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Life Skills Training and Couples' Emotional Maturity About To Marriage

Khaled Ahmadikia^{*1}, Reza Ahmadi²

1. M.Sc. Student of Psychological, Faculty of Literature & Humanities, Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran.

2. Assistant Professor of Psychological, Faculty of Literature & Humanities, Shahrekord Branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran.

A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of life skills training on couples' emotional maturity about to marriage. The statistical population of the study is all couples about to marriage, who consults pre-marriage counseling centers. After initial examination, 40 girls about to marriage were selected (20 girls in the experimental group and 20 girls in the control group) and randomly divided into two groups. The research instrument was emotional maturity questionnaire. Data were analyzed into descriptive and inferential statistics. At the descriptive level the mean and standard deviation and at the inferential level covariance analysis was used. The results showed that life skills training can increase the couples' emotional maturity about to marriage.

Keywords: Emotional Maturity, Life Skills Training, Marriage.

INTRODUCTION

Family identity is one of the most important social identities that begin with marriage. Since marriage is the beginning of this vital social identity, it has fundamental importance because family identity is formed by marriage. However, marriage is one of the most complex human relationships that exist between male and female interaction (Knox & Schacht, 2012; Lanoix, 2018). Davis, Greenstein, and Gerteisen Marks (2007), have identified marriage as one of the most difficult stages in the transition of life. Although marriage is considered an important identity in all societies and having a successful marriage is a main and ideal goal for anyone (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005), studies have shown that 40 to 50 percent of all first marriages end up in divorce (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). An extensive research has been done to understand the causes of marital satisfaction or its opposite point, divorce. The results have shown that having unrealistic expectations (Larson, 1988); communication skills and sexuality (Arefi & Mohsenzadeh, 2012); emotional immaturity (Dehghan Ahmadabadi & Aghamohammadian Sherbaf, 2015); the inability to manage stress (Sohrabi, Jahani, Mehrabian, Marashian, & Zaheri, 2016) are among the causes of marital incompatibility. Generally, there is a broad consensus that prevention is much more effective and desirable than attempting to

*. Corresponding Author: Ahmadikia, Kh.

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correct problems as it starts. Accordingly, a review of the literature on pre-marital counseling shows that pre-marriage training is one of the ways to prevent marital problems (Rajabi, Mahmoudi, Aslani, & Amanollahi, 2017; Van Epp, 2006). Pre-marriage training is an important preventive tools for families and individuals to avoid divorce costs (Hawkins, Carroll, Doherty, & Willoughby, 2004). Accordingly, some interventions such as life skills training that train several skills can be effective in this regard. So, the present study aimed to investigate the effect of training these skills on the stress and anxiety of couples about to marriage.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the effect of life skills training on couples' emotional maturity was investigated. The research method was semi-experimental using the experimental and control groups.

Table 1. Summary of instruction

	groups	Pre-test	instruction	Post-test
R	E	T ₁	x	T ₂
R	C	T ₁	-	T ₂

The statistical population of this study included 120 couples about to marriage consult the pre-marriage counseling centers in Farsan city. The participants of this study were two groups of couples about to marriage (20 subjects in the experimental group and 20 subjects in control group) based on convenience sampling. They were asked to answer the emotional maturity questionnaires. Couples who scored the high score in the emotional maturity questionnaire (high score in the emotional maturity questionnaire indicates low emotional maturity) were selected as sample groups.

In order to observe ethics after the end of the research process, training was also carried out on the control group. The experimental group received life skills training in 8 sessions of 60 minutes weekly, while the control group did not receive any training during the research process. In this research, with regard to the goals, in addition to the demographic questionnaire, one questionnaire of emotional maturity was used.

Emotional Maturity Questionnaire: This questionnaire was originally prepared by Singh and Bhargava (1990). This questionnaire measures five areas such as emotional instability, emotional regress, social adjustment, personality collapse, lack of independence. This questionnaire was on a Likert scale which ranged from extremely (score 5), very much (score 4), uncertain (score 3), probably (score 2) and never (score 1). A higher score indicates less emotional maturity. The test-retest reliability of the test was investigated on girls and boys (150 students) and the interval between these two tests was six months. The correlation between two tests was 0.75. The internal consistency was determined by calculating the correlation coefficient between the total scores of each of the five groups for emotional instability (0.75), emotional regress (0.63), emotional incompatibility (58.8), personality collapse and a lack of independence (0.46). The validity of this questionnaire against the external criteria, namely, the compatibility questionnaire determined by Sins and Singh, is 0.78.

After coordinating with the pre-marriage counseling center, the need for such training was reminded by the director of the center and in coordination with the director and other staff, the questionnaire was distributed among all the couples. After distributing the questionnaire for 1 month, the questionnaire was analyzed and those who scored those who scored low in the emotional maturity questionnaire were invited to do the research and they were placed in two

Life Skills Training and Couples' Emotional ...

groups. Then the first group was under manipulation and the control group did not receive any manipulation. After that post- test was administrated. It should be noted that the training package based on the life skills package Kleinke (1998) was developed. The summary of the contents of the training sessions is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sessions Summary

Sessions Summary
1 st session: introduction, expression of company rules at meetings, introduction of life skills programs, pre-test administration
2 nd session: Teaching Self-awareness Skill and its dimensions
3 rd session: Empathy Skills Training
4 th session: Communication skills training
5 th session: Problem-solving and decision-making skills training
6 th session: Stress management skills training (Stress introduction, Stress experience, Stress cycle, The way of dealing with Stress)
7 th session: Anger Management Skill Training and emotions expression in the right way
8 th session: Ambiguities resolution, post-test administration

To analyze the data from the research instruments, descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the purpose of presenting the results. Descriptive statistics including frequency table and frequency percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. And for analyzing the research hypotheses in the inferential statistics, covariance analysis was used. Results were submitted to SPSS20 for statistical analysis.

RESULTS

The following table shows the demographic information of the participants in the research.

Table3. Frequency and frequency percentage of educational status in the research group

Educational status	Groups	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma	E group	6	15
	C group	7	17.5
Undergraduate degree	E group	4	10
	C group	4	10
BA	E group	10	25
	C group	9	22.5

As shown in the table 3, in the experimental group, 6 subjects had a diploma, 4 had an undergraduate degree, and 10 had a bachelor degree. In the control group, 7 were diploma, 4 were undergraduate and 9 were bachelors.

Table 4. Results of covariance analysis of the effect of life skills training on emotional maturity in post-test stage

Source of change	Sum of square	df	Mean of square	F	sig	ETA square	Test power
Modified model	22.2571	1	22.2571	59.24	0.001	0.39	0.99
Pre-test	7.187	1	7.187	78.1	0.18	0.04	0.25
group	25.484	1	25.484	63.4	0.038	0.11	0.55
error	2.3868	37	54.104				

Table 4 shows the results of the unilabiate analysis of covariance test (ANCOVA). Based on this information, life skills training on couples' emotional maturity about to marriage in the post-test phase is effective. Because the level of significance is less than 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). In other

words, the difference between the control group and the experimental groups is significant due to the effect of training on the dependent variable. Also, it can be said that the difference between the scores of the control and experimental groups indicates that couples' emotional maturity is significantly different before and after training. Considering ETA square we can say that 11% of this decrease is due to the effect of training

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that life skill training increases the couples' emotional maturity about to marriage. These results are in accordance with the findings of Mustapha, Odebode, and Adegboyega (2017). In explaining the result, it should be said that emotional maturity is the ability to manage disturbing emotions and it reflects the individual's stability and tolerance relation to pressures which gives the possibility of resilience to neurotic tendencies. The most prominent symptom of emotional maturity is the ability to withstand stress. The most prominent symptom of emotional maturity is the ability to bear stress and another sign is the indifference to some types of stimuli that affect the individual and makes him feel weak or distressed. So, it can be said that the management of anger directly focuses on increasing emotional maturity. In anger management training, it is emphasized that nobody can get rid of or avoids anger because there are always phenomena or people who annoy an individual in a way that their change or control is beyond the individual's power. So, people can only learn how to manage their anger and put down their anger and display it in a proper way. Some of the strategies that have been taught in this area include respiratory interruptions, change glum thought, awareness of one's ability to self-control, rehabilitation, timing, witty, environmental change, do exercise, and better communication. All of these skills make it possible to manage not only anger but all the emotions.

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Life Skills Training and Couples' Emotional ...

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