The Effects of Life Skills Training on Marital Satisfaction

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Abstract

Life skills Training enable family members to solve the family problems. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of life skills training on marital satisfaction. The method of this study is experimental and research design is pretest-posttest with control group. Sample population was including 40 individuals (20 individuals for experimental group and 20 for control group). The program of life skills Training was executed at 8 sessions for experimental group. Enrich marital satisfaction scale (short form) was used as the research instrument. Results indicated that life skill training is effective on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: life skills, marital satisfaction, compatibility, females

1. Introduction

The Life Skills subject is central to the holistic development of learners. It is concerned with the social, personal, intellectual, emotional and physical development of learners, and with the way in which these are integrated.

Life skills programs have been piloted, used, consolidated in different parts of the world by the WHO and crystallized into pragmatic and workable rubrics. Life skills include 10 categories: 1. Decision-making , 2. Problem solving, 3. Creative thinking, 4. Critical thinking, 5. Effective communication, 6. Interpersonal skills,7. Self-awareness, 8. Empathy, 9. Coping with emotion, 10. Coping with stress (WHO, 1994). Despite its appearance in some contexts, life skills instruction has remained largely in the realm of theory.

There is convincing evidence that poor general marital satisfaction has a low-to-moderate correlation with a wide range of negative child outcomes, in particular for child conduct problems (e.g. Grych & Fincham, 1990; Jouriles, Bourg, & Farris, 1991). A number of factors contribute to the success or failure of marital relationships. Communication is commonly accepted as a substantial factor which impacts the degree of marital satisfaction that a couple may enjoy in their relationships. Hence, one of the major focuses of many marital enrichment programs is communication skills training. Thus, using strategies to improve quality of relationship and marital satisfaction is necessary for the survival of marriage. Learning life skills can help couples achieve this goal. Life skills are a set of

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abilities that causes adjustment and makes positive and useful behavior (Cheraghi, kalantari, moulavi, & shafti, 2009).

A review of the literature suggests the effectiveness of communication skills training (CST) for increasing marital satisfaction and improving quality of life. Yalchin (2007) trained communication skills to 14 couples who had registered through a newspaper summon and at the end of the period, the experimental group reported a higher level of marital adjustment and the results revealed that communication skills training leads to increased satisfaction, improved communication with the spouse and improved problem solving skills. Gottman (2004) showed that spouses who participated in communication skills programs had a higher sense of satisfaction with their marital lives, that these programs increased their level of empathy and satisfaction with their relationships and that they affected their communication style and marital quality and had positive effects on couples’ perceptions in self-evaluation of their marital lives. Stanly & Mockerman (2003) and Johnson & Cohen (2005) have also shown the positive effect of communication skill training and problem-solving on marital distress, controlling conflict, and marital satisfaction.

The purpose of the present research was to evaluate the effects of life skills training on marital satisfaction.

2. Methodology

The method of this study is experimental and research design is pretest- posttest with control group. The population of the research included all the married women, who referred to the Psychological Services Consulting Center in the period 2010-2011 in Babol. The sample population was including 40 married women randomly allocated in experimental and control groups (20 individuals for the experimental group and 20 for the control group).

First, the pretest was administered for both groups. Then, the training intervention was presented to the experimental group and finally the posttest was administered for both groups at the cessation of the training program.

The training sessions and its scientific exercises were scheduled for eight 2-hour sessions. Life skills training program was including, Decision-making, Problem solving, Creative thinking, Critical thinking, Effective communication, Interpersonal skills, Self-awareness, Empathy, Coping with emotion, & Coping with stress.

2.1. Instrument

Enrich's (1985) Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: Enrich questionnaire (short form) is a 47-question instrument developed to measure marital satisfaction. In the Farsi version of this questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha was obtained 0/82 for women and 0/92 for men that shows high internal consistency of this questionnaire. Correlation coefficient between the scores of subjects on two occasions with three weeks interval was 0/88 for all the subjects.

3. Tables

**Question 1:** Is life skills training effective on marital satisfaction of the married women? To study the effect of life skills training on marital satisfaction in experimental group, mean score of marital satisfaction in pretest and post test was compared and t test was used to study the signification of this difference.
As can be seen in table 1, after implementing training program, frequency of individuals was increased in high satisfaction and relative satisfaction levels. On the other hand, frequency of subjects decreased in dissatisfaction, representing the positive effect of the training program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normally satisfied</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dissatisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly dissatisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2: Results of T test to compare marital satisfaction in experimental group before and after life skills training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital satisfaction</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14/21</td>
<td>14/42</td>
<td>2/309</td>
<td>0/027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posttest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52/21</td>
<td>12/18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results of Table 2 show there is significant difference between mean scores of marital satisfaction in experimental group in pretest and post test. (T= 2.309, P<0/05).

Question 2: Is there significant difference between marital satisfaction level of experimental and control group?

To answer this question, mean scores of marital satisfaction of posttest in the two group were compared and t-test was used whose results reported have been in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction Experimental posttest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50/28</td>
<td>12/182</td>
<td>1/605</td>
<td>0/001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control pretest</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37/01</td>
<td>17/823</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 3 show there is significant difference between mean scores of marital satisfaction of posttest in experimental and control group. (T= 1/605, P<0/001).

4. Discussion

The life skills subject is aimed at guiding and preparing learners for life and its possibilities, including equipping learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society. So, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of life skills training on marital satisfaction. The result of the present study has showed that life skill training is effective on marital satisfaction. Results of the present study are consistent with the findings of some of previous studies. For instance Yaclin (2007) found that couple communication program had positive effects on marital adjustment levels by improving communication.

Moreover, the results of the present research are consistent with the results of Stanly & Mockerman (2003), Johnson & Cohen (2005) & Gottman (2004). Gottman (2004), Stanly & Mockerman (2003) and Johnson & Cohen (2005) have showed the positive effect of communication skill training and problem-solving on marital distress, controlling conflict, and marital satisfaction.

In explaining this result, it can be said that women who are entangled with life conflicts have no specific reasonable strategy for resolving these conflicts. Life skills training help them to take compensatory measures for...
coping with conflicts. Life skills help couples identify the underlying reasons for their problems and use more constructive methods for coping with them. In fact, life skills help couples convey their messages more accurately and effectively. The systematic practice of these skills makes individuals incorporate this behavior into their behavior repository and use it in conflicting situations. Learning communication skills leads to the exchange of positive, pleasing behaviors and reduces negative behaviors; increased exchange of positive behaviors ad satisfies the emotional needs of the couple, leads to positive feelings toward one another and leads to a change in attitude regarding negative behaviors.

The present research studied the effect of life skills training on the marital satisfaction of married women. The results showed that there is a significant difference between the women trained in life skills and those untrained; that is, teaching life skills has improved their marital satisfaction. Considering the results of this research and the importance of life skills in the efficiency of the family as the first social institution for enhancing health and welfare, pay attention to life skills is a social necessity. Thus, it is imperative for psychologists, counselors and family therapists to be equipped with strategies and techniques which are effective and can answer the needs of families.

Considering the limitation of the research samples such as low sample size and using only female participants, it is recommended that broader research should be carried out considering this issue to increase the possibility of generalizing the results with greater confidence.

This kind of intervention is recommended to be studied in other populations such as housewives, males and couples, and consequently be compared with control groups and each other. Finally, Educational workshops such as life skills may be a valuable preventive tool for couples and an efficient adjunct therapy for clinicians who are trying to help couples struggling to maintain their marital relationship.

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References


