that marital satisfaction scores were not statistically significantly different before and after intervention as a result of the intervention promoting marital satisfaction. The results of Sepahvand, Rasoulzadeh Tabatabai, Besharat and Allahyari (1393), compared an integrative couple therapy model based on self-regulation - attachment with the enrichment of marital couples marital satisfaction and psychological well-being and showed that the combination therapy based on self-regulation of couples; love and marriage enrichment programs in each of the dependent variables had significant differences compared to the control group.

Vakili (1392) in a study to compare the efficacy of couple therapy focused on emotion and marital conflict and interpersonal cognitive distortions where couples were referred to culture family houses in Isfahan city and showed that couple therapy focused on emotion and couple therapy cognitive-behavioral interventions reduced interpersonal distortion and reduced conflicts of marital couples. Sadeghi (1389) showed the effectiveness of training as enrichment of marriage life satisfaction and intimacy and that this method of teaching influences another training method that has been less discussed in the context of marital relationships, education in empowering couples. The educational approach tries to upgrade and change elements in a marital relationship, due to lack of consistency and marital satisfaction among couples and turn them into high adjustment and satisfaction.

This training aims to address the problems before they become critical and equip couples with the skills and insights needed to deal with future problems, to increase their satisfaction with the marriage. This training method sees the most common cause of marital problems as an inability to communicate well and healthily, and believes that many couples lack communication skills and are not

satisfied with their lives and in need of intervention specialized. They believe that healthy couples with skills training, explore new and effective methods and that they use more power and at the same time do not deprive others of their needs and achieve a better companionship for people strengthens their relationship.

According to mentioned materials, this present study aimed to identify balance effectiveness of instruction of spouses self-empowering to increase their satisfaction and sexual relations, to answer to the question. Does self-empowering spouse education increase their sexual relations satisfaction?

Research approach, statistics and sample population:

This study is quasi experimental with pre-test, post-test and control group. The research population constituted all couples of Better Life council center in Tehran 1393. Sampling approach was available. They were 30 couples whose marital satisfaction test showed they have low marital satisfaction. Criteria of entry into the study included: age range between 20-35 years, after more than 5 years of marriage. Spouses needed to live in their own house.

Criteria also included lack of medical conditions such as cardiovascular, or pulmonary disorders and lack of any form of psychiatric disorders such as depression, and lack of action for divorce, Education had the least degree and participants had to have a common desire to participate in the program. Such participants were then selected and randomly divided into control and experimental groups.

Among the participants, 17 (28.3 percent) had the age of 30-25, 13 (21.7 percent) the age of 35-31 and 30 (0/50 percent) were in the 40-36 age profile. 8 people (13.3%) had an associate degree, 34 person (7/56 percent) had a bachelor's degree and 18 (0.30 percent) had a master's degree.

Measuring tool

In this study the Enrich marital satisfaction questionnaire was used. This questionnaire was prepared in 1989 by Alson, Fournir and Darkman. It has 115 questions and evaluated 12 subscales. Questions are as 5 options (completely agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, completely disagree).

This questionnaire evaluates subscales of idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, relationship, financial management, leisure activity, the roles of egalitarianism, sexual relation, ideological orientation, children and parenting, family and friends and also conflict resolution. Grading of the questionnaire is based on Likert 5 scale. Questions 3, 4, and 6 to 34 had scoring reversed. In other words, these questions will accrue score 1 to I completely agree and 5 to I completely disagree. Soleymaniyan and Navabinejad have reported and calculated internal consistency of the test for long form at 93% and 95% for short form.

Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire in the present study was marked for subscales of idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, relationship, financial management, leisure activity, the roles of egalitarianism, sexual relation, ideological orientation, conflict resolution were equal in order of 72%, 85%, 76% and 83%.

Procedure and data analysis

In this study the empowerment of training couples was defined as independent variables and the dependent variable was defined as marital satisfaction. Each couple, in the testing group took part in 15 sessions for 180 minutes of couple's empowerment training and the session was held twice a week.

The following provides a summary of what occurred in these meetings.

First session:

This session is run with the aim of briefing members and logic expressed and the objectives of the training session by the group coach after introducing himself to members to the members and then the member introduce themselves after which the education executive gives information to members about couples empowering education. Rules of the group: couples regular participation in all meetings, doing homework, presenting it in next meeting.

Second session:

This session was held with the aim of training in the form of an outline of the overall context, problems for each of the couples and awareness of each couple about the impact of irrational beliefs in creating and forming these problems.

Third session:

This session has the aim of intimacy and compatibility education between couples and education of different ways of behavior and performance for increasing marital intimacy.

Fourth session:

The aim of this session was improving sexual education. Training couples about sexual relations and informing of adverse effects of sexual dysfunction on relationships and training in good ways to improve sexual relations of couples.

Fifth session:

The purpose of this session is checking methods of conflict resolution. During this session couples are shown methods of appropriate and inappropriate behavior that can be effective on creating, or clearing marital conflict and to become acquainted with and taught conversation that helps in conflict resolution.

Sixth session:

This session has the aim of conflict resolution by education of problem solving such as defining problems and selecting of good methods for solving them. Also duties and obligations for each of these problems should be taken and couples trained in these ways.

Seventh session;

This session has the aim of discussing, compatibility of couples about capabilities and growth areas in religious beliefs.

Eighth session:

This session aims to rain in home management and how couples can solve domestic problems of daily life.

Ninth session:

This session aims to educate on effective relationships with family and friends.

Tenth session

Wrap-up session and final meeting and running the marital satisfaction post-test.

In this research we evaluated the raw data from the descriptive statistic average and standard deviation, descriptive statistics, covariance analysis using SPSS 21 to analyse data.

Findings

In Table 1. The mean and standard deviation of the variables are presented.

Table 1: Marital satisfaction mean scores of pre-test and post-test components of the test and control groups

Control				Experimental				Variables
Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		
Std	M	Std	M	Std	M	Std	M	
3.85	9.60	3.17	11.40	1.46	14.70	3.62	12.00	Idealistic distortion
5.02	19.70	4.69	20.60	3.85	23.33	4.97	19.36	Marital satisfaction
8.51	19.56	5.88	19.90	7.69	26.46	5.60	18.20	Personal issues
8.01	21.16	6.83	23.13	3.43	26.43	6.81	22.76	Conflict Resolution
6.08	22.26	4.97	24.66	2.59	23.93	5.38	23.66	Financial Management
5.25	21.23	5.20	21.33	5.43	21.76	3.72	21.23	Free time
7.35	28.80	6.21	30.53	6.20	28.06	7.46	27.63	Sexual relations
4.45	18.16	7.43	26.73	5.41	22.96	8.62	21.56	Relationship
7.19	14.60	3.81	19.73	5.77	21.50	4.30	21.20	Children
3.78	1083	5.14	14.36	1.46	14.70	5.06	14.66	Friends and relatives
5.00	19.33	1.70	19.30	3.85	23.33	2.58	19.30	Role of egalitarianism
9.40	20.03	4.36	21.06	7.69	26.46	3.03	22.53	Religious orientation

As can be seen in Table 1. The mean marital satisfaction test in the experimental group is higher than the pre-test. Levene's test was used to test the assumptions. In order to assume equal variances (significance level was greater than 0.05). In fact, if the level is significantly less than 0.05, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is violated. Levene's test results are reported in Table 2. According to the results in Table 2, the level of significance for each of the dependent variables is larger than 0.05. So the assumption of homogeneity of error variances is revealed.

Table 2: Test to examine the assumption of homogeneity of variance of the error (Levene)

Significance level	Df2	Df1	F	
0.372	58	1	0.808	Idealistic distortion
0.352	58	1	0.879	Marital satisfaction
0.903	58	1	0.015	Personal issues
0.468	58	1	0.533	Relationship
0.967	58	1	0.002	Financial Management
0.236	58	1	1.434	Free time
0.253	58	1	1.334	Sexual relations
0.350	58	1	0.888	Children
0.608	58	1	0.256	Friends and relatives
0.137	58	1	2.268	Role of egalitarianism
0.058	58	1	3.729	Religious orientation
0.424	58	1	0.648	Overall satisfaction

The results of analysis of variance for marital satisfaction of spouses in the post-test are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Univariate analysis of covariance on marital satisfaction of spouses in both experimental and control groups after adjusting for pre-test scores

Ability test	Effect	Significance level	F	Mean square	df	Total squares	
1.000	0.562	0.006	73019.091	38583.173	1	38583.173	Overall satisfaction

Table 3 shows that by eliminating the effect of pre-test scores were for marital satisfactions in terms of membership there is a significant difference. This hypothesis is confirmed. So we can conclude that empowerment education in the experimental group had an impact on marital satisfaction. (According to the average of the scores given in Table 1, empowering education increased marital satisfaction in the test group versus the control group). The intervention effect was 562/0 and 000/1 statistical power.

The results of analysis of variance for marital satisfaction in the post-test are presented in Table 4:

Table 4: Multivariate analysis of variance test of marital satisfaction scores in the experimental and control groups with control pre-test

Significant degree	Error df	Hypo df	F	Value	
0.001	35	12	10.487	0.782	Lambda Wilkes

Table 4 shows the results of multivariate analysis of covariance (Wilks Lambda) on components of marital satisfaction, between the experimental and control groups where at least one of the dependent variables is significant. To find out which of the components are different between the two groups of univariate analysis of covariance was used in the MANCOVA test where results are reported (Table 5 - next page).

Table 5 shows that by eliminating the effect of pre-test scores we estimated between idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, financial management roles egalitarianism, religion, children, parenting, family and friends for resolving the conflict in terms of membership there is a significant difference.

So it can be concluded that education in empowering couples in the experimental group had an impact on marital satisfaction. \

Table 5: Univariate analysis of covariance marital satisfaction in both experimental and control groups after adjusting for pre-test scores

Significance level	F	Mean square	df	Total squares	
0.000	31.008	303.859	1	303.859	Idealistic distortion
0.001	12.492	228.616	1	228.616	Marital Satisfaction
0.007	7.839	422.359	1	422.359	Personal issues
0.004	90108	381.123	1	381.123	Conflict Resolution
0.151	21.134	46317	1	46317	Financial Management
0.963	0.002	0.071	1	0.071	Free time
0.151	2.132	36.426	1	36.426	Sexual relations
0.001	12.854	326.754	1	326.754	Relationship
0.000	21.898	922.617	1	922.617	Children
0.000	18.799	169.190	1	169.190	Friends and relatives
0.001	13.955	253.957	1	253.957	Role of egalitarianism
0.019	5.924	313.074	1	313.074	Religious orientation

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of empowerment to improve marital satisfaction in couples. The results of this study showed that couple's empowerment training improved marital satisfaction in the experimental group in the post-impact test. According to the results of Table 1, the average marital satisfaction in the experimental group, who received training, was higher in the post test than in the control group. This result was consistent with the findings of Oraki et.al (1391), and Eisanejad et.al (1390).

Oraki et.al (1391), in a study to assess the effectiveness of their marital relationship enhancement program on adaptation showed that this training increased the marital compatibility.

Eisanejad et.al (1390), during research on improving the effectiveness of enrichment of optimism and happiness of marital couples showed that the training is effective in improving optimism and marital happiness. One of the most important factors that affects the survival and growth of the family, healthy relationships and understanding between members, especially spouses is marital satisfaction and a well-functioning family infrastructure, that facilitates the role of parents and provides economic growth and life satisfaction. On the other hand there is dissatisfaction in relationships, in addition to the foregoing problems, causing difficulty in social relationships, and a tendency to social deviations and decline of moral and cultural values between couples. Satisfaction and marital compatibility is a situation in which a general feeling of happiness and satisfaction exists in the couple. Marital satisfaction as a couple adaptive process allows couples to feel satisfied with marriage and each other and to have common interests and activities and feel that their expectations are met with marriage.

The education of couple's empowerment shows the most important problem of couples is their inability to properly communicate, and due to this lack of proper communication skills many couples were not satisfied with their lives and

require specialized intervention. They believe that couples with good education skills discover and achieve effective new skills where they can have more authority over their lives and as they achieve their needs they don't exclude other and become more helpful and strengthen their close relations.

If marital satisfaction in the family is weak, especially in couples who don't have mutual understanding the family atmosphere will be cold and lifeless. Clinical experiences and studies also show that the root of many marital problems is lack of communication between couples. Lack of training in sexual relations may relate to limitations in our country's culture and back ground and education on these issues can improve intimate marital relationships. . The study was restricted to couple in the Better Life Counseling Centre and a wider sample selection would have been better. problems. What should not be ignored is it was effective and the research final results, were compounded by being of short duration of treatment and having time limits.

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