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The effectiveness of group training of transactional analysis on intimacy in couples

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Abstract

The aim of the recent study was to examine the effectiveness of group training of Transactional Analysis on intimacy in Couples. The research method was quasi-experimental with pre-test and post-test control group design with 3- month follow up session. The sample consisted of 30 people who had shown positive responses to cooperation invitation of researchers and gained the lowest scores in 17- item intimacy scale. Then they randomly located in two 15-people control and experimental groups. The experimental group received eight 90-minute training sessions of Transactional Analysis. Afterwards the post-tests were taken to both groups and after 3 months a follow up test was taken. The ANCOVA was used for analysing the data. The results indicated that training Transactional Analysis concepts had a significant impact on increasing intimacy in Couples and the impression had been also stable for 3 months.

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1. Introduction

Marriage as the most important and elevated social ritual to achieve affective needs, has been always under emphasis and human relationship is complicated, delicate and dynamic which has special characteristics. The main reasons for marriage are mainly love and passion, having a partner and companion in life, satisfying affective,

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mental expectancies and increasing happiness (Bernstein, 1380). Intimacy is one of the marital needs and also is the evident feature of a successful and happy couple. The depth of the intimacy that people make in their relation, depends on their ability to have accurate, effective and clear relationship with thought, feelings, needs, wants and desires. So, learning how to establish an efficient relationship is the first step in process of making or increasing intimacy in every relationship (Bagarozzi, 2001). According to Bagarozzi (2001), intimacy is the closeness, similarity and an emotional or love personal relationship with another person which needs deep cognition and perception of another person due to express thoughts and feelings that are applied as a source of similarity and closeness.

Relationship and the way people convey their messages to each other is one of the crucial issues for having satisfied and desirable interactions. The transactional analysis theory of Bern (1964, 1970, 1972) which has been presented in the second half of twentieth century, is one of the theories which emphasis on inter personal relationships and interactional reactions of individuals and proposes unique strategies in the field of interpersonal issues (Steiner, 1971, 1974, 1990). In transactional analysis, it is thought that the human personality has been organized as a three separate status of Ego named parent, adult and child. In this situation, because each state of Ego is accounted as one of the sub construct of ego, each state of that, when used in appropriate situation, would be considered as adjusted and adapted (Prochaska & Norcross, 1999). As Greeff (2000) stated, an effective and influential communication between spouses, is the most important aspect of the families having pleasant function. However, because the relationship occurred in two verbal and non-verbal level so one of the major causes of emerging marital conflicts is the incompatibility of the messages which are being conveyed in two level at the same time (Sohrabi, 2003). It seems that the transactional analysis theory by teaching the complementary and crossed transactions to couples, will familiarize them by the effective ways of establishing communication, and might equipped them with proper relational skills to establish pleasant and satisfied relationship by identifying the ego states of their own and their spouses and might subsequently have positive impacts on their intimacy. Now with respect to what has been stated, the purpose of this research was to examine the Effectiveness of Group Training of Transactional Analysis on Intimacy in Couples.

2. Method

The research method was quasi- experimental with pre-test post-test control group design and a 3 month follow up session. The population of the research incorporated all couples referred to counselling centres of Mashhad city in year 2013. Among the research population, those who had shown positive responses to cooperation invitation of researchers, completed the 26-item brief WHO quality of life questionnaire as a pre-test. Then 30 people (15 couples) who gained the lowest scores, were selected as sample and randomly located in two 15-people control and experimental groups. The experimental group received eight 90-minute training sessions of Transactional Analysis. Afterwards, the post-test were given from both groups and 3 month later they responded to follow up test.

2.1. Research tools

2.1.1. Intimacy scale

This 17-item scale is developed by Alexis J. Walker and Linda Thompson (1983) and assess the emotional closeness in form of affection, altruism and satisfaction. The range of scores is from 1 to 7. The higher scores represents a higher intimacy. This scale by having the alpha coefficient of 91/0 to 97/0 has a good internal consistency.

2.2. Implementation method

The training was done in 8 2- hour sessions. The therapy started by introducing the three ego states to the members. Then they were encouraged to find their dominant states in their different interactions with others in diverse situation. Then the complementary and crossed transitions was explained and enough and necessary exercises around them were conducted. Afterwards some of the games which could be occurred in marital life

between the spouses were reviewed, and their impacts on the couples' communication were examined. During the group training the participant couples were encouraged to realize their inappropriate ways of communication and games which they have applied. And they were persuaded to decide to apply appropriate ego state in proper times.

3. Results

The descriptive results related to intimacy for control and experimental groups in pre-test, post-test and follow up is represented in table number 1.

Table 1. The results of descriptive outcomes related to intimacy of control and experimental groups in pre-test, post-test and follow up

variable	frequency	Groups	Pre-Test		Post-Test		follow up	
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
intimacy	15	Control Group	2.49	.25	4.10	.65	3.87	.75
	15	Experimental Group	2.50	.21	5.31	.63	4.94	.72

Table one shows that intimacy average in post-test comparing with pre-test has more increase in experimental group than control group and this position was approximately stable in follow up.

3.1. Research hypothesis

Group training Transactional Analysis has a significant effect on intimacy in Couples.

For testing the above hypothesis the single variable covariance analysis was used. For doing this, first for examining the important hypothesis of covariance analysis, the homogeneity of regressions was examined. Then, Leven test was done to examine the homogeneity of variances which their results are shown in table 2 and 3.

Table2. The results of homogeneity of gradient of regressions between covariate (pre-test) and dependent variable (post-test) in factor levels (control and experimental groups)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
group * Assertiveness Pre-test	.03	1	.03	.12	.731

As seen in table 2, interaction between covariate and dependent variable are not significant in factor levels, so the hypothesis about homogeneity of regressions followed.

Table 3. The results of levene's homogeneity of variances test

F	Df1	Df2	Sig.
.02	1	28	.886

With respect to insignificance of F amount we can conclude that there is homogeneity between variances.

Regarding the homogeneity of regressions and homogeneity of variances, it is possible to do covariance analysis. The results of ANCOVA could be seen in table number 4.

Table 4. The ANCOVA results on control and experimental groups' scores (pre-test and post-test).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-test	5.111	1	5.111	21.206	.0001	.440
Group	10.676	1	10.676	44.296	.0001	.621
Error	6.508	27	.241			
Total	687.088	30				

Dependent Variable: Intimacy Post-test

As seen in table 4, there is a significant difference between control and experimental group in intimacy average after implementing the group training. It means that comparing with control group; experimental group has more increase in intimacy in post-test. Also, the influence amount of intervention of independent variable (Group training Transactional Analysis) has been equal to .62

Along with examining the reliability of the results, the follow up scores was also examined by covariance analysis which its results can be seen in table 5. Its notable that presuppositions of covariance analysis were examines and proved right that according to follow the concise conveying rules, we avoid to state it again.

Table 5. The results of ANCOVA analysis on control and experimental group scores (pre-test and follow up).

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pre-test	4.329	1	4.329	10.626	.003	.282
Group	8.354	1	8.354	20.503	.000	.432
Error	11.001	27	.407			
Total	606.608	30				

Dependent Variable: Intimacy Follow up

The table results indicate that there is a significant difference in average of intimacy in follow up session between control and experimental groups. It means that in follow up session, experimental group comparing with control group have had more increase in their intimacy and it connotes the stability of intimacy increase caused by receiving group training in experimental group. Similarly, the amount of influence of intervention of independent variable (Group training Transactional Analysis) was .43 which it also conveys the stability of training effectiveness.

4. Conclusion and discussion

The results indicated that training Transactional Analysis concepts had a significant impact on increasing intimacy in Couples and the impression had been also stable for 3 months. These results are in accordance with Kazemi and et.al (2013) which found that the group training of transactional analysis can raise the social intimacy by improving the relational skills. Also the findings are consistent with the research of Sekhavat and Attari (2010) that indicated that group training of transactional analysis could improve the mother- child relationship and its components such as positive affection. Also Salamat (2005) in a research showed that transactional analysis method resulted in decreasing the marital conflicts. Moreover, in this research it was found that the intimacy, interaction method, criticism method and marital satisfaction had also been increased. Torkan (2006) had also indicated that the teaching of transactional analysis would lead to marital satisfaction and intimacy increase. By achieving information about the way of conveying their messages to their spouses, and acquiring perception about their transactions with their spouses and its influences on them, the participants in group training have got better interaction and subsequently higher intimacy.

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