

## Investigating the relationship between self-disclosure and difficulty in emotion regulation among female students of Tehran Azad University

Zarin Khat T.<sup>1\*</sup>

### Abstract:

**Introduction:** Today, due to the very important role that emotions have in human life, their expression and disclosure can bring many benefits to people. So, this article aims to investigate the psychometric properties of the self-disclosure scale and its relationship with the difficulty in regulating the emotions of female students of Azad University of Tehran,

**Research Methods:** This descriptive-correlation study was conducted. The statistical population includes all female students of Azad Universities in Tehran who were studying in the academic year of 1402-1401, and the sample size was considered equal to 500 people. Random and multi-stage cluster were selected. The research tools included Gerrard's self-disclosure questionnaire (1974) and Goetz and Rothmer's (2004) difficulty in emotion regulation questionnaire were used. In order to check the validity of the mentioned questionnaires, construct and content validity were used. Content validity was confirmed by professors and also a number of experts, and confirmatory factor analysis was used to check construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha index was used to measure construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was more than 0.7, which indicates reliability. It was questionnaires. The data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially through SPSS software.

**Findings:** The results show that the significance level of the self-disclosure variable (0.000) is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant correlation between the self-disclosure variable and the difficulty in regulating students' emotions

**Conclusion:** The results of data analysis showed; According to female students of Azad universities in Tehran, there is a positive and direct relationship between self-disclosure and difficulty in regulating students' emotions.

**Keywords:** Difficulty in emotion regulation, female students, Self-disclosure scale

Received: 26/May/ 2023

Accepted: 5/July/2023

**Citation:** Zarin Khat T. Examining the psychometric properties of the self-disclosure scale and its relationship with difficulty in regulating the excitement of female students of Tehran Azad University, Family and health, 2023; 13(1): 121-130

<sup>1</sup>- Master's degree in psychology - assessment and measurement, Department of Psychology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran. Iran. Corresponding author, [t.zarrinlhat@gmail.com](mailto:t.zarrinlhat@gmail.com) ORCID: 0000-0003-3359-9139

## Introduction:

Throughout their lives, people experience many positive and negative emotions such as anger, peace, jealousy, anxiety and fear. Emotions play a very important role in human life; They add color and smell to life and have positive and constructive functions in cases such as regulating relationships. At the same time, negative experiences cause negative emotions to be experienced with great intensity. People cannot avoid these emotions forever and it is necessary to be able to manage negative emotions in order to have a healthy life.

The increasing importance of emotions in psychological literature has caused therapeutic approaches in the etiology and treatment of psychological disorders to pay more attention to the emotion component. So that new treatments such as emotion-focused therapy emerged, which specifically focused on emotion, and also during recent decades, conventional cognitive-behavioral therapies that emphasized cognition and behavior more in formulations and interventions. They assigned an important role to excitement. The importance of emotion has been manifested in other interventions such as acceptance and commitment therapy (2), emotional schema therapy (3), cognitive therapy based on mindfulness (4) and stress reduction based on mindfulness (5, 6).

Self-disclosure is a gradual process during which people usually reveal their thoughts and feelings in interaction with others. The process of self-disclosure refers to the methods by which people reveal the details of their lives to others and give information about themselves to others; therefore, disclosure occurs when a person knowingly and intentionally gives information about himself to another person that he is generally unaware of. Self-disclosure is one of the most important features of psychological functioning and is a sign of personal health (7).

From the perspective of the cognitive process (8), talking about stressful thoughts and feelings with a reliable and expert person reduces the feeling of sadness and tension. The therapeutic value of disclosure can be seen in many psychological fields. There is evidence that revealing and expressing painful experiences and feelings causes biological changes. Extensive studies have shown that real exposure and touching of feelings and emotions leads to the coordination of the two hemispheres of the brain (9), establishing a link between cognitive and emotional processes (10), improving the functioning of the immune system, autonomic nerves, and physical and mental health (11). to be According to the conducted research, disclosure is effective not only in treating many disorders, but also in reducing the severity of their negative effects. Also, self-disclosure causes sincere and supportive social contact (12), increases self-esteem, reduces stress and adapts to the environment. On the contrary, non-disclosure has many negative effects. For example, one of the variables that may cause a delay in people receiving medical and psychological care is non-disclosure (13,14).

One of the most important processes in the formation of a sincere relationship is self-disclosure; It means disclosing private and confidential information that cannot be obtained otherwise. Self-disclosure is a gradual process, people usually do not reveal their innermost and most private thoughts and feelings in their first encounter with others. This phenomenon is also a reciprocal flow; That is, the two sides of the relationship reveal their inner feelings and realities to each other, and if one of them withdraws, the flow of self-disclosure stops (15).

<https://sanad.iau.ir/Journal/fhj/Article/1213763>, D.O.R. 20.1001.1.23223065.1402.13.1.11.8

Self-disclosure includes the process of revealing a person's thoughts, inner feelings and previous experiences to another person. Exchanging internal information related to oneself is considered the main process through which the relationship between people expands, also self-disclosure is an important part of interpersonal relationships and it is necessary to pay attention to it in order to understand marital performance. (16). Self-disclosure not only shows compatibility in relationships, but it is necessary to achieve mental health and stability of close relationships with others, which means that with high self-disclosure, we can have more compatibility and less worry about our relationship with others (17).

But despite the therapeutic importance of emotional disclosure and its many positive biological and psychological effects, researches show that many people who suffer from negative moods do not disclose immediately and may not express it for years. (18) and this increases their psychological distress. Factors affect the level of disclosure and sometimes prevent it from progressing; Demographic factors such as gender and age, socio-cultural factors, negative reaction of others, worry, shame and guilt, self-criticism and blame are among the factors that cause delay in disclosure (19).

One of the important foundations of forming intimacy is self-disclosure, and without it, no intimate relationship can take shape. Self-disclosure in relationships should be appropriate and reciprocal self-examination tied to analysis and cost and reward. Public self-disclosure occurs at the beginning and development of a relationship with a person, and intimate self-disclosure occurs later in the process of further developing the relationship (20).

Self-disclosure is the expression of personal information and the ability to express one's thoughts, feelings and opinions to another person, which leads to close relationships between people. According to the theory of social influence, the purpose of self-disclosure is to gain more knowledge about people (21, 22). There are four types of self-disclosure, including emotional, evaluation, informational, and instrumental, among which, emotional self-disclosure has a higher psychological importance and it means that a person expresses his deepest emotional experiences verbally or in writing to others or himself. (23) Emotional self-disclosure as one of the processes of change in therapy has a long history. This concept was mentioned for the first time under the title of psychological refinement in Aristotle's writings, and he believed that one of the best ways to relieve pain is to arouse emotions through dramatic scenes (24).

Alidousti et al.(26) conducted a research with the aim of "Effectiveness of emotion regulation training based on the Gross model on emotion regulation, anxiety and depression of mothers with mentally retarded children" and concluded that the emotion regulation and depression scores of experimental group subjects in Compared with the control group in the post-test stage, it was significantly lower. From the findings, it can be concluded that emotion regulation training is a suitable way to improve emotion regulation and reduce anxiety and depression of mentally retarded mothers, and these trainings can be used as an intervention. It is based on empirical evidence to be used in psychological clinics.

Eskandari and Aryapuran (27) conducted a research with the aim of the effectiveness of training based on cognitive behavioral interventions on marital self-disclosure of couples. The results showed that cognitive-behavioral therapy significantly increases couples' self-disclosure. Also, the

results showed that cognitive-behavioral therapy had an effect on increasing relational, financial, sexual, and imbalance self-disclosure, but the effect of gender and the interactive effect of cognitive-behavioral therapy Behavior and gender were not significant on couples' self-disclosure and its dimensions. Based on the results obtained, training based on cognitive-behavioral interventions can be used to adjust couples' marital problems, including low disclosure.

Samavatian (28), a research titled self-disclosure in social networks; Study virtual: Hamadan city did. This research is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-survey based on data collection method and correlational in terms of data analysis method. The results showed that in self-disclosure, the sharing of images component explains 95%, individual characteristics and the expression of beliefs explain 78% and 76% of this variable, respectively. Also, significant relationships were found between age, gender, education and self-disclosure. Based on this, in Hamadan city, men have more self-disclosure than women. As people get older, they tend to disclose their information less, and the higher the level of education, the more self-disclosure occurs.

Sangao and Twichapong (29) conducted a study called psychometric self-disclosure scale through online social network (Facebook). A sample of 300 university students in Thailand completed online questionnaires. Using exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, its psychometric properties were investigated. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis showed that eighteen items were maintained with the five-factor structure of self-disclosure through online social networks scale, which include: social capital, trust, safety, social image and privacy. The psychometric properties of the self-disclosure scale support its feasibility as a research scale for measuring self-disclosure through an online social network (Facebook).

Wang et al. (30) conducted a study on the mediating role of self-disclosure and the moderating role of gender and social anxiety in the relationship between Chinese adolescents' online communication and their real-world social relationships. The results show that for boys and adolescent boys with high social anxiety, online communication can explain more predictive power in users' self-disclosure, and this suggests that gender and social anxiety moderate the relationship between online communication and online self-disclosure. . Wills and Grotz (31), investigated the relationship between trust and self-disclosure. The results showed that a high level of trust was related to a tendency to deliberate self-disclosure and a high level of self-disclosure.

Not having the skill of self-disclosure and neglecting its relationship with the difficulty in regulating students' emotions causes people to live a sad life with anxiety and depression. Having the social skill of self-disclosure helps students meet good people, get the job they want, and succeed in their studies, work, and relationships. The review of theoretical foundations and research related to self-disclosure and difficulty in emotional regulation shows that the psychometric properties of the self-disclosure scale among Azad University students have not been conducted so far, and the relationship between self-disclosure and difficulty in emotion regulation has not been investigated so far. Therefore, according to the stated content, this research seeks to answer the question, what is the relationship between self-disclosure and the difficulty in regulating emotion in female students of Azad University of Tehran?

**Research method:**

The current research was carried out using a descriptive method. The statistical population includes all female students of Azad universities in Tehran who were employed in the academic year of 1400, which is a total of 500 people as a sample using a random method and multi-cluster sampling. They were selected step by step. The research tools included Gerrard's self-disclosure questionnaire (32) and Goetz and Rothmer's (33) difficulty in emotion regulation questionnaire were used. In order to check the validity of the mentioned questionnaires, construct and content validity were used. Content validity was confirmed by professors and also a number of experts, and confirmatory factor analysis was used to check construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha index was used to measure construct validity, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was more than 0.7, which indicates reliability. Questionnaires. The data was analyzed descriptively and inferentially through SPSS software.

**Findings:**

The result of examining the correlation between self-disclosure and difficulty in emotion regulation is given in the table 1.

**Table (1):** Examining the correlation between self-disclosure and difficulty in emotion regulation

Model	The correlation coefficient	The coefficient of determination	Adjusted coefficient of determination	Dorbin of Watson
1	0.710	0.504	0.503	1.656
<b>Significance level = 0.000</b>				
<b>Predictor variables: self-disclosure</b>				
<b>Dependent variable: difficulty in emotion regulation</b>				

According to Table 1, it can be seen that the significance level of self-disclosure variable (0.000) is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant correlation between the self-disclosure variable and the difficulty in regulating students' emotions. Considering the positivity of the coefficient (correlation), it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the variable of self-disclosure and the difficulty in regulating emotions. According to the fact that the value obtained for the Watson camera statistic is 1.656 and it is in the standard interval of 1.5 to 2.5, the assumption of no correlation between the errors is not rejected, so it can be said that the assumption of independence of errors is confirmed and it can be Regression was used, so it can be said: self-disclosure has a significant correlation with difficulty in regulating emotions with a correlation coefficient of 71.00%.

**Discussion and conclusion:**

The goal of any research is to achieve results through which specific goals can be achieved. In addition, it should be noted that these results can provide a foundation for other researches and

researchers. This research, like other researches, seeks to achieve goals and results. It should be noted that what is very important is the interpretation of the research results. Every researcher can provide an index for other researches and researchers by providing valuable suggestions. Therefore, the researcher should interpret and interpret and provide practical suggestions based on the results of the analysis. In fact, one of the important parts of research that can be a way to turn ideas into action for success in the future is a correct conclusion and relevant and suitable suggestions. Providing results that are based on correct analysis can lead to the improvement of the conditions in the field under investigation.

The significance level of the self-disclosure variable (0.000) is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant correlation between the self-disclosure variable and the difficulty in regulating students' emotions. Considering the positiveness of the coefficient (B), it can be said that there is a significant relationship between the self-disclosure variable and the difficulty in regulating emotions. Therefore, we can say: self-disclosure has a significant correlation with difficulty in regulating emotions with a coefficient of 0.71. Based on the obtained results, by improving self-disclosure skills among female students in Tehran, emotion regulation control is improved in them. Therefore, acquiring self-disclosure skills among the female students of Azad University of Tehran can help them a lot in maintaining and controlling emotions and feelings. In a comparative approach, the obtained results are in line with the findings of Ahmedbeigi (34) in a study titled the role of emotional expression and self-disclosure in social anxiety with regard to the mediator role of emotional dysregulation, who found that there is a significant relationship between self-disclosure and emotion regulation.

Considering the existence of a relationship between the self-disclosure scale and the difficulty in regulating the emotions of female students of Azad University of Tehran, therefore, using the self-disclosure scale can be a solution to reduce the difficulty in regulating the emotions of students. It is suggested that the relevant authorities and practitioners use the self-disclosure scale used in this research to identify educational strategies regarding the pathology and prevention of injuries caused by self-disclosure among female students in Tehran. It is suggested to conduct skill-building workshops to improve self-disclosure and reduce some mood disorders in female students in Tehran.

### **Research limitations:**

1- This research was conducted on female students of Tehran Azad Universities (Tehran Azad University and Yadgar Imam Azad University) and therefore the results obtained are applicable to this community and its generalization to other communities, gender, etc. It is difficult and should be done with caution.


2- The non-cooperation of some officials of Azad University in Tehran caused the researcher to have access to a limited number of units of Azad University in Tehran.

Therefore, it is suggested that this research be conducted in other universities of Iran and among the statistical population of male students and its results be compared with the results of the present research. And if possible, this research should be done in other free universities of Tehran to increase the generalizability of the results.

**References:**

- 1- Dunham GD. Emotional Skill Falnes and Marital Satisfaction Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Okran, 2008; 34(2): 126- 32.
- 2- Bai Z., Luo S., Zhang L., Wu S., Chi I. Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) to reduce depression: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 2020 Jan 1; 260:728-37. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.09.040>
- 3- Dado H., Panzeri M., Caponcello D., Carmelita A., Grecucci A. Schema therapy for emotional dysregulation in personality disorders: A review. *Current opinion in psychiatry*. 2018 Jan 1; 31(1):43-9. DOI:[10.1097/YCO.0000000000000380](https://doi.org/10.1097/YCO.0000000000000380)
- 4- Singh AP., Sharma J. Effect of Mindfulness based Cognitive Therapy on Emotional well-being among young adults. *Buddhist Approach to Harmonious Families, Healthcare and Sustainable Societies*. 2019 Apr 16:441. <https://www.undv2019vietnam.com/Subtheme-02/en/29.pdf>
- 5- Zhang JY., Cui YX., Zhou YQ., Li YL. Effects of mindfulness-based stress reduction on prenatal stress, anxiety and depression. *Psychology, health & medicine*. 2019 Jan 2; 24(1):51-8, DOI:[10.1080/13548506.2018.1468028](https://doi.org/10.1080/13548506.2018.1468028)
- 6- Butler RM., Boden MT., Olino TM., Morrison AS., Goldin PR., Gross J.J., Heimberg RG. Emotional clarity and attention to emotions in cognitive behavioral group therapy and mindfulness-based stress reduction for social anxiety disorder. *Journal of anxiety disorders*. 2018 Apr 1; 55:31-8. DOI:[10.1016/j.janxdis.2018.03.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2018.03.003)
- 7- Ignatius E., Kokkonen M. Factors contributing to verbal self-disclosure. *Nordic Psychology*. 2007 Jan 1; 59(4):362-91, <https://doi.org/10.1027/1901-2276.59.4.362>
- 8- Lepore SJ., Ragan JD., Jones S. Talking facilitates cognitive–emotional processes of adaptation to an acute stressor. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 2000 Mar; 78(3):499. DOI:[10.1037/0022-3514.78.3.499](https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.78.3.499)
- 9- Gaillard JM. Implications of brain lateralization for intensive short-term dynamic psychotherapy. *International Journal of Intensive Short-Term Dynamic Psychotherapy*. 2000 Sep; 14(3):79-97.
- 10- Bucci W. The power of the narrative: A multiple code account. In J. W. Pennebaker (Ed.), *Emotion, disclosure, & health*. American Psychological Association 1995: 93-122 <https://doi.org/10.1037/10182-005>
- 11- Pennebaker JW. Opening up: The healing power of expressing emotions. Guilford Press; 1997 Aug 8.
- 12- Schönbucher V., Maier T., Mohler-Kuo M., Schnyder U., Landolt MA. Disclosure of child sexual abuse by adolescents: A qualitative in-depth study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. 2012 Nov; 27(17):3486-513, DOI:[10.1177/0886260512445380](https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260512445380)
- 13- Lev-Wiesel R., First M. Willingness to disclose child maltreatment: CSA vs. other forms of child abuse in relation to gender. *Child abuse & neglect*. 2018 May 1; 79:183-91. DOI: [10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.02.010)
- 14- Beckett H., Pearce JJ., Wager NM. Understanding children's non-disclosure of child sexual assault: implications for assisting parents and teachers to become effective guardians. *Safer Communities*. 2015 Jan: 12.

- 15- Dwyer D. Psychology of interpersonal relations (translated by Ismail Biyabangard and Ali Nemati, 2002), Tehran, Mehraban Institute publishing; 2000
- 16- Waring E.M., Holden R.R., Wesly S. Development of the marital self-disclosure questionnaire. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 1998 54(6), 817-824, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1097-4679\(199810\)54:6<817::AID-JCLP9>3.0.CO;2-D](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4679(199810)54:6<817::AID-JCLP9>3.0.CO;2-D)
- 17- Schumm W.R., Figley C.R., Fuhs N.N. Predicting self-disclosure anxiety in the marital relationship. Journal of Psychology, 1981; 107: 273-279.
- 18- Romano E., Moorman J., Ressel M., Lyons J. Men with childhood sexual abuse histories: Disclosure experiences and links with mental health. Child abuse & neglect. 2019 Mar 1; 89:212-24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2018.12.010>
- 19- Lemaigre C., Taylor EP., Gittoes C. Barriers and facilitators to disclosing sexual abuse in childhood and adolescence: A systematic review. Child Abuse & Neglect. 2017 Aug 1; 70:39-52. DOI:[10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.009](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.05.009)
- 20- Aazami Y., Sohrabi F., Borjal A., Chopan H. The effectiveness of teaching emotion regulation based on gross model in reducing impulsivity in drug-dependent people. research on addiction, 2014;8(30): 127-141. URL: <http://etiadpajohi.ir/article-1-648-en.html> (In Persian).
- 21- AlKhazaleh Z., Younes M.B. The relationship between self-Disclosure and management of marital conflict among a sample of educational Zarqa first directorate teachers in Jordan. European Journal of Social Sciences, 2015; 47(4): 387-398.
- 22- AlKhazaleh Z., Younes M.B. The relationship between self-Disclosure and management of marital conflict among a sample of educational Zarqa first directorate teachers in Jordan. European Journal of Social Sciences, 2015; 47(4): 387-398.
- 23- Pennebaker J.W., Chung C.K. Expressive writing, emotional upheavals, and health. Foundations of health psychology; 2007
- 24- Prochaska JO, Norcross JC. Systems of psychotherapy: A trans theoretical analysis. Oxford University Press; 2018 Feb 1.
- 25- Saidi N., Lotfi M., Ghahari Sh., Pirmoradi M.R. (1400). A comparative study of emotion regulation patterns in different age decades, Journal of Cognitive Psychology and Psychiatry, 2021; 8(1): 61-73. Doi: [10.32598/shenakht.8.1.61](https://doi.org/10.32598/shenakht.8.1.61)
- 26- Alidosti F., Jangi F., Shujai Far Sh., In a research aimed at "Effectiveness of emotion regulation training based on the Gross model on emotion regulation, anxiety and depression of mothers with mentally retarded children", Family Psychology Quarterly, 2019; 7(1): 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.52547/ijfp.7.1.69>
- 27- Eskandari A., Aryapouran S. The effectiveness of training based on cognitive-behavioral interventions on couples' marital self-disclosure, Psychological Studies Quarterly, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Al-Zahra University, 2018; 15(2): 127-143.
- 28- Samavatian A. Examining self-disclosure in social networks; Study virtual: Hamadan city. Hamedan Police Science Quarterly, 2017; 5(16): 1-28. <https://ensani.ir/file/download/article/1614165771-10371-99-90.pdf>

<https://sanad.iau.ir/Journal/fhj/Article/1213763>, D.O.R. 20.1001.1.23223065.1402.13.1.11.8 

- 29- Sangkeaw S., Tevichapong P. Scale Development of Self-Disclosure Through Online Social Network (Facebook). Research gate, 2015; 1(1): 1-14. DOI:[10.14456/itjlp.2015.20](https://doi.org/10.14456/itjlp.2015.20)
- 30- Wang J.L., Jackson L.A., Zhang D.J. The mediator role of self-disclosure and moderator roles of gender and social anxiety in the relationship between Chinese adolescents' online communication and their real-world social relationships. Computers in Human Behavior, 2011; 27(6): 2161-2168. DOI:[10.1016/j.chb.2011.06.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.06.010)
- 31- Wheelless L.R., Grotz J. The measurement of trust and its relationship to self-disclosure. Human Communication Research, 2006; 3(3): 250-257. [doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00523.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00523.x)
- 32- Saadati Shamir A., Gholami F. Determining the factor structure of the Emotional Self-Disclosure Scale (ESDS) in married students. The scientific-research quarterly of the educational research journal. 2013;10(41): 59-76. [https://edu.bojnourd.iau.ir/article\\_519878.html](https://edu.bojnourd.iau.ir/article_519878.html)
- 33- Goleman D. Working with Emotional intelligence, Bloomsbury Publishing, London; 1998
- 34- Ahmadbeigi N.. The role of emotional expressiveness and self-disclosure in social anxiety regarding the mediating role of emotional dysregulation. Master thesis of Tabriz University. Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, 2014