

The Study of the Influence of Training Anger Management Skills on Resolving Couples' Conflicts

Elham Izadi and Elahe Izadi

M.A in Counselling, Faculty of Humanities, Department of Counselling, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, IR of IRAN

*Corresponding author's e-mail: amag2004@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: While anger is a fulfilling emotion, it can be destructive too. It balances our inner structure and prepares us to confront the potential errors in our surroundings. Since anger management is one of the life skills, this study tries to investigate the influence of training anger management skills on resolving couples' conflicts. The present study is an experimental design of pre- and post-test with control group that was carried out on clients with issues of marital discord in Family Counseling Center in Ghaen City in 2012-2013. Sample group who consisted of 60 people enumerated voluntarily and divided into two equal groups of test and control (30 people). Both groups filled 42- question questionnaire of marital conflicts (MCQ) then test group took part in 12 sessions of 90 minutes in anger management but the control group didn't take part in those classes. After the program, both groups filled the questionnaires again. Mean and standard deviation were used for analyzing the data at descriptive level and at inferential level multi- variable covariance analysis and mono-variable MANOVA and ANOVA showed that components at pre and posttest stages revealed that training anger management had significant relationship with resolving couples' conflicts.

Key words: Anger Management, Couples' Conflict, Ghaen City.

INTRODUCTION

A quick look around the world will show that according to one of the contemporary social scientists "our age is the age of aggression". Mass and individual killings, assault, discrimination, deprivation of basic rights, all reveal the ugly face of man towards his fellow men [1]. Concepts of Anger, irascibility and aggression are sometimes used interchangeably and a clear definition of each of these concepts and differentiating them seem difficult. However, anger can be an emotional state or inner feeling that results from physiological excitation and understanding the thoughts that relate to malice [2]. Anger is a destructive and at the same time satisfying emotion that activates our inner system and prepares us to confront surrounding potential errors.

Detrimental effects of anger affect the person internally and externally and result in inability to manage anger, adding personal distress, impaired general health and interpersonal communication, conflict and dangerous behavior [2]. Life skills are a set of capabilities that provide adaptation background and positive behavior. Researchers have emphasized on the positive impact of life skills on the prevention of violent behavior or, strengthening self-esteem and self-concept as well as reducing drug use [3].

According to Klasr and Mlarky Sexual conflict results from the lack of coordination in the form of needs and ways of their satisfaction, self-centeredness, the difference in expectations, irresponsible behavior towards the marital relationship and marriage [4].

Stating the Problem: Family is a social identity that results from the male and female marriage. Among the manifestations of the human social life are healthy and constructive transactions between spouses, love of people, intimacy and sympathy. Families especially young couples should know about satisfying biological and psychological needs of each other and being aware of the methods of satisfying them and controlling and managing adverse sentiments are necessary and indispensable. An individual's satisfaction of life means the family satisfaction and results in material and spiritual development and growth of the society [5].

Conflict and lack of agreement is a normal process in each family but sometimes they result in intense conflicts and lack of good and healthy function of the family as the first social identity that its main responsibility is creating healthy character and moral. Conflict means disagreement and opposition between two persons and a fight between people over heterogeneous benefits and the difference in purposes and understanding [6].

Anger: Anger is one of the complex human emotions that can be expressed bodily and emotionally. According to some specialists, in all cases, the main cause of anger is frustration. Some anger causes include being fired, wronged, ridiculed or humiliated, cheated or injured by others [7].

Conflict: According to Klasr and Mlarky Sexual conflict results from the lack of coordination in the form of needs and ways of their satisfaction, self-centeredness, the difference in expectations, irresponsible behavior towards the marital relationship and marriage [6].

Different kinds of Conflict

1. Tendency- Tendency conflict: This is the simplest kind of conflict since we must choose between two favorite purposes. This conflict has the least mental pressure among other conflicts and can be resolved easily and creates mutual decision making and satisfaction, for example, going on a trip during holidays.

2. Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict: Force to choose between two negative and unwanted purpose results in conflict. It is difficult for those who face this kind of conflict because both of them are unwanted and result in mental pressure. For example, some young couples don't want to live with their parents; meanwhile, they don't have any job or property.

3. Tendency-Avoidance Conflict: One should decide on reaching a desirable goal in an undesirable way. For example, reaching relaxation and capital for life and being away from family for a while. This kind of conflict can be resolved hardly and needs time and mental involvement because on one hand reaching desirable goal results in embarrassment, and on the other hand, ignoring it results in failure and depression. In this case, one confronts a mixture of positive and negative feelings. Among these conflicts, tendency- avoidance conflict is the most common. Most life affairs are desirable-undesirable, sometimes, they are attractive and sometimes they are difficult and those are successful who know skills and are trained in their family or have correct understanding of their emotions while facing problems and conflicts.

Influential Factors in Decreasing Marital Conflicts

1. Communication Skills: Communication plays a central role in marriage; it is revealed that influential and effective communication between couples is the most important aspect of successful families. Beck and Jonz understood that the most common problem in unsuccessful marriages is weak communication [8].

2. Reciprocity: An important source of satisfaction in marriage is gifts that couples receive from each other. Successful couples return gifts but ignore punishing behavior of their partner.

3. Problem Solving Skills: Conflict is an inevitable part of marriage but couples don't forget their problems, instead they retain them as a sealed document to use it in a great fight. While in successful families, couples not only know the existence of the conflict, but also try to resolve them in the best way possible.

4. Cognitive Factors: There is a lot of evidence that methods of understanding, couples' evaluation of each other and events have an important influence on the quality of their relationship. Negative effects "illogical beliefs" or at least unreal criteria that people have about intimate relationship influence transactions and couples satisfaction.

5. Emotional Skillfulness: As Covova et al., stated research about emotion takes place at several aspects. The first aspect studies occurrence, capacity and intensity of emotional response in marriage. For example, Bersi Gotman in 1994 concluded that embarrassed couples have negative interaction and emotion in comparison to relaxed ones. Second aspect, the role of negative emotions such as depression and anxiety is studied in marital health. This aspect showed a powerful relationship between depression and marital problems. Third aspect studied the role of emotions in couple therapy. Based on this aspect, the foundation of abnormal relationship is in negative emotions that become clear in interaction with the spouse [8].

6. Sexuality: Sexual relationship progresses with continuous satisfaction of the relationship. Following sections talk about sexual intimacy that is one of the aspects of intimacy and plays an important role in decreasing conflicts. Satisfied couples report more coordination between sexual activities that they desire and sexual activities that they experience. In both men and women satisfaction of sexual relationship has a significant relationship with family function. Research by Razan - Grandn et al. suggests that sexual satisfaction is an important component in faithful relationship. However, the initial satisfaction of sex is a strong predictor of decreasing marital conflicts and relationship stability and continuity later in life. Low and unsatisfying sex is the origin of some conflicts in problematic couples, on the other hand, sexual problems are often due to poor communication in life. Therefore, a part of treatment of sexual problems includes helping couples improve their overall relationship. Sexual harmony rather than frequency of sexual activity related to marital Satisfaction [5].

7. Individuality and Differentiation of self: In fact, the belief that couples are better half of each other shows cultural mistake in marriage. Flexible sexual roles in this culture believe that two halves of a person create a complete human being. Understanding is that one second multiplied by one second equals one. The fact is that when marriages go toward conflicts and disagreements and two persons marry to complete each other, they become more imperfect in comparison with the time when they were not complete (single) and this is the main reason in most failures in marriages. Therefore, those who have more organized inner state are more successful in organizing their partner.

8. Personality Characteristics: Although personality differences are natural and don't result in much difference in marital satisfaction but two cases influence relationship problems and divorce and predict them: one is the ability to regulate negative emotions (being nervous) and the other is attachment style along with unsafety the study of Atari, et al. (2006) showed that personality factor of neuroticism is negatively related to marital satisfaction. In contrast, personality factors including extraversion, agreement and being just positively related to marital satisfaction.

Atari et al., stated that regardless of consistency or inconsistency of the couples' level of seeking excitement, it will negatively affect marital adjustment and they pointed out that since marriage is a long term contract that limits two partners, it is not easily acceptable for those who seek excitement; therefore, satisfaction and compatibility with marriage decreases in these people.

9. Life Events

Life events refer to developmental growth and the change in situations that couples confront together or individually. It is most likely that during the periods when change rate and stressful events increase, communication problems also increase. For example at the beginning of marital life, pregnancy and bringing up children and its problems, serious disease or the death of relatives, children's teenage, children's leaving home, betrayal and separation. Retirement is another major transition for couples and accompanies agitation in relationship [4].

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study is an experimental design of pre- and post-test with control group that was carried out on clients with issues of marital discord in Family Counseling Center in Ghaen City in 2012-2013. Its purpose is practical. Sample group who consisted of 60 people (30 couples) were between 25-38 and enumerated voluntarily and divided into two equal groups of test and control (15 couples in each group). Both groups filled 42- question questionnaire of marital conflicts (MCQ) then test group took part in 12 sessions of 90 minutes in anger management but the control group didn't take part in those classes. After the program, both groups filled the questionnaire again. It was Barati questionnaire of marital conflicts (MCQ) which consisted of 42 questions and designed for evaluating couples conflicts based on clinical experiences. The data are measured, this questionnaire evaluates seven aspects of marital conflicts including: decrease of cooperation, less sexual relationship, increasing emotional reactions, increasing children's protection, increasing individual relationship with relatives, decreasing relationship with in-laws and friends, separating financial affairs. Each question has five options and assigned a mark. The maximum grade is 210 and the minimum is 42. At descriptive level, data were evaluated by using mean and standard deviation and at inferential level MANOVA and ANOVA multi and mono variable covariance was used.

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive indexes of couples' scores of control and test groups in total variable of marital conflicts at pre-test stage

Statistical index variables	test				control			
	mean	Standard deviation	minimum	maximum	mean	Standard deviation	minimum	maximum
Marital conflicts	82	4.2	79	91	170	6.8	158	183

This table shows mean and standard deviation of couples' scores of control and test groups in total variable of marital conflicts at pre-test stage and the scores show that total score of marital conflict variable at pre-test stage for test and control groups are 170 and 82, respectively.

Table 2. the study of the hypothesis of gradient homogeneity of marital conflict

	ss	df	M ²	F	Sig.	Aita coefficient
Revised model	1519.506	3	506.502	3.2	0.029	0.151
Within group effect	5352.631	1	5352.631	34.3	0	0.348
Inter group effect	855.275	1	866.275	5.4	0.023	0.091
Group interactive effect and pre test	1431.037	2	715.518	2.5	0.144	0.16
error	8571.172	55	155.839			
total	1690461.000	59				
Revised total	10090.678	58				

Gradients homogeneity test examines the interactive effect of group and pretest. A significant interactive effect between variables and refers to the fact that differences based on dependant variable between groups change as a function of variables. If interactive effect is significant, the results of covariance analysis are meaningless and it must not be used, instead we use joohsen- Newman Potthoff alternation method which is not applicable in SPSS. Based on table findings, since observed f of group interactive effect and pretest(2.5) at 95 percent certainty level with degree of freedom of 2 and 59 is smaller than f of table 4 (3.15), the relationship between group variables and pretest is not significant; therefore, we can use Variance analysis of ANCOVA.

Table 3. Descriptive indicators of marital conflict scores in general and variable variance equality test

group	m	SD	number	F	Df1	Df2	Sig.
control	169.9667	6.20057	30	5.495	1	57	023.
test	167.5172	17.81576	29				
total	168.7627	13.19004	59				

The results of the table show descriptive indicators of marital conflict score in general and marital conflict variable variance equality test in general. As it can be seen, based on the significance of f, variance equality hypothesis is observed.

Table 4. Kolmogroph Sminoph test for the study of the normality of marital conflict variable distribution

Conflict score	Index	
120	number	
148.3417	mean	Normal parameters
38.89924	Standard deviation	
348.	total	Maximum difference
18.	positive	
-34.	negative	
3	Kolmogroph Sminoph test	
0	Significance level	

Based on the results of tables (4) based on the high amount of z and significance level of (0.00), there is no reason against null hypothesis which states that the sample of the study doesn't have normal distribution. $P < 0.05$ $Z = (1.96)$.

Table5. Covariance Analysis Test of mono variable MANOVA on posttest components of marital conflicts of control and test groups with controlling pretest effect

	Test name	Amount	20914.4	df hypothesis	df error	Sig.
Within group	Effect Testing Pylayy	0.999	25575.7	2	57	0
	Wilks Lambda test	0.001	25575.7	2	57	0
	Hotelling trace test	897.393	25575.7	2	57	0
	The largest root test	897.393	25575.7	2	57	0
Inter group	Effect Testing Pylayy	0.982	1546.7	2	57	0.003
	Wilks Lambda test	0.018	1546.7	2	57	0.003
	Hotelling trace test	54.273	1546.7	2	57	0.003
	The largest root test	54.273	1546.7	2	57	0.003

For performing multi aspect variance analysis test, variance homogeneity test (BOX) was performed and based on the results (Sig=0.15 F=1.56) variables' variance had homogeneous conditions and shows the normality of the test for desired variables. As it can be seen from tables 5, significance level of all tests shows that groups have significant difference at least in parts of dependant variables. Mono variable Covariance Analysis was run in the context of Mankova on each component and the results in all components showed the significance of score differences of control and test groups in all components of marital conflicts.

Table 6. multi variable Covariance analysis test ANCOVA on the scores of posttest marital conflict of control and test groups, by controlling posttest influence

source	ss	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
group	4822.374	1, 59	4822.374	27.370	0

Table 6 shows multi variable Covariance analysis test ANCOVA on the scores of posttest of marital conflict of control and test groups, by controlling posttest influence. As it can be seen from the above table, there is a significant relationship between couples of test group that were under training anger management skills and control group that didn't take part in those sessions. ($p \leq 0.05$ and $f=27.37$) therefore, the first hypothesis can be verified, in other words, training anger management skills decreases marital conflicts in test group in comparison with control group.

DISCUSSION

Marriage has been described as the most important and fundamental human relationship because it provides the basic structures for building family relationships and bringing up the next generation. One of the most important aspects of a marital system is the satisfaction that couples experience.

Divorce statistics show that marital satisfaction is not easily accessible and serious disagreements start from the first weeks or months after marriage and if they are not resolved, they will threaten the stability and satisfaction of this unit.

Anger management interventions, decreasing the intensity and frequency of anger and facilitating non aggressive responses are emphasized.

Conflicts are harmful and they can be resolved when individuals have the skills of living, decision making, problem solving, communication, creativity and development.

Based on the results, there is significant difference between couples of test group that were under anger management training and control group ($P < 0.05$ and $F = 27.37$). Therefore, hypothesis is verified and in other words training anger management skills results in lower marital conflicts between couples of test group in comparison with the control group and it is in accordance with other research findings.

Faridi carried out a research on the influence of training structural family therapy interventions on decreasing marital conflicts and concluded that it positively influenced women's marital conflicts.

Bashkar Soltanali studied the influence of training anger management skills on decreasing marital conflicts between couples who referred to Baghmalek conflict resolution council and the results showed significant difference and the influence of these sessions on decreasing marital conflicts.

Excitement is necessary in life but anger has destructive influences. The most important ones are conflicts such as increasing personal sadness, decreasing interpersonal relationship, disunion, aggression, and By purposeful emotion and gaining skills, we can reach behavioral and social health and successful function in life.

REFERENCES

1. Ovliaee, N. 2006. the effect of training marital intimacy enrichment on increasing intimacy of couples in Isfahan, *Journal of Family Studies*, 6 second year.
2. Asghari, M. & Hakimirad, E. 2008. Preliminary Validation of a revised version of a questionnaire of weakness of anger expression in student's community. *Daneshvar behavior*. Number 28 .
3. Beshkar, S. 2008. "The impact of training anger management skills on marital conflict reduction of couples who referred to Baghmalek conflict resolution Council." *Family Counseling Master's thesis*, Ahvaz Shahid Chamran University .
4. Etemady, E. ET al. 2006. The study of the Effectiveness of cognitive - behavioral treatment on intimacy of the client couples in Isfahan City, *psychological*, 2 (2-1):87-69.
5. Bernstein, F.H.M.T. 2003. *Recognition and treatment of marital discord (marital therapy)*. (Sohrabi, HR), Tehran: Rasa Cultural Institute .
6. Ahadi, J. 2001. *Mental health*. Tehran: Ney Publication .
7. Kaplan, H. & Saduk. 2006 Translated by Arjmand, M. *Handbook of Clinical Psychiatry*, Tehran, Arjmand publication .
8. Ashmalyng, k., Fruzty, Vjykusun. N.S. 2004. *Marital problems. Cognitive behavioral therapy*. (Ghasem Zadeh. Habib Ullah) Tehran: Arjmand Publication .