

The Study of Emotional Intelligence among Divorced Couples in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence that includes the ability to control and identify emotions in us and others, and uses this information to guide our thinking and actions. The purpose of this research is to investigate the emotional intelligence among divorced couples in Iran. The present study is an experimental research with experimental and control groups. The statistical population consists of all divorced couples who referred to the Justice Department of Tehran. Simple random sampling was done among applicants who agreed to participate in research sessions. Thirty individuals were selected and divided into two experimental and control groups randomly. First, both groups completed Goldberg and Hiller's General Health Questionnaire. Eight emotional intelligence training sessions were held and finally, the posttest was performed and the results were compared using SPSS software. Also, there was a significant effect on social functioning and depression.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Couples, Divorce, Mental Health, Marital Satisfaction.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Man needs several skills for social life. One of these skills is emotional management skills. The most important issues in life skills are as follows: understanding our emotions and regulating and expressing the feelings properly, living and acting well, decision making skills, creative thinking and innovation, the skill of establishing a friendly relationship, self-awareness and knowledge of own strengths and weaknesses, problem-solving skills, coping under pressure, understanding other people's feeling and emotions, dealing with group pressure and social compatibility. Failure to acquire these skills leads to ineffective and inappropriate behaviors in the face of psychological stress. In addition to the presented evidences about the effectiveness of emotional intelligence skills on marital satisfaction, there is ample evidence that couples face numerous problems in establishing and managing emotional relations

with their spouse. Obviously, the defect in the emotional skills of the spouses, along with many other factors, has an adverse effect on their married life. Research evidence has shown that emotional skills increase the ability to withstand the psychological stresses and solve daily problems and has a significant role in the continuity and compatibility in marital relations. In recent years, in the field of marital relations, emotional intelligence skills have been introduced as one of the essential requirements of a successful and compatible marital life. In the 1980s, emotional intelligence got its current name, which relates to the concept of personal success, happiness and professional success. The concept of emotional intelligence shows that why two persons with the same intelligence quotient achieve very different degrees of success in life. Emotional intelligence is a new concept that has been proposed in recent years and is used against cognitive intelligence. In fact, emotional intelligence is a non-cognitive

intelligence that is historically rooted in the concept of social intelligence and is first introduced by Thorndike (1920). In Thorndike's opinion, emotional intelligence is an important ability to manage human beings for acting wisely in human relations. After Thorndike, Gardner (1993) believed that social intelligence consists of interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. In Gardner's view, intrapersonal intelligence includes the ability of person to face the self and expressing a complex and distinct set of feelings and interpersonal intelligence includes the intelligence ability of person to interact with others, to feel and distinguish their behaviors, motivations and intentions (Ganji, 2009).

Gardner, Salovey, and Mayer (1990) are among the first to define emotional intelligence as a subset of social intelligence, including the ability to control feelings and emotions of themselves and others, to identify the emotions in themselves and others, and to use this information for guiding one's thinking and actions. Golman (1995) also identifies emotional intelligence as self-awareness, management and control of excitement, self-motivation, empathy, and correction and management of relationships. Bar-On (1997), like Golman, identifies emotional intelligence such as emotional self-awareness, self-expression, self-esteem, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relationships, realism, flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, optimism and happiness.

In the third millennium, due to advances in technology and its positive impact on human health and quality of life, research into the health issue and the influential factors can solve many problems and complexities associated with pathology, lifestyle, and promoting the physical and social health and finally can help to identify public health threats (Ja-fardokht 2009). It seems that global attention to emotional intelligence is due to the fact that this approach has been addressed all human, emotional, individual and interpersonal aspects of relationship, social and interpersonal skills and self-awareness (Spector, 2000).

Some researchers believe that emotional intelligence includes personality variables that correlate with inter textual indicators of behavior such as aggression, empathy, daring and optimism. According to Bar-On, emotions are the core of life, and emotions affect excitements and vice versa. This is a very important reason why we

should do something about how to judge and control the excitement of the people. Individuals need to know that their emotions can dictate them the ability of (a) living in school and communicate the peers (b) accountability, responsibility and self-reliance; (c) dealing with different life and death issues.

The concept of emotional intelligence was introduced by Golman in 1995. Another scientist named Bar-On (1997) developed and EQ questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 133 items and was a self-report questionnaire. The items in the questionnaire (EQ) measure five main dimensions that are: in-person skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, stress control and general mood. Therefore, emotional intelligence is one of the important factors in determining a person's success (in life and work) and directly affects the individual's mental health. Emotional intelligence interacts with other important determinants (individual's ability to cope with environmental constraints) such as bio-medical preparedness, cognitive intelligence talents, and environmental realities and constraints. In this regard, several studies have been carried out. Hosseinzadeh et al indicate that there is a significant difference among five components of emotional intelligence, i.e. responsibility, empathy, flexibility, stress tolerance and problem solving between male and female patients (Hosseinzadeh et al, 2015).

GholamiPoorang et al showed that there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health; and self-efficacy and mental health. This means that people with high emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, have more mental health. Also, the results of multivariate regression analysis showed that 72 percent of mental health variance is explained through self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (GholamiPoorang et al, 2015).

Tirgari et al (2006) compared levels of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction and their structural relation in incompatible couples. They showed that there is a significant positive relationship between the components of emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. This study showed that emotional adequacies are fundamental and effective on improving and strengthening marital relationships. Considering the position of emotional intelligence in learning and its sustainable effects on health and quality of life in the future, and given that the effects of divorce on women and families are very persistent, the counselors and psychologists should provide

solutions for management of negative emotions such as stress, depression and anxiety, which indicates the necessity of this research. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of emotional intelligence on divorced couples.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Goldberg and Hiller’s General Health Questionnaire was developed to identify non-psychotic mental disorders. The main form is sixty questions that have been revised repeatedly and have different short forms, in accordance with different conditions and cultures. The 28 items version of General Health Questionnaire(GHQ-28) was used in this study. This form has four scales of physical symptoms, anxiety and sleep disorder, social dysfunction and severe depression, and each scale have seven questions. In all questions, the subject must select the options that are more relevant to their conditions. The subject’s response to each question is shown in a four degree range. In all options, except for disruption of social function, low degrees indicates health and high degrees indicate a lack of health and discomfort in the individual. According to Goldberg, the correlation of GHQ scores and the results of the evaluation of disorders is %80. He stated that different forms of the GHQ have a high degree of validity and efficiency. Several studies have been carried out on the various statistical populations of students and staff in order to evaluate the reliability of the questionnaire. Most of the studies have reported a high degree of reliability including Yaqubee who reports 0.88, Solati 0.89, Palahang 0.91, and MirKheshti 0.92.

The subject is assigned randomly to experimental and control groups. Then two groups completed the Goldberg and Hiller General Health Questionnaire. Eight emotional intelligence training sessions were performed for the experimental group. Subsequently, the post-test was performed for the groups and the results were compared using SPSS software.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest over general health and its subtests for both experimental and control groups. Covariance test was used to assess the significance of mean differences. To this end, the effect of the pre-test control variable was removed from the post-test scores, and then the two groups were compared according to the remaining scores.

Considering the fact that in the general health questionnaire, the high scores of subtests indicate the general health deterioration of the subjects, the table also shows that in the experimental group, the mean is decreased in all four subscales, which could indicate the probable effect of independent variable (emotional intelligence) on the general health of the experimental group. However, in the control group, the means did not have a significant reduction in any of the subscales. Since the assumptions of the covariance analysis method are not established, the score difference method is used between the pretest and posttest scores of the two groups. The results are shown in Table 2. The Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) related to the difference between the two variables are statistically significant and indicate that both experimental and control groups are at least significantly different in one of the four compared variables. In order to compare the groups, first the difference between the pretest and the individual variables is calculated. The multivariate analysis of variance was done on difference scores. The results of univariate analysis of variance were presented in the context of multivariate analysis of variance. The findings of Table 3 show that there is a significant difference between the two groups’ scores in terms of physical symptoms, social dysfunction, severe depression and anxiety. In other words, experimental intervention reduces the variables of physical symptoms, severe depression and anxiety and improves the social dysfunction.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of pretest and posttest scores for research scales of the two groups

Scales	Groups	Pretest		Posttest	
		Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
General Health	Experimental	34.03	3.2	2.11	5
	Control	32.9	2.8	31.9	2.5
Physical symptoms	Experimental	8.19	1.1	4.70	2.5
	Control	8.22	1.3	8.35	1.05
Anxiety and sleep disorder	Experimental	7.01	2.3	3.90	2.7
	Control	7.59	1.9	7.10	1.7
Social dysfunction	Experimental	9.77	1	6.1	1.5
	Control	9	1.2	7.3	1.4
Depression	Experimental	9.03	1.1	5.34	1.2
	Control	9.06	1	9.01	1.3

Table 2: The results of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) in both experimental and control groups in terms of pretest and posttest difference scores of the research variables (Physical symptoms, Social dysfunction, severe depression and Anxiety)

Type of test	Value	f	Df assumption	Df error	Sig. level
Pillai's Trace	0.815	61.90	4	55	0.000
Wilk's Lambda.	0.178	61.90	4	55	0.000
Hotelling's trace	4.45	61.90	4	55	0.000

Table 3: The results of difference scores of research variables in both experimental and control groups

Resources for change	Variables	Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	f	Sig.
Groups	Physical symptoms	194.38	1	194.38	45.64	0.000
	Anxiety and sleep disorder	104	1	104	17.60	0.000
	Social dysfunction	68.23	1	68.23	26.35	0.000
	Depression	197.99	1	197.99	119.40	0.000

The aim of this study was to investigate emotional intelligence among divorced couples in Iran. In addition to general health, the effectiveness of this method was evaluated separately on physical symptoms, anxiety and sleep disorders, social dysfunction and depression of divorced couples. The results of this study showed that emotional intelligence significantly increased the general health of divorced couples.

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) total scores indicated that the posttest total score in experimental group is higher than the pretest one, which confirmed the first hypothesis of the research. This result is consistent with those of Esmaili (2002) and Besharat et al (2005). This study showed that emotional intelligence training was effective on physical symptoms. As a result, the second hypothesis was confirmed, which is consistent with those of Mokhtari et al (2014) and Hosseinzadeh et al (2015). In this research, the third hypothesis is also confirmed. Emotional intelligence training has been able to reduce anxiety. This result is in line with the results of Adibrad (2002) and Norian et al (2011). Fourth hypothesis is also confirmed. Emotional intelligence training has been affective in social dysfunction, which is in line with those of Agha Mohammadu et al (2011). The fifth hypothesis is confirmed. According to this hypothesis, emotional

intelligence can be effective on depression and this is consistent with the results of Tahmasebian, Anari and Salehsedghpoor (2009).

Emotional intelligence has many uses that can make people's lives satisfying. Researches show that people with higher emotional intelligence has high life satisfaction. Low emotional intelligence is often the cause of problems for many people. Failures to establish social relationships, improper marriage, at risk mental state are among these problems. Self-awareness and identification of the type and intensity of emotions is an important part of emotional intelligence. People who identify their emotions easily, has a quick response to problems. In most life issues, our emotions and feelings are involved. Therefore, emotional intelligence is primarily involved with these issues, and the first steps are taken to prepare a person for the next steps partly by identifying the type and intensity of emotions. As long as a person cannot identify the emotions quickly so s/he cannot control and manage the feelings on time. Fast implementation of above steps shows the high level of emotional intelligence. People with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to control their feelings than others. They have more power to control their emotions and do not allow the emotions to go beyond the necessary levels and to be emotionally backward. They know many skills and abilities to control their feelings, and in most cases, they use these skills and techniques quickly. They easily control their anger and direct it in the right direction to evacuate it and reach the appropriate result. They do not become anxious too soon or at a bad time. They know how to maintain their peace in these cases. Also, people with higher emotional intelligence have successful social relationships. They can easily establish relationships with others and can sustain and strengthen these relationships with the skills they have. They are comfortable in their relationships and act warmly without anxiety and accept others easily. Other people feel comfortable with them and tend to continue their relations with them. The relationships of low emotional intelligence individuals are evaluated cold and most of their relationships fail at the very early stages.

IV. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that high emotional intelligence can have a significant effect on general health of people and on the prevention of negative and destructive personal and social consequences caused by stress and anxiety. This

study tried to extend the mind toward internal and external realities in order to reduce anxiety and symptoms of depression, do relaxation exercises and mental concentration methods, apply life skills such as self-expression, the power of saying "No" and the techniques to enhance the emotional intelligence and finally improve the general health of participants.

According to the results of this research and other studies, it should be noted that cultural authorities, mass media and mental health authorities can plan on training of emotional intelligence by providing appropriate facilities. Emotional intelligence training programs help everyone acquire and improve the ability of emotional intelligence and increase the general health of the community.

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