

THE STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BOWEN SELF-DIFFERENTIATION COUNSELING ON MARITAL CONFLICTS ON MARRIED WOMEN IN ISFAHAN

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of Bowen Self- differentiate counseling on marital conflicts among married women in Isfahan. *Materials & Methods:* Method of present investigation was a quasi-experimental research with experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test stages. The statistical population was consisted of all married women in Isfahan, those who had at least one child. The subjects were 60 people who Received higher score in questionnaire of marital conflict and randomly selected and assigned to two experimental(N=30) and control group(N=30). The measure was Marital Conflicts questionnaire with seven subscales. The experimental group received eight sessions of Bowen counseling Self-differentiation group counseling. The control group received no intervention. The data were analyzed using covariance analysis. *Findings:* The results showed that Bowen self- differentiation group counseling were effective on marital conflicts and their dimensions among married women. *Discussion & Conclusion:* the effectiveness of the Bowen Self-differentiation counseling can be used in decreasing marital problems of couples.

KEY WORDS: Self-differentiation, marital conflicts, married Women.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most universal human institutions that composes of two person with different abilities and talents and with different needs and interests, and in sum with different personalities (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002). Marital disputes are common and natural as the result of their differences in all lives which cannot be prevented since repeated interactions of different couples provide a platform for such conflicts. What is important here is not the problem itself, but the couples' relation and their readiness for dialogue

and constructive deal with problems as they try to cope with obstacles and to confront the challenge in their married life just like viruses of diseases (Beck, 1996). The roots of conflict in relations depend on factors such as: different beliefs, opposing beliefs, different expectations, values, desires and interest, and so forth (Davis, 2006). In addition, Bowen's etiology examines the root of problem of family in individual's in differentiation and fusion with the source family in three generations (Gladding, 2007). Different studies show that marital conflicts and turmoil in relations between spouses lead to the emergence of various physical and mental

problems. With the increase in conflict, inconsistency will be increased and life satisfaction will be decreased and this consequently will lead to low quality of interpersonal relationships, psychological conflicts and aggression, depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, alcohol abuse and physical diseases like heart disease and cancer (Hamid, Koochaki, & Hayatbakhsh, 2012). Increasing marital conflicts in the contemporary world and the risk of divorce or segregation and its negative impact on partner's mental health and their children have caused counselors and family therapists to provide theories and programs to help couples experiencing conflict. Bowen's theory emphasizes on the need of differentiation in behavioral and cognitive levels for better interpersonal and intrapersonal interaction and defines differentiated individuals as those who control the situation with an awareness of thoughts, feelings and opinions in highly emotional situations. In contrast, the undifferentiated individuals are governed by their emotions in their decision makings and are susceptible for severe psychological symptoms and diseases (Eskiyan, 2005). Rice (1996) has divided conflicts into two categories of constructive and destructive conflicts. Constructive conflict refers to an issue in which talking about the problems, understanding the problems, compromise and consensus are possible and dialogue can reduce negative emotions and build respect and trust and helps both sides understand each other. Destructive conflict refers to those conflicts that involve the counterpart more than the problems. Parties attack "each other" instead of the problem and cause embarrassment, humiliation, hatred, contempt, and even insult and punishment. Supporters and fans of growth and constructive-oriented theories believe that the cause of the increase of marital conflicts is due to the incapability and lack of the young couple's skills to change behavioral patterns, rules and expectations adapted from previous relationships, especially base family and a new marital life (Carr, 2000). The systemic therapists define conflict as any dispute over the ownership of bases and other sources in order to obtain benefits and increase their own privileges. This increase in assets is along with the intention of injuring the opponent, disarmament and expelling the counterpart from the scene. Therefore, marital conflict is due to respond to individual

differences in which the reaction is sometimes so aggravated that which governs anger, hatred, jealousy, abuse, verbal and physical degradation and destruction of the marital relation and life (Young & Long, 1998). Freud attributed the source of interpersonal conflict to the conflict of the mental energies due to unresolved issues in childhood and believed that an immature person cannot, in fact, experience intimacy or sense of understanding and honesty that exists between two persons and the reasons of this intimacy problem is primarily the problem of transmission. For example, pre-genital character cannot link with others as they are, but distort them according to his/her childhood imaginations of what others have to be which means the return to the unresolved issues of childhood. According to Freud, the treatment of intrapersonal conflict lies in the resolution of interpersonal deep unconscious conflict (Prochaska & Norcross, 2011). Bowen is of opinion that family is basically an emotional system (Friedman, 1991). The main pillar of Bowen's family therapy is that there is a chronic anxiety in whole life arising out of the realm of life. This anxiety is both emotional and physical and diffused all over Protoplasm. Some people are more exposed to and are affected by this anxiety "due to the way that past generation transmitted anxiety to them" (Gladdying, 2007). This chronic anxiety as an integral component of all living systems exists in this emotional unit (family) in different forms and degrees and produces some forces within the family which direct them towards "being together" or in the opposite direction towards differentiation. Anxiety is high in some families and it is low in some other. However, there is no family without anxiety. According to Bowen, mental and family injuries are due to Multigenerational Transmission Processes and Projections. Projection occurs when the couples diffuse their lack of individuality and in differentiation, transferred to children or marital. Meanwhile, people are looking to find a mate in tune with their own differentiation. So it is natural for people who have low levels of differentiation to choose their spouse in tune with their own level of differentiation. This process is preserved and transmitted to the next generation with a lower differentiation known Multigenerational Transmission Process (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002). As a result, undifferentiated couples will not tolerate each other's differences and cultural

differences and try to make triangles to reduce the resulted conflicts (Carr, 2000). During the conflicts and disputes, they will adopt stickiness to their spouse or distance and divorce from him/her. According to Ellis, Sichel, Yeager, DiMatta, and DiGiuseppe (1989) point of view conflict is a part of a marital relationship. Couples must learn to resolve their own conflicts to be happy. Conflict is not always negative. But the way in which the spouses apply for conflict management may have a negative effect on the relationship. Managing conflict can be constructive or destructive. Destructive conflict management is characterized by resonant spiral of deception, intimidation and bullying (voiced public opposition), the spiral of avoidance (voiced hidden conflict), revenge, competitive domineering and hegemony patterns and degrading and despicable verbal and nonverbal communication. In contrast, constructive conflict management is characterized by flexibility, interactivity with the intention of learning rather than the intent of protecting, improving self-esteem, focusing on the relationship rather than focusing on the person and cooperation (Bahari, 2010). Kaye (1985) stated that families produce new members and in spite of the fact that they grant these new members autonomy at the end and they do not expect them to live with them under one roof, however, this family membership will remain forever. According to Kaye (1985) the power of family is to the extent that, despite the miles of distance between family members and even the deaths of some of them, still family influence will remain. So that even when a family member temporarily or permanently feels alienation about his/her family, he/she cannot really break his/her ties with the family. Bowen recounted this process as fusion-differentiation with the use of the theory of systems. Both terms reveal Bowen's emphasis on this issue that a person's maturity and self-flourishing requires the individual's segregation from emotional attachment to the family of origin (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002). Farahbakhsh (2011) tried to evaluate the correlation between the perceived characteristics of the main and current family and its relationship with the marital conflict. The results showed that there is a correlation between independence from the main family and the level of perceived intimacy in the current family, marital conflicts and its different aspects.

Teimoori, Qolamali, and Bakhshayesh (2012) in their research project on the prediction of marital satisfaction based on attachment styles and self-differentiation, concluded that people with high secure attachment and differentiation, experience more marital satisfaction in their own life as well. Skowron (2000) in the study of prediction of marital satisfaction, found that among all the aspects of self-differentiation, only two aspects namely emotional faults and emotional reactions can predict marital satisfaction as the differentiated individuals face lesser problems in their married life. The results of Skowron and Schmitt (2003) investigated the validity and reliability of the subscales of fusion with others and result revealed that people who have high fusion will experience more marital fusion and insecure attachment in adulthood and will have more problems in understanding, expressing and controlling their emotions. The increasing conflicts in life will bring serious consequences for the couple and the family and provides the collapse of relationships. Although, self-differentiation counseling has been widely used in family therapies and interpersonal relationships, however, it has not been much considered in case of women. Thus, considering the importance of the issue, the aim of the present study is to evaluate the effectiveness of counseling based on Bowen's self-differentiation on women's marital conflict in Isfahan.

MATERIALS & METHODS

This study is of quasi-experimental research with a design of two experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test stages. In this research, the counseling based on Bowen's self-differentiation which has been conducted as group counseling in eight 90-minute sessions with a frequency of twice a week on the experimental group was considered as the independent variable and the level of as women's marital conflict as the dependent variable. The statistical population of this study is all married women in Isfahan in 2013 who were selected voluntarily and by the use of advertisement throughout the city. Moreover, the Marital Conflict Questionnaire has been implemented on referrals as pre-test and 60 people among them who scored higher on marital conflict (one standard deviation above the mean) were selected and randomly

assigned to experimental and control groups. Research tool is Marital Conflict Questionnaire (MCQ) made by Barati and Sanaei (1996) which composed of 42 questions and measures seven aspects of marital conflict including: reduction of collaboration, reduction of sexual activity, increase of emotional reactions, increase of children supporting, increase of individual relation with relatives, reduction of individual relation with

wife's relatives, and separation of financial affairs (Bahari, Fatehizadeh, Ahmadi, Moolavi, and Bahrami, 2009). The reliability of the questionnaire equals 0.52 with good content validity reported by Barati (1996). To analyze data and examining the research hypotheses, descriptive statistics (such as mean, standard deviation, and charts) and inferential statistics (analysis of covariance) were used.

Table 1.
The details of counseling sessions based on Bowen's self-differentiation

Session	Content of Treatment
First	Communication and referrals. Explaining the objectives, rules and number of sessions. Conducting the pre-test. Offering the prospect of future sessions and explaining the issue. Providing homework's. Feedback.
Second	Teaching the concept of differentiation. Explaining defenses of behaviors based on reason and emotion. Contact between current problems of life and differentiation. Expressing differentiated and undifferentiated features. Providing homework's. Feedback.
Third	Explaining the four elements of differentiation, Explaining relationship of each component of differentiation with extreme dependency and self-confidence. Offering coping strategies. Providing homework, feedback.
Fourth	Explaining the logic in the family triangle. Studying the effects of the triangle making on continuing problem and family relation. Training the triangulation techniques. Providing homework, feedback.
Fifth	Explaining family projection process. Explaining the current family problem and the impact of the projection process on it. Discussing the position of children and their personalities and its relation with the transmission of the parents' differentiation, providing homework, feedback.
Sixth	Examining the effects of family of origin environment in his/her life. Explaining the relationship between current problems and difficulties of life in the former home of the father. Mental and even physical return to father's house. Reviewing and correcting learned patterns, providing homework, feedback.
Seventh	Explaining the process of formation of Multigenerational Transmission Process and transmission of the differentiation level to the next generations, the relation of Multigenerational Transmission Process and the current problem and prevention strategies, mapped image generation training,
Eighth	Concluding the presented materials during the sessions. Discussing with members about the new solutions as a result of these sessions applied to the current problems. Asking for feedback on the efficiency of the solutions or practical impasse. Conducting the post-test. Appreciation, thanks and closure of sessions.

Findings

Table 2
Correlation coefficient of demographic characteristics with marital conflict

Demographic Characteristics	Correlation Coefficient	Sig
Age	-0.135	0.477
Education	-0.145	0.019
Number of Children	-0.152	0.422

Based on the results in Table 2 among all correlation coefficient of the demographic characteristics with scores of marital conflict, only the correlation of level of education with scores of marital conflict is significant. And this significance is inverse and direct. It means that those with higher education are faced with less marital conflict $p<0.05$.

First hypothesis: the self-differentiation advice on marital conflict affects married women.

The First Hypothesis: Self-differentiation counseling is effective on the rate of women's marital conflict.

Table 3
Comparison of the mean and standard deviation of scores of marital conflict in the experimental and control groups in pre-test and post-test stages

Groups	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Sample Size	Mean	SD	Sample Size	Mean	SD
Experimental	30	116.13	10.294	30	90.776	17.123
Control	30	121.10	15.164	30	112.53	11.941

According to the results presented in Table 3, in the experimental group, the mean of scores in the post-test stage has declined compared to pre-test stage. In addition, comparison of the means of the post-test in both control and experimental groups suggests that marital conflict of the experimental group had a significant decrease compared to the control group.

Table 4
Results of Levine's Test on presupposition of the equality of variances of the two groups in population in the pre-test on marital conflict

Variable	Index	DF	F	Sig
Marital Conflict	Pre-test	58	4.721	0.054

The results of Levine's test on the second hypothesis suggests that the presupposition of the equality of variances of the two groups in population in the pre-test phase has been observed ($P > 0.05$).

Table 5
Results of covariance test on the impact of self-differentiation on marital conflict on experimental group

Index/Source of Changes	Sum Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	Sig	P	T
Pre-test	6873.93	1	6873.93	67.96	0.000	0.55	0.26
Group Membership	9259.41	1	9259.41	91.55	0.000	0.62	1.00

As shown in Table 5, after removing the effect of synchronous variables (impact of education and pre-test) on the dependent variable and based on the calculated values, it is observed that the meaningful effect of groups on marital conflict equals 0.62 ($p < 0.05$, $F = 91.55$). This means that 62 percent of the individual differences in experimental and control groups is determined by group membership. Statistical power of 1 indicates that the sample size is sufficient to examine this hypothesis. Thus, the first research hypothesis based on impact of self-differentiation counseling on married women's marital conflict is confirmed.

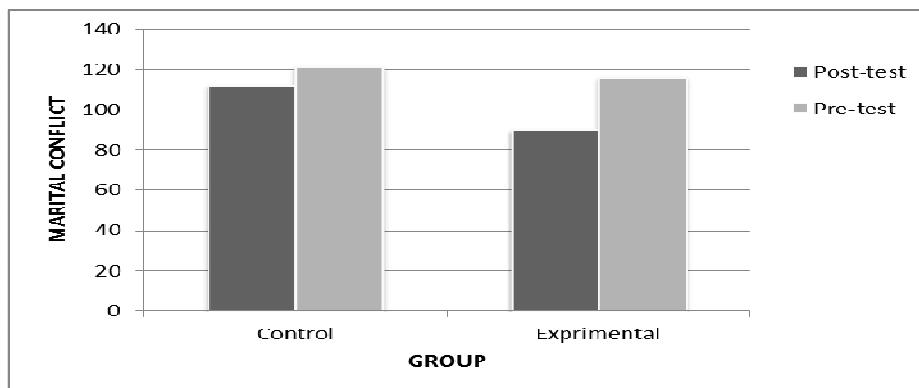


Chart 1

L- 17

Bar Chart of the factor of marital conflict for separate group and test

The Second Hypothesis: The self-differentiation counseling is effective on aspects of married women's marital conflict.

Table 6
Comparison of the mean and standard deviation of the scores of marital conflict in experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test stages

Subscales	Pre-test				Post-test			
	Experimental G		Control G		Experimental G		Control G	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Reduction of Collaboration	17.16	3.742	16.600	3.625	13.366	3.295	15.200	4.551
Reduction of Sexual Activity	15.133	4.116	13.833	4.060	12.266	3.128	14.166	5.031
Increase of Emotional Reactions	19.933	8.241	17.866	4.032	13.633	3.448	17.966	7.640
Increase of Children Supporting	15.000	4.110	16.500	4.083	13.066	3.423	15.966	5.404
Increase of Individual Relation with Relatives	16.533	2.800	16.533	4.847	13.600	4.531	17.200	5.653
Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives	15.766	4.057	14.066	3.638	12.000	2.319	14.600	3.873
Separation of Financial Affairs	16.700	3.475	16.533	4.599	13.200	3.809	17.466	5.124

According to the results presented in Table 6, the mean scores in the experimental group in post-test phase had a significant decrease in all aspects compared to the control group in the pre-test phase.

Table 7
The results Levine's test on the presupposition of the equality of variances the two groups in population in pre-test stage on aspects of marital conflict

Subscales	DF	F	Sig
Reduction of Collaboration	58	0.039	0.844
Reduction of Sexual Activity	58	0.248	0.620
Increase of Emotional Reactions	58	8.947	0.054
Increase of Children Supporting	58	1.077	0.304
Increase of Individual Relation with Relatives	58	6.665	0.112
Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives	58	0.216	0.644
Separation of Financial Affairs	58	2.176	0.146

The results Levine's test on the second hypothesis suggests that the presupposition of the equality of variances of the two groups of society in the pre-test is observed in all aspects. ($P>0.05$).

Table 8
The results of ANCOVA on the impact of self-differentiation counseling on aspects of marital conflict of experimental groups

Sources of Change	Index	Sum Square s	DF	Mean Squares	F	Sig	P	T
Pre-test	Reduction of Collaboration	6.5	1	6.5	0.41	0.53	0.007	0.096
	Reduction of Sexual Activity	0.19	1	0.19	0.011	0.92	0.00	0.051
	Increase of Emotional Reactions	303.3	1	303.3	0.86	0.36	0.015	0.15
	Increase of Children Supporting	13.0	1	13.0	0.63	0.43	0.011	0.12
	Increase of Individual Relation with Relatives	56.17	1	56.17	2.25	0.139	0.038	0.32
	Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives	14.51	1	14.51	1.43	0.24	0.025	0.22
	Separation of Financial Affairs	83.88	1	83.88	4.35	0.041	0.071	0.54
Group Membership	Reduction of Collaboration	52.96	1	52.96	3.32	0.024	0.055	0.43
	Reduction of Sexual Activity	53.80	1	53.80	3.01	0.048	0.05	0.40
	Increase of Emotional Reactions	304.42	1	304.42	8.64	0.005	0.132	0.83
	Increase of Children Supporting	107.78	1	107.78	5.23	0.026	0.084	0.62
	Increase of Individual Relation with Relatives	185.15	1	185.15	7.43	0.008	0.115	0.76
	Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives	113.62	1	113.62	11.23	0.001	0.165	0.91
	Separation of Financial Affairs	279.28	1	279.28	14.49	0.000	0.203	0.96

The results of Table 8 revealed that there was a significant difference between experimental and control groups in all subscales of the conflict. In other words, after modifying the impact of covariate, the results of covariance

analysis showed that self-differentiation counseling is effective in reducing the seven aspects of marital conflict ($P < 0.05$).

DISCUSSIONS & CONCLUSION

This study has been conducted aimed to investigate the effect of Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling on marital conflict in Isfahan. As described in the descriptive findings part, the scores of women's marital conflict in the experimental group in the post-test (90.776) has considerably declined compared to pre-test (116.13). Moreover, as it is shown in the analytical findings of the results of covariance, there is a significant difference in terms of marital conflict between women of experimental group that been intervened with Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling and the control group who were not under any intervention in which this difference as the following results can be studied: The results of the first hypothesis test showed that Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling is effective on reducing marital conflict of married women. This finding is consistent with results of studies conducted by Skowron and Friedlander, (1998), Skowron, (2000), Sehat, (2007), and Peleg (2008). In addition, Yousefi, Etemadi, Bahrami, Bashlideh, and Shirbagi (2010), confirmed in their researches that Bowen's theory is suitable to be applied in Iranian society and Self-Differentiation is in tune with mental health and marital quality. The result of study conducted by Zarei, Farahbakhsh, and Esmaeili (2011), showed that self-differentiation, trust and pendency have a significant relationship with marital relation, while Skowron (2000) in the prediction of marital satisfaction survey, concluded that only two aspects of self-differentiation among all aspects namely emotional detachment and emotional reactions can predict marital satisfaction. The result of the research is also consistent with that of Farahbakhsh (2011). On the possible reasons of the effects of Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling on reducing marital conflict can be said that conflict is inevitable in any intrapersonal relationship including marital relationship since when two people with different viewpoints come close together, disagreements and problems are inevitable. However, the alarm of problems in a relationship rings when these conflicts revolve around the same issues continuously and severely. The impact of Self-Differentiation Counseling on

this matter can be explained as follows; Bowen's therapy and treatment increases couples' awareness of their own emotional reactions by raising the level of differentiation and modifying the relationship between parents and children and helping the person to gain the appropriate independence from the family of origin and thus minimizes or stops the emergence of marital conflict and helps to upgrade individual's maturity and professionalism to prevent problems or solve them appropriately. The other findings of this study suggest that Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling is effective on the seven aspects of married women's marital conflict. From the aspect of "Reduction of Collaboration", the findings of this study is consistent with the results of other researchers like Sehat (2007), Hayatbakhsh, Shafieabadi, and Zaker (2010), and Hakimi, Fatehizadeh, and Bagheban (2012) that studies and examined the efficacy of different trainings on reducing the understudied conflicts. Moreover Skowron and Dendy (2004) stated that self-differentiation helps to improve problem solving skills and better individual's cooperation. In explaining the effectiveness of Bowen's self-differentiation counseling on the reduction of couple's collaboration, it can be pointed out that many of the issues that couples are involved with are systemic rather than personal matters. Most of couples since each is trying to change the other are in trouble and face problems. To cope with this problem, the partners should have the ability to see their own problems and to do responsibilities together and with the help of each other and to use conflict as a tool for collaboration (Miller & Sherard, 1999). Self-differentiation Consulting opens the way for increasing and maintaining spouses' collaboration by providing the insight based on respecting and considering each other's opinions, sharing ideas while maintaining the independence and exploring sustaining ways for enhancing the collaboration. From the aspects of "Reduction of Sexual Activity", the results of the study are in consistence with the findings of Hakimi, Fatehizadeh, and Bagheban, (2012), Soodani, Shahriari, Shafieabadi, (2010) Shahsiah, Bahrami, and Mohebi, (2011) about the effectiveness of efficient training on improving this aspect as well. Regarding the impact of self-

differentiation on this aspect, it can be said that: when the relationship between the couple break due to the problems and the partners involved in a winner-loser false circle of feelings, women usually resort to indirect manner of using power such as sexual withdrawal, emotional changes and excessive focus on the children. However, the satisfactory sexual relation raises levels of marital satisfaction. Self-differentiation counseling not only flicks the individuals to be aware of their negative feelings in this regard, but also advises them to be developed and raises them higher than the family in search of their role models. Then, they will experience a new realm through the context and environment in which their childhood has formed during the years to anticipate and deal with the resistance which excited by their own changes. This process will improve the transfer from emotional reactions to the clear recognition. The present study was also effective on the aspect of "emotional reactions". The results of this study are consistent with the following research findings, Hakimi, Fatehizadeh, and Bagheban (2012) which revealed that training emotional safety has a significant impact on improving this aspect. The results of study conducted by Soodani, Shahriari, and Shafiabadi, (2010) exposed that The Bern Stein Behavioral- Communicative Couple Therapy has had an impact on this aspect as well. In addition, people who have high fusion face more problems to understand, express and control their emotions (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003). To explain the finding, it can be said: one of the most important factors of creation, duration and intensity of conflict between spouses is to resort to emotional reactions in sensitive positions. Using emotional reactions will leave no opportunity to pause and think for the person and opens the way for immature and emotional behavior and actions and block thinking and wisdom. While, the most important distinct feature of self-differentiation counseling is the emphasis on the upgrading the person's ability to distinguish between reason and emotion and to differentiate emotional and intellectual responses to say and to take the most appropriate word and action in the shortest time for thinking. From the aspect of "Children Supporting", the findings of this study is in accordance with the results of the study conducted by Hills, Lewis, Duvall, Keith, and Pike (1999) in a sample of 900 people, in which they

found that there is a correlation between fusion in family, making triangles and preparation for marriage as well as attitude towards marriage. With regards to possible reasons for the impact of self-differentiation counseling on this aspect, it can be said: low level of differentiation of one of the spouses or both of them leads them to take distance from each other in the event of wives' psychological stress for setting themselves free from the pressure and reducing the intensity of the conflict and drawing towards one of the children. This tendency for distance along with allied child against her husband, a phenomenon known as 'triangulation'. While fueling the problems and keeping them, it will transmit the lowest level of differentiation to the targeted children, namely to create a fusion between herself and the child. The fusion, in Bowen's terms, has a negative connotation that destroys boundaries and lack of individuality between two or more people and so creates coexisting relations which not only deteriorate his/her freedom but also affect his/her realistic thinking by irritability and marginalizes it. The obtained result of the impact of Bowen's Self-Differentiation Counseling on the "Increase of Individual Relation with Relatives" is in tune with the results of the research conducted by Soodani, Shahriari, and Shafiabadi (2010). As Farahbakhsh (2011) showed that there is a correlation between independence from the family of origin and the level of perceived intimacy in the current family and marital conflict. To explain this finding, we can argue: As mentioned earlier, triangle formation is one of strategies that undifferentiated couple resort to in order to reduce conflict. This triangulation is sometimes done with one of the children and sometimes by entering a third person other than a family member which has undeniable negative impact on marital relations. Thus, self-differentiation counseling also provides individual's independence while raising the level of their differentiation, an independence by which an individual can also keep his/her autonomy while in relation with others and stay firm in his/her decisions. The findings of this research showed that Self-Differentiation Counseling has been effective on "Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives". This finding is consistent with the results of Peleg (2008) that showed marital relation is in inverse relation with emotional satisfaction

placed While, Shahsiah, Bahrami, and Mohebi (2011) who attempted to evaluate the effect of sex training on couple's conflict, showed that the training has not been effective in improving the relationship with wife's relatives. The reasons for the positive effect of Self-Differentiation Counseling on "Reduction of Individual Relation with Wife's Relatives" can be interpreted as such that; one of the most important issues in Self-Differentiation Counseling is emotional detachment that undifferentiated individuals resort to as a defensive mechanism. The emotional detachment in any relation reveals the problems of undifferentiating and pressure in sensitive situations. a temporary relief that will have long-term negative effects responsible for isolating the individual from an intimate contact that can be benefited from. However, the Self-Differentiation Counseling after affecting the level of individual's differentiation, deals with the unresolved emotional attachment that the person has carried from the family of origin as well and then to cope with it by generalizing this attachment to the relatives by cutting away from them. The self-differentiation counseling could affect these subscales from "Separation of Financial Affairs" aspect which is in accordance with the result of Hakimi, Fatehizadeh, and Bagheban (2012), While Bahari, Fatehizadeh, Ahmadi, Moolavi, and Bahrami, (2009) in a study that examined the training of wives' communicational skills to reduce marital conflict, and the result revealed that this training had not a positive effect from the aspect of "Separation of Financial Affairs". In explaining these findings, it can be pointed out that individuals can achieve a positive insight and attitude based on trust in the counterpart in life and in adjusting highly reactive

and emotional interactions by making use of Bowen's self-differentiation counseling. The training and consulting based on Bowen's self-differentiation is of distinct approaches to family therapy which establishes positive and favorable long-term results in the individual's relations and grants him/her the behavioral management in order to establish an appropriate balance in intellectual or emotional reactions develop whenever required according to the situation. Moreover, he/she has to remain independent in relation with others and always walk on border in the relations. Thus, for those clients that facing these problems resulting from non-compliance with these issues in life, the simple, efficient and improving techniques of this model can be very fruitful in the therapy. With regards to the limitations of the present study, it can be pointed out that this research was conducted within a short period of time and that it would not have follow-up stage in which it can affect the generalization of the results in long-term. Furthermore, conducting group counseling sessions by the researcher herself and conducting the study only on the sample of women can be considered of the limitations of this research. It is suggested that, in future studies, the self-differentiation counseling can be implemented on a group of couples with the assistance of a trained person to perform therapeutic interventions. Moreover, it also should be noted that doing the similar studies with long-term follow-up phase can be fruitful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am, hereby, very thankful to and appreciate all those who have assisted me in conducting this project

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