

Relationship between Communication Skills and Effective Divorce in Unsatisfied Couples: A Communicational Plan and Background Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The present study was considered aimed to investigate the relationship between communication skills and affective divorce in unsatisfied couples in Hamedan city. **Methods:** The research method was descriptive from correlational type. The statistical population of the study was including all unsatisfied couples referring to counseling centers in Hamedan city in 2016-2017. A sample of 80 unsatisfied couples was selected using available sampling method. Data were collected using communication skills questionnaire of Quindom and Gatman's affective divorce. Pearson correlation method was used to analyze the data. **Results:** The results showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between the scales of communication and auditory skill, the ability to receive and send messages, insights on the communication process and the relationship with determinism with affective divorce in couples. **Discussion and Conclusion:** According to the results, it can be said that communicational skills can predict affective divorce in couples and are among the factors affecting the level of affective divorce in couples.

Keywords: Conflict, Affective divorce, Communication skills

One of the common problems in the family is marital conflict. The process of conflict is created when one of the parties perceives that the other party suppresses his/her favorite issues (Fincham et al, 2004). From a systemic perspective, most couples are confronted since each one tries to force the other to change. But this change is often accompanied by hatred, which will later be expressed explicitly or in hidden (Jonynienè and Kern, 2012). The most important conflict-causing damage is divorce; experts believe that the process of divorce in most cases involves the following path: minor differences, repeated minor differences and becoming serious, the separation or unwillingness of one of the couples to the other party, the

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couples' fatigue from violence and conflict, affective divorce and, finally, legal divorce (Bastani, Golzari and Roshani, 2011).

Meanwhile, affective divorce is a hidden and unregistered phenomenon in the lives of many couples; although the husband and wife are not formally separated, but continue to live with each other in the same home without any feeling and affection (Beach & Whisman, 2012). In other words, affective divorce is another form of divorce and is a very important phenomenon that is not registered anywhere. This type of divorce relates to families who decide for reasons such as family-based traditions or inappropriate beliefs and negative attitudes toward divorced women, fear and concern for loneliness, loss of children, or inability to meet life's needs, decide to live with their spouse under one roof with oblige (Safaeirad and Varastehfar, 2012).

Affective divorce can have various causes: including excessive work and employment, economic and financial problems, differences in marital and sexual matters, having different cultural and educational backgrounds, having different hobbies and disagreement over spending the course of leisure time and some personality traits such as selfishness, extravagance, pride and strangling, diversity, self-confidence and low self-esteem (Buss & Shackelford, 2005). Among the variables that seem to be related with the degree of couples' affective divorce is the amount of communication skills of couples. Studies show that there is a high correlation between communication skills and couples' conflict resolution and marital adjustment and divorce rates. For example, Yalcin and Karahan (2007) believe that one of the best ways to strengthen the relationship between spouses is to teach communication skills for couples, that help them to resolve their future marital conflicts. In their research, they found that the educational program of spouses' relation on marital adjustment was effective. The ability to communicate is a basic skill for humans, which some people have more skill in this field than others (Salmon & Yang, 2011). Communication skills refer to behaviors that one can communicate with others in a way that leads to positive responses and inhibition from negative responses (Stiefel et al., 2009). A good relationship between spouses will enable them to share their needs, desires and interests with others; express their love, friendship and affection with each other and are well versed in solving the inevitable problems in the family, but the lack of necessary communication skills deprive such a function from family and couples and transforms their close relationship into a parallel and without intimacy. When a close relationship comes to an end, the energy of love becomes anxiety and anger, resulting in many conflicts, repeated criticisms, refuting in silence, lack of emotional companying, and leaving problems unsolved (Bolton, 1996; Translated by Sohrabi, 2004). In various researches, the relationship between communication skills and affective divorce has been investigated, such as the researches of Javadi et al (2015), Shahmohammadi, Dervizeh and Pourshahriari (2008), Mirgain and Cordova (2007), Lundblad and Hansson (2006). These researches have considered communication skills as a significant variable in marital satisfaction and affective divorce. Therefore, considering the importance of the issue and considering that affective divorce plays an important role in compromising the health of the

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family and society, and since that the issue of affective divorce is less carefully investigated; the researcher poses the question of whether there is a relationship between communication skills and affective divorce in unsatisfied couples in Hamadan city?.

METHODOLOGY

Statistical population, sample and sampling method

The statistical population consisted of all dissatisfied couples referring to counseling centers in Hamedan city in 2016-2017. In this research, a sample of 80 dissatisfied couples was selected using available sampling method. In this way, people who came to the family counseling centers were asked to assist the researcher in their research if they wished, and if they were willing to cooperate, the questionnaires were delivered to the couples and were collected after completing them.

Instruments

- 1- Affective divorce questionnaire:** Gutman (2002) has set this questionnaire in 24 items in the form of two options of Yes (1) or No (0) (Mousavi and Reza zadeh, 2014). After collecting positive responses, if the number is equal to eight (8) and above, it means that the person's marital life is subject to separation and signs of psychological divorce are evident. In the study of Mousavi and Reza zadeh (2014), the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained by the method of Cronbach's alpha equal to 0.93. in a research, Mami and Asgari (2014), in order to determine the apparent and content validity of the questionnaire, they were first approved it by the expert professors, then they used Cronbach's alpha to obtain reliability, and the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was obtained higher than 0.7.
- 2- Quindom's Communication Skills Questionnaire:** the questionnaire of communication skills consisting of 34 questions that assesses the questions in 5 dimensions (communication and auditory skills, ability to receive and send messages, insight into the process of communication, affective control and relationship with decisiveness). In Iran, in a research Hossein Chari and Fadakar (2005) using Cronbach's alpha reported the reliability of this questionnaire equal to 0.71. Reliability of the questionnaire or its reliability was also calculated using Cronbach's alpha. Usually, the confidence interval of the Cronbach's alpha range from zero (0) means instability, to the positive one (+ 1) means full stability, and the closer the result to positive one is, the questionnaire is more reliable. Cronbach's alpha for the communication skills questionnaire was obtained equal to 0.71 which indicates a good reliability of the questionnaire.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To conduct this research, first a referral from the Department of Education and Postgraduate Education was requested and after the issuance of the researcher's introduction by attending in the family counseling centers, after providing the necessary information and the purpose of the research, and the issues of secrecy and confidentiality, Questionnaires were distributed

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among the voluntarily couples who referred to the family counseling centers for consultation and related issues, and were collected after their responses to the questionnaires. After completing the questionnaires, the data were reviewed, coded and extracted.

Statistical methods for analysis of data

The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods such as mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution, and also inferential statistical methods such as Pearson correlation. SPSS 23 software was also used to analyze the data.

RESULTS

Table 1: Frequency distribution of sample individuals in terms of education

		Frequency	Percent
Education level	Under diploma	49	32.7
	Diploma	64	42.7
	College education	37	24.7
	Total	150	100

In Table 1, the ratio of the studied individuals is based on education level. In this regard, 49 people of the sample had education level under diploma, 64 people had diploma, and 37 had university degrees. These data are also shown in chart 1.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of sample individuals according to the duration of marriage

		Frequency	Percent
Duration of marriage	1-3	70	46.7
	4-7	60	40.0
	Above 8	20	13.3
	Total	150	100

In Table 2, the ratio of the studied individuals is based on their marriage duration. Of these, 35 couples equal to 70 people had marriage duration between 1 and 3 years, 30 couples equaling 60 people between 4 to 7 years, and 10 couples equaling 20 people had marriage duration equal to 8 years or more.

Table 3: Average and standard deviation

		Average	Standard deviation
Communication skills	Affective divorce	9.773	3.139
	Communication and auditory skills	16.633	4.699
	Ability to receive and send messages	22.180	5.405
	Insight into the communication process	14.880	3.025
	Affective control	26.346	7.494
	Relationship with decisiveness	15.640	2.727

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According to Table 3, the mean and standard deviation of the research variables were obtained as follows: Affective divorce (9.773, 3.139), communication and auditory skills (16.633, 4.699), the ability to receive and send messages (22.180, 5.405), insight into the communication process (14.880, 3.025), affective control (26.346, 7.494), the relationship with decisiveness (15.640, 2.727).

Table 4: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for data normalization

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov test		
	Statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Affective divorce	0.068	150	0.090

According to the results of Table 4, the significance level of affective divorce was obtained in Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Sig = 0.090). Considering that in Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, the significance level is higher than Sig = 0.05, it indicates that the data are normal, it can be said that the explanation of the data is normal.

Table 5: Correlation coefficient between communication skills and affective divorce in couples

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Affective divorce	1					
2-Communication and auditory skills	-0.251**	1				
3-Ability to receive and send messages	-0.275**	0.121	1			
4-Insight into the communication process	-0.264**	0.512**	0.115	1		
5-Affective control	0.041	0.220**	-0.038	0.221*	1	
6-Relationship with decisiveness	-0.162*	0.439**	0.008	0.514**	0.193*	1

*: $P < 0.05$, **: $P < 0.01$

According to the results of Table 5, it is clear that there is a negative and significant relationship between the scales of communication and auditory skills with affective divorce ($r = -0.251$, $p < 0.01$), between ability to receive and send messages with affective divorce ($r = -0.275$, $p < 0.01$), between insight into the communication process with affective divorce ($r = -0.264$, $p < 0.01$) in couples. There is also a negative and significant relationship between the

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scales of relationship with decisiveness and affective divorce in couples ($r = -0.162, p < 0.05$). On the other hand, according to the results of the table, it is clear that there is not a significant relationship between affective control and affective divorce in couples.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the present research is to investigate the relationship between communication skills and affective divorce, and in this section we explain the results of this study. The results showed that there is a negative significant relationship between most communication skills (communication and auditory skills, the ability to receive and send messages, insight into the communication process, relationship with decisiveness) with affective divorce. In this study, due to the lack of research done similar to the present research, this finding is compared with the results of researches close to the variables of this research. The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous researches such as Javadi et al (2015), Shahmohammadi et al (2008), Salmon and Yang (2011), Yalcin and Karahan (2007), Mirgain and Cordova (2007) and Lundblad and Hansson (2006). Based on the cognitive-behavioral approach, there are many negative references, expectations and beliefs that prevent effective communication. Communication skills help couples identify the underlying causes of their destructive conflict and use more constructive ways to deal with it. In fact, communication skills help couples transfer their messages more accurately and efficiently, and provide more rewarding ways to deal with conflicts in their lives. Interpersonal communication forms the basis of the initial linkage with others. Effective communication promotes people's prosperity and improves the quality of life, while ineffective communication is an obstacle to prosperity and even a means to disassociate human souls. It can be clearly stated that one of the basic things of human happiness is his interpersonal communication; however, if the goal of communication is to have peace with his partner and in common life, "communication" becomes the living standard of life and it plays a decisive role in the quality of life in marriage. Meanwhile, it can be said that the equipping of spouses with communication skills is important in their compatibility and satisfaction, and lack of awareness of this basic skill leads to many misunderstandings, conflicts and stress among couples. Therefore, it can be said that most unsatisfied and incompatible couples have weak communication skills, low tolerance to criticism, poor ability to solve marital problems, and poor partner perception, and when confronted with conflicts, they have positive attitudes to themselves and negative attitudes toward their partners. If marital rules derived from beliefs and values are very difficult, couples cannot act as two equal partners, that is, instead of trying to control conflicts, and reduce it in various ways such as dialogue, listening to the other word, and the representation of damaged feelings, reveal their unsatisfying in an indirect way to the partner, which could lead to an increase in affective divorce. In justifying the results, it is suggested that establishing correct and right communication increases the affective and emotional intimacy of couples. If a couple can communicate in the right way, they will not only have effective communication but also the intimacy between them will increase. On the other hand, the increase in intimacy and

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affection of the couples increases their sensitivity to each other, and resulting to increase in their emotional bonding.

This study contained some limitations: the implementation of questionnaires was among unsatisfied couples who, because of their pressure and the stresses they faced, had a bias in response. One of the other limitations of this research is the research method. Since the research method was correlational type, in this method, due to the lack of control of some variables on the results of the data, the inference of the relations of the variables should be done with caution. It is suggested that a safe way to help reduce the affective divorce of unsatisfied couples is to direct them to learn spouse communication skills. According to the results of this study, it is suggested that the training of spouses' communication skills as one of the psycho-educational interventions should be added to other counseling interventions.

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