

Effectiveness of Anger Management Training on the Quality of Marital Satisfaction of Female Elementary School Students' Mothers in Rasht

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ABSTRACT: The present study aims for effectiveness of anger management training on the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary school students' mothers in the city of Rasht. This research is performed experimentally using a pretest-posttest design with a control group and its statistical population includes all mothers having a daughter at the age of elementary school. Statistical sample consists of 30 mothers with at least one score below the average in the marital satisfaction scale. They were randomly placed in 2 groups of fifteen. During performing this study, after sample selection and placing samples in a test group and a control group, pretest was run in both groups. Then, the test group received anger management training including eight 90-minute sessions, once a week. In order to collect data, Enrich (1989) marital satisfaction questionnaire with an alpha of 0.92 was used which was filled in through reporting in pre- and post-intervention phases. Data was statistically analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics of one-way covariance analysis (ANCOVA) which was done by the software SPSS 20. Results showed that the significance level calculated is smaller than 0.05. Therefore, F value is significant ($F_{(1,27)}=284.433$; $P<0.0005$; Partial $\eta^2=0.913$). Additionally, the effect rate obtained in this study is 0.913. This means that 91% of the difference in posttest scores of marital satisfaction is related to the effectiveness of anger management training. By investigating the hypothesis results, it was found that subjects of test group displayed a more significant decrease in aggression level and marital satisfaction quality improvement.

Keywords: Anger Management Training, Marital Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Anger is a satisfactory excitement and, at the same time, devastating; it activates our internal system and prepares us for facing potential dangers (Tyler and Novaco, 2005). Researchers believe that anger will not be a healthy excitement if it is not expressed in a controlled way, especially the excitement can cause aggressive behavior (Lau, 2001). Chronic anger has negative effects on physical and mental health, social relationships and overall quality of life (Dahlen and Deffenbacher, 2001). Also, expressing anger may result in family, interpersonal, and occupational conflicts, others' negative assessment of the person, negative self-concept, and low self-confidence (Kalameri and Peeni, 2003). Anger management and control do not mean that the person does not show their anger at all, but anger control includes expressing the anger in a consistent manner (Geresten, 2009). By teaching anger management practices to mothers, they can be made aware that in the event of an anger occurrence what the proper treatment is in order to avoid further problems

caused by the anger itself. There are several practical ways to manage anger. They include:

A. Making changes in the environment. Sometimes, a person is placed in an environment in which there are factors lowering their stimulation threshold towards anger or even causing their anger. Removing these factors, if possible, or even leaving the place can reduce anger level.

B. Leaving the place. In situations where person's presence is likely to cause contention, we can leave the environment.

C. Relaxation. Relaxation is a proper way to reduce anger. Yoga, concentration and the corresponding activities can also be useful.

D. Problem solving. Sometimes, the reason for someone's anger is a real threat or cruelty to which anger is a natural reaction. In such situations, it is better to find a suitable solution to your problem in addition to control your anger. Problem solving skill teaches people finding the best solution for these kinds of problems.

E. Coping with negative thoughts. Interpretation of the situation and what the person says to himself can cause anger or calmness. Therefore, one should pay attention to their thoughts when being angry.

F. Expressing anger in a consistent manner. When expressing anger in a consistent manner, one exhibits brave behavior. Brave behavior is the one with which the individual can show, without aggressive behavior, that they are annoyed or angered by others.

G. Stopping the thoughts, feelings, and contentious moods. Once these moods are created, shout to yourself: Stop! Enough is enough! If the person himself fails, another one says "stop" and after implementing this approach, he diverts his thought into the issues he enjoys so that he has a pleasant feeling.

H. Diverting contentious thoughts. The human mind cannot think of two issues simultaneously. In a situation where one is made angry, the desirable thought can be put into the mind.

I. Finding a confidant

J. Exercise, swimming, and walking

K. Being patient, trusting one another, and accepting others as they are (Geresten, 2009)

Elson (1989) states three overall satisfaction areas regarding marital satisfaction which interfere with and are linked to each other as following:

1. Satisfaction with marriage
2. Satisfaction with family life
3. Total satisfaction with life

In Elson's opinion, satisfaction with marriage is within satisfaction with family, which is encompassed by total satisfaction with life. Correlation coefficient is around 70% between marital satisfaction and satisfaction with family and 67% between satisfaction with family and natural satisfaction with life (Soleymanian, 1994; according to Azadbakht, 2010). Generally, marriage relieves you of solipsism, anxiety, and the feel of control over objects and people, causes mental and physical health and avoids many mental and physical illnesses and social deviance (Navabinezhad, 2004). Marital satisfaction indicates family effectiveness and strength. Family welfare and health depends on healthy and thriving relationships between couples. If the family does not enjoy the necessary strength, negative consequences are different types of mental and physical problems (Satir, 1983, translated by Birashk, 2011). In fact, this phenomenon prolongs the couple's life and enhances physical and mental health, economic development, and total satisfaction with life. Marital satisfaction and adjustment are created through mutual love, caring for each other, acceptance, mutual understanding, and satisfying the needs (Mehrabadi,

2011). According to Alice (2010), marital satisfaction is objective feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by husband and wife, taking into consideration all aspects of their lives. Marriage can be regarded as one of the most important decisions in each person's life. Study of the relationship between couples helps clarify structural frameworks within which couples' relationships are formed. One of dimensions of couples' relationships is the quality of marital relationship, which plays a key role in assessing overall quality of family relations (Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach, 2000). Marital satisfaction quality is a multi-dimensional concept and includes different dimensions of couples' communication such as adjustment, satisfaction, happiness, solidarity, and commitment (Turkcell, 2006). There are three main approaches to conceptualizing the quality of marital relationships. The first approach is related to (Livayz and Spanyr, 1979; quoted from Edital and Yuaw, 2005) which finds the quality of marital relationships a combination of adjustment and happiness. The second one is for (Fincham and Bradbury, 1987; quoted from Crowley, 2006). According to this approach, the quality of the marital relationship reflects one's total evaluation of that relationship. The third approach belongs to (Marx, 1989; quoted from Turkcell, 2006) which is a combination of Livayz and Spanyr's approach and Bowen's systemic approach. Marx has a systemic attitude towards the individual, their relationship with their spouse, and their relationship with others. From this perspective, a married individual has three angles including internal angle, spousal angle, and external angle. The first angle is the internal self, which covers inner aspect of the individual, efforts, motives, and different energies formed by a long history of all life experience. The second angle is the relationship with the spouse; that part of one's self which continuously pays attention to, harmonizes with, and takes care of the spouse. The second angle is a solidarity-independence bridge - that is why the spouse is believed to be one's soul mate. The third angle shows every point outside one's self except the spouse. Despite Bowen's opinion that sees the important other one as a mere person, Marx believes that the important other one can also be a job, hobby and so on. Accordingly, Marx defines the quality of marital relationship as "a result of the ways in which married people organize themselves within this triangle (three angles)" (Turkcell, 2006). Birth marks a fundamental change in family's organization. When a child is born, some new roles should be appeared and the spousal performance has to be changed in order to meet parental obligations (Ashkani, 2009).

Researchers believe that the greater the number of children, the lower the marital satisfaction (Satir, 2011). Satisfactory marital relationships improve the relationship of children with each other and with parents and result in growth, competence, and ability to adapt in children. Marriages which are governed by agreement have positive mother-child and father-child relationships (Ahadi et al., 2005). Research shows that children paradoxically influence the increase in marital stability (at least when they are relatively young) and the decrease in its quality at the same time. In child rearing period, marital happiness decreases but again increases after children leave home (Ashkani, 2009). Anger destroys intimate relationships. Susan Hazalus and Jerry Deffenbacher (1986) in a study on angry men came to the conclusion that 45 percent of them have faced severe in their marital relationships during last year. Debvar Weaver and Darlen Shaw at the medical college of South Carolina found that women of type A have a much worse marital life comparing to women of type B. Divorce statistics also refers to the role of anger in marital breakdown. About 52% of divorces in America result from emotional or physical difficulties. The effect of anger rehashing on marital relations is the same as that of the injury made by skin removing. Anger hurts feelings and each rehash creates a new injury. Emotional scars produce a problem like their counterparts, physical scars. Chronic anger makes people hard and inflexible, creates defensiveness, and its long-term impact is losing empathy and intimacy. The angry spouse in the relationship feels despair and helplessness. Only if the other partner changes themselves or revises their behavior, the situation will become better. All the time the other person seems to be faulty and because all blames and critiques do not make the other party change themselves, the feeling of helplessness rises and anger grows (Kim Pulg; translated by Mahdi Gharache Daghi, 2011). In a study by Ahadi (2011) entitled "Study of marital satisfaction, parental emotion expression and emotional-behavioral problems in children", it was concluded that there is a significant correlation between parents' emotion expression and child's emotional-behavioral problems. Also, marital satisfaction correlates significantly with the way father expresses his emotions to his child. In this research, it has been shown that marital satisfaction variables have a significant relationship with children's emotional-behavioral problems. High and low marital satisfaction is indirectly and directly related to emotional-behavioral problems in children, respectively. Sepah Mansour and Mazaheri (2006), in a study entitled "A comparison of love style components between married people with and without marital satisfaction" which was done on 50 couples referring to

Consulting Services Centers, showed that the increase in intimacy and pleasure in couples' interaction can result in more satisfaction with spousal relations and commitment alone does not produce this satisfaction. Results of research conducted by Pournaghash Tehrani (2007) on couples referring to Dispute Settlement Council suggested that anger management training program can significantly reduce disagreements between couples. Tabe Bordbar (2007) entitled "Predicting marital satisfaction based on attachment styles" indicated that there is a significant relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction. Moreover, there is a difference in secure and avoidant attachment styles but no difference in anxious attachment styles between men and women. In the study of Takhti (2008) named "A comparative study of irrational beliefs and marital satisfaction of working couples with different educational levels", it was found that there is a significant relationship between irrational beliefs and marital satisfaction of couples. In addition, there is no significant relationship between couples' marital satisfaction and educational level. Tweeng, Campel, and Foster (2009) concluded in a study that, in general, couples with children experience less marital satisfaction than those without children. Eden et al. (2012) carried out a study on the relationship between marital satisfaction and adjustment and parents' relation with children in 60 couples with proper marital satisfaction and their 7- to 10-year-old children. Findings showed that the quality of interaction between parents and their children and the security feeling created among them have a significant relationship with parents' marital satisfaction level. They also demonstrated that parents are in good mental health. This group was compared to children whose parents had low marital satisfaction and psychological disorders and it was found that the level of conflict and physical violence towards children is higher. Allison (2008) in an assessment of positive child rearing program came to the conclusion that this program is effective in reducing children's destructive behavior, parental hatred-making strategies, and enhancing parents' efficiency and satisfaction. Gerick and Fincham (2008) study suggests that family conflicts and mental pressure are associated with adolescents' mood. If children's or adolescents' perceptions of conflicts are generally received as a serious threat, it is easy to expect anxiety, depression, or even psychosomatic reactions. Considering the aforementioned matters, the main question of the present research is whether anger management training influences the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary students' mothers.

METHOD

The present study is performed experimentally using a pretest-posttest design with a control group and its statistical population includes all mothers having a daughter at the age of elementary school. Accordingly, mothers with minimum literacy were randomly chosen as study samples. Statistical sample consists of 30 mothers with at least one score below the average in the marital satisfaction scale. First, marital satisfaction test was done on all 100 members of the statistical population and 50 mothers were found qualified in both tests. After clinical interview, 20 cases were excluded due to being on medications or in therapy and 30 cases were selected as samples and randomly placed in 2 groups of fifteen. During performing this study, after sample selection and placing samples in a test group and a control group, pretest was run in both groups. Then, the test group received anger management training including eight 90-minute sessions, once a week. The control group received no training in this period. Finally, posttest was done on both groups simultaneously and in the same conditions.

A. Performance conditions

Inclusion criteria:

- (1) Consent of the subject to participate in anger management training sessions
- (2) Lack of medical and psychological treatments

Exclusion criteria:

- (1) Lack of tolerance to accepting anger management training sessions

Tools:

A) Structured clinical Interview for DSM-IV Axis I-Disorder (SCID-I): It is a semi-structured clinical interview developed by Frest, Spiters, Gibon and Williams in order to diagnose major axis I disorders based on DSM-IV (Ventora and Liberman, 1998). In the present study, clinical version of SCID-CV was used for clinical diagnosis in axis I. Clinical version has a manual and a distinct scoring program. Reliability coefficient of 0.60 was reported as inter-rater reliability for SCID. (Norgurd and Rivich, 2012). After translating this interview into Persian, Sharify *et al.* (2009) found the diagnostic agreement of this tool to be desirable for most specific and general diagnoses (a reliability of more than 0.60). Kappa coefficient was 0.52 for all current diagnoses and was obtained 0.55 for all lifelong diagnoses. In addition, reliability and ability to run Persian version of SCID is acceptable (Sharify *et al.*, 1388).

B) Marital satisfaction questionnaire (ENRICH), short form: Olson (1989) used this questionnaire to

investigate marital satisfaction and believes that every one of the topics in it is related to one of important areas. Evaluating these areas in a spousal relationship can express potential problems of couples or can identify their strength and reinforcement areas. Short form of the questionnaire is composed of 47 questions and 12 subscales. Scoring is based on Likert scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) and in questions (4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47) the scoring is reverse. A high score on the questionnaire is a sign of dissatisfaction and a low score indicates satisfaction with marital relationship. Minimum and maximum scores are 47 and 235, respectively. Final score on the whole questionnaire is the score the subject achieves from it (Ebadatpour, 2000). In the original form of ENRICH questionnaire, Olson *et al.* (1989) reported the reliability to be 0.92 by alpha coefficient method. Soleymanian (1994) reported the value of 0.95 for the reliability through calculating alpha coefficient (Ebadatpour, 2000). Sanaee (2000) have examined reliability of the questionnaire and stated that ENRICH questionnaire's correlation coefficient has been reported with family satisfaction scales of 0.41 to 0.60 and life satisfaction scales of 0.32 to 0.41 which demonstrates the validity of the structure (Teymouri, 2004). All subscales of ENRICH questionnaire distinguish satisfied couples from unsatisfied ones and this fact indicates that the questionnaire has good criterion-related validity. Also, its content-related validity has been studied and approved by a group of psychologist professors (Mirkheshti, 1996).

In this research, descriptive and inferential statistics methods were used to analyze data. In descriptive statistics, frequency, graph, mean, and standard deviation will be utilized and we will use one-way covariance analysis (ANCOVA), while observing the assumptions, in inferential statistics. The whole statistical analysis was done by the statistical software SPSS 20.

FINDINGS

Main hypothesis: Anger management training affects the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary school students' mothers. Based on the results obtained from the statistical analysis, main hypothesis of the present study in respect of effectiveness of anger management training on the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary students' mothers was confirmed. It means that anger management training enhances the marital satisfaction of these mothers.

General structure of anger management training sessions.

Session	Title	Content
1	Introduction, expression and definitions of anger and its consequences	Introducing group members, introducing the program and stating the general objective of anger management training and the importance of participating in it. Group rules and general expectations of the program, definition of anger and its synonyms. Explaining the concept of anger and related concepts and distinguishing them. Discussing and recognizing the adverse consequences of uncontrolled anger.
2	Anger motives and common responses of personal patterns of anger experience and behavior	Explaining "anger initiators" or "anger motivating factors" concepts with suitable examples and confronting situations. Examining the advantages and potential harms of anger in a simple sense. Studying and identifying physical signs, thoughts and behaviors usually being experienced during anger excitement. Reporting anger events by group members in order to study the learning rate of members and each member's greater understanding of their own anger patterns. In this regard, each group member expresses their anger-related events and experience, explains their own personal anger patterns, reports the behavior he or she usually shows while being angry, and describes general body changes during anger excitement.
3	Monitoring the alarming signs of anger, relaxation and decreasing the tension.	In this session, two states of relaxation and body tension and the sensation representing these states are compared and their differences are simply put. Exercises related to the relaxation strategy are performed in detail.
4	Adopting a perspective, phenomenological perception of motives and anger experience	Concepts of "perspective adopting" and "phenomenological perception of motives" are simply put. The role of personal perception of situations in motivation for and intensification of anger is explained referring to some proper examples.
5	The role of negative thoughts in anger experience, changing the negative thoughts and anger control.	The role of negative self-reports and useless thoughts in anger experience and the behavior originating from it is explained. Concept of provoking thoughts, beliefs and expectations is explained with some suitable examples mentioned. A list of useful and constructive thoughts, beliefs and expectations will be provided in respect of anger management. Mutual effects of negative thoughts and anger experience are explained with proper examples. A list of useful thoughts is constructed as suitable alternatives for negative thoughts with cooperation of group members. Through role playing and scene making, ways of opposing negative thoughts are exercised.
6	Self-ordering to control the anger Training courage and communication skills	The concept of "self-ordering" will be defined while referring to some relevant examples. It is exercised to provide suitable reminders in order to use in different situations. Additionally, individuals will be instructed to use diverting their attention away from provoking situations and challenging their thoughts and decisions. Concept of "courage" is defined and the importance of applying courageous behavior (frank and decisive behavior) will be simply explained. Then, courage is compared to passiveness and aggression and characteristics of each of these three kinds of behavior will be described. The role of effective communication skills, particularly courage, in anger management will be explained. Presentation of courage through role playing by every member.
7	Training problem solving strategies	Training "problem solving" strategy will be explained by mentioning its components (problem, solutions, choices and outcomes). The importance and necessity of using "problem solving" strategy in the context of anger management will be explained with some relevant examples mentioned. Problem solving strategy will be exercised by reading or listening to real or imaginary events in order to deepen the learning.
8	Training immunization against stresses of controlling the anger.	Application of "Training immunization against stresses of anger control" technique is simply put. How to use "imaginative confrontation and response inhibition" is illustrated referring to its stages. A hierarchy of potential provoking situations is provided by collaboration with group members.

According to the findings obtained from Table 1, since the significance level calculated is smaller than the alpha of 0.05, F is significant ($F_{(1,27)} = 284.433$; $p < 0.0005$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.913$). Thus, it may be stated that anger management training technique has been

effective in marital satisfaction. Additionally, the trace value obtained in this study is 0.913. This indicates that 91% of the difference in posttest scores of marital satisfaction is related to the effectiveness of anger management training.

Table 1: Results of covariance analysis of the influence of anger management training on marital satisfaction.

Dependent variable	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	sig	Eta value	Trace
Marital satisfaction	49979.862	1	49979.862	284.433	0.000	0.913	
Error	4744.367	27	175.717				

Table 2: Results of follow-up test for marital satisfaction variable (a comparison of means).

Groups	Means' difference	Standard deviation	sig	95% confidence interval	
				Lower limit	Upper limit
Anger management and control	-82.124	4.869	0.000	-92.115	-72.132

Findings of Table 2 confirm that there is a -82.124 difference between mean marital satisfaction of anger management group and control group which is statistically significant ($p < 0.0005$). Therefore, second hypothesis of this study that "Anger management training affects marital satisfaction of mothers with elementary school aged daughters" was approved. Posttest means of the marital satisfaction variable in anger management test group are given in Graph 1 in order for comparison.

Graph 1: Graph related to posttest means of marital satisfaction variable in two test and control groups

Graph 1 is related to posttest scores of marital satisfaction variable in two test and control groups, meaning that applying the anger management training in the test group has led to increased posttest mean scores of marital satisfaction variable, whereas in the control group (without anger management training) there was no change in posttest mean scores of marital satisfaction. This indicates that anger management training leads to improved marital satisfaction of female elementary students' mothers.

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

Main hypothesis: Anger management training influences the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary school students' mothers. Based on the results obtained from the statistical analysis, main hypothesis of the present study in respect of

effectiveness of anger management training on the quality of marital satisfaction of female elementary students' mothers was confirmed. It means that anger management training enhances the marital satisfaction of these mothers. According to the findings obtained from Table 1, since the significance level calculated is smaller than the alpha of 0.05, F is significant ($F_{(1,27)} = 284.433$; $p < 0.0005$; partial $\eta^2 = 0.913$). Thus, it may be stated that anger management training technique has been effective in marital satisfaction. Additionally, the trace value obtained in this study is 0.913. This indicates that 91% of the difference in posttest scores of marital satisfaction is related to the effectiveness of anger management training. This finding conforms to findings of Ahadi (2011), Sepah Mansour (2006), Pournaghash Tehrani (2007), Bordbar (2007), Tweeng, Campel, and Foster (2009), Eden *et al.* (2012), Allison (2008), and Gerick and Fincham (2008). In explanation of this hypothesis it can be said that because communication skills, problem solving, and correct ways to deal with violence were taught to subjects in training sessions on anger management, cognitive-behavioral patterns such as the ability to communicate verbally in an effective manner, controlling impulses, the ability to change aggressive impulses into milder behavior through the situation and environment, and helping women undergoing training identify and replace more positive and favorable consequences instead of non-aggressive behavior were strengthened.

Furthermore, results suggest the point that subjects have learned the applied intervention under training and the change in their violent behavior stems from the change in anger management skills and the ability to control their impulses. Therefore, it seems logical that anger management training can reduce women's verbal and nonverbal violent behavior towards members. Also, since decreased violent behavior helps communication patterns with being desirable, conditions for the emergence of emotions between spouses will be facilitated and spouses may even be encouraged to decide on forming new behavioral patterns. Given the fact that expression correction technique, problem solving skills, and aggressive state formation were instructed to subjects in the framework of anger management skills, they are likely to help strengthen the ability to control anger and improve marital satisfaction. Behavioral coping skills are related to effectively expressing emotions, expressiveness, and problem solving. In behavioral interventions people are taught to recognize their internal and external anger signs and then, while their excitement is kept balanced by them, they express that anger in a non-hostile way or use it in order to reinforce the problem-solving action. Focus on problems and problem-solving goals prevents accumulation of anger and excessive aggressive reactions through using thought as a buffer between impulse and action. In general, the study showed that training anger management skills results in a decrease in women's violent behavior towards their husbands and, on the other hand, men exhibit a better response to the appropriate behavior. As a result, there will be more suitable interactions between couples and increased marital satisfaction.

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