

Original research

The effectiveness of marital satisfaction intervention protocol on adherence to obligations: (Case Study: married female students of Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch)

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Abstract:

Introduction: Today, with the occurrence of cultural, social, and technological changes, marital relations, including adherence to the obligations of the couple, have undergone ups and downs that sometimes threaten the family basis. So, this research aimed to investigate the effectiveness of marital satisfaction intervention protocol (constructed by the researcher) on adherence to obligations.

Research Method: The research method was a clinical trial study and a pre-test and post-test design with a control group was used. The statistical population of the research consisted of married female students of Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, who had been married for at least 5 years. The research sample was selected based on Cohen's sample size estimation table and simple random sampling method (15 people in each group). The research tool was the Marital Intimacy Questionnaire of Vondenbroek and Bertman. The method of statistical analysis of the data was the univariate covariance test and the t-test of two independent samples.

Findings: The findings indicated that the variable of "Adherence to Commitments", the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slope was not established, so the pre-test scores were subtracted from the post-test scores and the average difference was calculated in the groups using the t-test of two independent samples was compared. Between the differences in the variable of "adherence to obligations" in the test group respectively (4.733) and the control group (0.133) there was a significant difference and the average difference of agreement between couples in the test group was significantly greater than the average it was in the control group, so the effectiveness of the intervention protocol on the variable was confirmed.

Conclusion: The results of this research can be used in family reinforcement programs in student counseling centers.

Keywords: adherence to commitments, intervention protocol, indigenous, marital satisfaction, the researcher – constructed

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Introduction:

Based on existing theoretical foundations, a "healthy family" is conceptualized with six components: intimacy and empathy, family members' independence, satisfaction, meeting family members' needs, family cohesion, and the prevalence of ethical values within the family (1). Societies have always sought ways to increase marital life satisfaction and resolve issues related to couples and marital life. Numerous studies on marital life and mental health, which is itself a determining factor in the level of life satisfaction, have shown that there is a relationship between these two variables (2). Dimensions of family communication patterns (constructive-interacting, demanding/withdrawing, and avoiding) as well as sexual satisfaction significantly predict marital commitment (3). In recent years, due to the prevalence of divorce among young people, a kind of epidemic of family breakdown and weakening of bonds has been created, leading to emotional separation between couples (4). Therefore, intervening to increase marital satisfaction and adherence to marital commitments, given its importance in the health and well-being of couples, is increasingly being raised as a research and investigation issue. Another important issue that requires research is that despite the existence of some intervention protocols in marital life, such as the marital enrichment protocol, cognitive-behavioral couple therapy protocol, and group cognitive-behavioral couple therapy protocol by Baucom and Epstein¹ (2002), the effectiveness of a native intervention protocol tailored to the culture of Iranian families has not yet been investigated, and the existing research gap in this regard further emphasizes the importance and necessity of this research. Thus, this research seeks to answer the question of whether a researcher-developed marital satisfaction intervention protocol is effective on the adherence to marital commitments of married female students. Providing appropriate solutions to strengthen and increase adherence to marital commitments of married female students at Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, and Tehran, based on the findings is also the applied goal of the research.

Research Method:

This study employed a quantitative, quasi-experimental design with a pre-test and post-test control group to investigate the effectiveness of a marital satisfaction intervention protocol on the marital commitment of married female students at Azad University, Central Tehran Branch. The population of this study comprised all married female undergraduate students at Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, in the academic year 2023-2024, who had been married for at least five years. To estimate the sample size, Cohen's power analysis table was used (at a significance level of 0.05, confidence interval of 95%, and maximum variance). Simple random sampling was employed. All members of the population were listed, and then individuals were randomly selected according to the sample size and randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group (15 participants in each group). Data was analyzed using SPSS software. Inferential data analysis involved a test of significant differences. A univariate analysis of covariance and an independent-samples t-test were used to compare the marital commitment variable in the pre-test and post-test stages between the experimental and control groups. In this study, the 56-item Marital Intimacy Questionnaire developed by Stephan Vandon Brouck & Hanss Bertommen in 1995 was used. This questionnaire includes five dimensions, one of which is marital commitment. The validity and reliability of the Marital Intimacy

¹ - Baucom, D. H & Epstein, N.

Questionnaire have been established based on the research of Vandon Brouck and Bertommen, as well as studies by Akbari and Amiri in Iran, using construct validity, internal consistency of items, and Cronbach's alpha, which was found to be above 0.7. Based on the results of a previous study conducted by the researcher, the marital satisfaction intervention protocol was implemented in 10 sessions (60-90 minutes each), consisting of four components: cognitive-behavioral strategies, emotion-focused strategies, mindfulness strategies, and communication intervention strategies.

Findings:

Regarding the commitment variable, the assumption of homogeneity of regression slopes was not met. Therefore, pre-test scores were subtracted from post-test scores, and the resulting mean differences were compared between groups. This comparison was conducted using an independent samples t-test, and the results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of the Independent Samples t-test for the Difference in Commitment Scores between Post-test and Pre-test

Variable	Group	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-value	P-value
Difference in commitment scores between pre-test and post-test	Control	0.133	1.302	- 2.933	0.010
	Experimental	4.733	5.934		

As shown in the table above, for the commitment variable, the significance level is 0.010, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the difference in commitment scores in the control and experimental groups, confirming the effectiveness of the intervention protocol on commitment. Furthermore, examining Table 5 more closely, it can be seen that the mean of the experimental group is 4.733, which is higher than the mean of the control group with a value of 0.133. Therefore, it can be said that the mean difference in commitment scores in the experimental group is significantly greater than the mean difference in the control group.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The findings revealed the effectiveness of the developed intervention protocol on the variable of commitment adherence. These findings align with the results of previous researches by Azizi and Haji Alizadeh (5) on "The relationship between emotional abuse and marital satisfaction: The mediating role of marital disenchantment in women and men," Dessyrianti and Setiawan (6) titled "Trust and communication as predictors of marital intimacy in working couples," Dobrowolska et al. (7), titled "Perspectives on marital satisfaction," DiMaggio (8) (2020) on "Factors contributing to marital satisfaction," Al-darmaki et al. (9) on "Development and validation of a culturally-bound scale of marital satisfaction," and Mohammadi (10) titled "An investigation of the pattern of intimate relationships between spouses." It is recommended that the results of this research be utilized in student counseling centers as a skills-enhancement program aimed at improving levels of adherence to marital commitments.

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