An Investigation of Effectiveness of Educating Grice’s Cooperative Principle on Marital Satisfaction of Married Women

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the efficacy of Grice cooperative principles on marital satisfaction. The statistical population of this study is composed of all married women who have referred to the psychological and counseling centers of the city of Gorgan in order to receive technical and specialized assistance concerning their marital problems. Through random sampling, 30 women were selected from the total number of women and they were categorized into two groups of experimental and control. The experimental group was instructed Grice cooperative principles in eight 2-hour sessions and the control groups did not receive any instruction. The instruments used in this study are questionnaire, personal information, Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale, and the practical guide of Gricean principles of communication for couples (Morand, 2008). The research plan includes pre-test and post-test in control group. Furthermore, the SPSS software was used for data analysis and the results of this study show that the instruction of Grice cooperative principles has the positive effects on increasing the marital satisfaction of women; therefore, it is suggested that the instruction of Grice cooperative principles is applied particularly in verbal communication of couples in a continuous and regular way.

KEY WORDS: Instruction, Grice cooperative principle, marital satisfaction, married women

INTRODUCTION

The relationship is considered to play an important role in determining marital satisfaction and creating close and intimate relations between couples. Any problem in establishing a relationship leads to anxiety. Lack of mastery in communicative skills as well as unhealthy relationship renders the life of most couples one-sided and devoid of intimacy (Tashivo & Fraizer, 2007). An acceptable and expectable intimacy between couples strengthens their close relationships to the extent that it can be stated that the main principle in a successful marriage is establishing intimacy between couples. Intimacy is a dynamic process which rests on mutual trust, confidence, and respect. What is more important than the marriage itself is success in marriage or marital satisfaction. Statistics show that the rate of divorce is increasing in countries. Furthermore, based on the report of the American National Center for Health Statistic, more than one third of the recent marriages in America lead to divorce during the first five years and most of durable marriages function weakly or are abound with dissatisfaction (Weigle & Ballard Reisch, 2008).

In this regard, investigating marital satisfaction and the factors contributing to the durability and survival of the marriage as well as factors leading to disruption of marriage are necessary (Danesh, 2010). Jaididi and Rasoulzade Tabatabie (2010) believe that marital satisfaction is a process created during couples’ life due to the fact that it is contingent on correspondence of tastes, recognition of personal trait, establishment of behavioral regulations and formation of interactional patterns. Vinch (2006) believes that marital satisfaction is correspondence of one’s status quo with his/her expected marital relationships. The satisfaction experienced by couples is considered as one of the basic aspects of a marital system. Although it appears that statistics related to divorce, as the most reliable index of marital disruption, indicate that marital satisfaction cannot be easily achieved.

The increasing divorce rate, family violence, and family disputes show that marital satisfaction cannot be obtained easily; therefore, many researchers have investigated significant factors in this regard (Danesh, 2010).

Attar et al. (2009) investigated the effect of teaching verbal skills as a communicative program to couples on the decrease of marital revulsion. Results show that teaching communicative programs can decrease marital revulsion.

Skills taught in this program were active listing, speaking, dispute settlement, interpersonal relations, and self-awareness skills. The results showed that teaching communicative skills can be helpful in establishing an amiable,
two-sided and efficient relationship between couples. Consequently, this leads to their growth and prosperity on the one hand and decrease of any destructive and negative feelings during the marital relationship on the other hand. Furthermore, it can reduce feelings of despair, anger, worthlessness, and increase feelings of sympathy, willingness in continuation of marriage relationship. Finally it can assist in decreasing tension and frustration.

In general, when lines of communication are open in marriage (or in any other type of the relationship) and couples are both the recipient and the sender of messages, any probable problem is expected to solve. Unfortunately, lack of ability in establishing a verbal communication is the common problem couples today. Verbal communication is a kind of relationship in which words, ideas, and the message of two sides are communicated.

Paul Grice (1975) is the most prominent sociolinguist who has considered social behavior and language. He believes that verbal and linguistic communication between humans is not a mixture of passive clauses and sentences, rather these linguistic phrases, at least, to some extent, are common efforts that each of the participants in a conversation identifies and follows the goal or a set of goals.

Any kind of verbal communication is based on cooperation. By cooperative principle in communication, Grice means that if listeners cannot understand the aim of the speaker in conversation, a sort of misunderstanding occurs which prevents the listeners from understanding.

A listener must recognize the context of speech and the speaker should prepare the contextual situation in a way to avoid the occurrence of any kind of misunderstanding. Grice proposed four conversational maxims in his Cooperative Principle. According to Grice, the cooperative principle is a norm governing all cooperative interactions among human beings and it can be thought of and used as an ideal guideline for semantics of relationship and communication. The four conversational maxims of cooperative principles are as follows:

- **Maxim of Quantity:** information
  - Make your contribution as informative as required for the current purposes of the exchange.
  - Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

- **Maxim of Quality:** Truth
  - Do not say what you believe to be false.
  - Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

- **Maxim of Relevance:** Relevance
  - Be relevant.

- **Maxim of Manner:** Clarity ("be perspicuous")
  - Avoid obscurity of expression.
  - Avoid ambiguity.
  - Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
  - Be orderly.

If all these condition are observed, listener will be easily able to understand the words and the message of the speaker and answer the questions provided that he has observed the principle of cooperation. Applying Cooperative Principle, the present research deals with the realm of marriage in order to investigate and assess the possible effects of Cooperative Principle on couples’ relations with the goal of increasing the marital satisfaction (Bani Ardalan, 1387).

The main aim of the present research is to explain the effects of teaching Grice cooperative principle on the level of satisfaction in marriage among married women. Research hypothesis is that teaching Grice cooperative principle to women is effective concerning the level of their marital satisfaction.

Statistical population of this research includes all married women (764) who consulted with the counseling center of the police department as well as and Rastin Counseling Center in Gorgan in the year 2013. The method in this research is random sampling in which 60 married women were categorized in two groups of test and control.

**Samples and Sampling:**

In this research, the samples are collected randomly in which 60 married women are placed in two control and test groups.

**Date collection Tools:**

Enrich short form questionnaires which consisted of 47-questions (fertilization, strength of relation and satisfaction) were used in this research for identification and scoring. It has been attempted to assess the potential problematic contexts and also to identify the strong points of a marital relation by means of these questionnaires which have been used as “a valid tool in numerous researches for evaluating the marital satisfaction” (Thanayi, 1379).
RESEARCH METHOD

After the identification of two test groups, teaching sessions were specified and instructions were given to the group during an explanatory session. Then, based on textbook sessions were planned during 7 weeks (a two-hour session per week) and the final session was allocated to evaluation. A month after the last educational session, a post-test was administered for the assessment of marital satisfaction in two groups. Here, applied guidelines have been used for increasing communication and marital satisfaction based on Grice Cooperative Principle was used in this study.

Table 1: An applied guideline to increase marital satisfaction by use of Grice Cooperative Principle, edited by Lee Wood Morand (2008), translated by written permission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The session</th>
<th>First session</th>
<th>An overview of the Grice cooperative principle for subjects - explaining the adherence to the goals and list of objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Second session</td>
<td>Commitment to cooperative principle, motivation behind the goals, mutual respect, active role, steps of establishing relationship, results and discussion, and homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Third session</td>
<td>Establishing the principle of quality in communication, results and discussion, conclusions, and homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fourth session</td>
<td>Establishing the principle of quantity in communication, results and discussion, conclusions, and homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fifth and sixth sessions</td>
<td>Establishing the principle of relevance in communication, results and discussion, conclusions, and homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Seventh session</td>
<td>Establishing the principle of manner in communication, results and discussion, conclusions, and homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis Method:

In order to analyze the data statistically, the collected data was entered in SPSS software and T statistical tests with two pair samples, Levin test, and one-sided covariance have been used and the results were reported in the form of frequency distribution tables and charts.

Table 2. Descriptive and inferential statistics of the variables of marital satisfaction and its dimensions among married women(Pre-test, post-test) – test group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital satisfaction items</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MaritalRelationship</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>STD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PersonalityIssues</td>
<td>3.343</td>
<td>0.739</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.725</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rearing</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.846</td>
<td>4.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Management</td>
<td>3.512</td>
<td>0.802</td>
<td>3.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Activities</td>
<td>4.128</td>
<td>0.734</td>
<td>4.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Relationship</td>
<td>3.612</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>3.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Friends</td>
<td>3.602</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td>4.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalitarian Roles</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td>4.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Orientation</td>
<td>3.217</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>3.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.609</td>
<td>0.496</td>
<td>3.923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of mean in the pre-test stage of the test group shows that leisure activities with a mean of 4.128 out of 5 and conflict resolution with a mean of 4.12 out of 5 had the highest mean scores among the marital satisfaction items including marital relationship, personality issues, conflict resolution, child rearing, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, family and friends, equitallitarian roles and religious orientation. While religious orientation with a mean of 3.217 out of 5 and marital relationship with a mean of 3.343 out of 5 had the lowest mean scores. The obtained mean scores in the post-test of the test group demonstrates that equitallitarian roles with a mean of 4.415 out of 5, marital relationship with a mean of 4.13 out of 5, and family and friends with a mean of 4.017 out of 5 had the highest mean scores. In contrast, religious orientation and financial management with a mean of 3.695 out of 5, sexual relationship with a mean of 3.699 out of 5 and personality issues with a mean of 3.760 out of 5 had the lowest mean scores.

Investigation of the level of the existing variables in the above hypothesis indicates that paired-t test has been used to assess the difference of mean considering the fact that variables' level of measurement is quantitative and interval and both variables are dependent, and also the distribution of mentioned data is normal.
According to the output, the mean of marital satisfaction in test group before the implementation of skill training courses is 3.609 out of 5, and after implementation of training course the mean is 3.923 out of 5. The significant level indicates that implementation of skill training courses has a significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction in the studied sample. So, the hypothesis is verified. Statistics of control group demonstrated that there is no significant difference in the mean of marital satisfaction in pre-test and post-test stage (see Table 4).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the Paired Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>STD. Deviation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the implementation of skill training courses</td>
<td>3.609</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.596</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the implementation of skill training courses</td>
<td>3.923</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.387</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this research, the intended hypothesis has been studied by means of a pre-test and a post-test in both test and control groups. The level of studied variables' measurement was interval, therefore, to evaluate the difference of mean between test group and control group a Levin test has been used for homogeneity of variances, and one-sided covariance has been used to compare the scores of two variables, and finally, it has been evaluated the moderated means of post-test in both test group and control group and differences between them.

The Differences of Means of Two Variables

- T-test is the only parametric test which includes two dependent and independent samples. In this study, T-test has been used to test different hypotheses concerning either two studied samples or groups. This test which compares the mean of two groups of respondents has been used to evaluate the confidence interval or to test the hypothesis of difference of mean of two populations. Namely, the means obtained from random samples have been reviewed in this research.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Paired Sample in Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>STD. Deviation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction in pre-test stage</td>
<td>3.489</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>0.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction in post-test stage</td>
<td>3.366</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3.381</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in the second output of T-test, the significant level of Levin test is less than 0.05. So, the variances between two groups are not equal, and the second row is used to explain the results of T-test with two independent samples. According to the significant level of T-test (0.01) which is less than 0.05, it can be said that there is a significant difference between two studied control and test groups, statistically.

Evaluation of Homogenization Hypothesis of Variances

- Presupposition of homogenization of variances seeks to evaluate the issue of whether samples have been selected from population with equal variances or not. To test the homogeneity of research variables' variances the Levin's test for equality of variances has been used. The homogeneity of heterogeneity of variances can be reviewed based on the significant level obtained in this test. If the significant level obtained is more than P=0.05, the variances are equal and vice versa. Evaluation of homogenization hypothesis of variances for two sample groups has been presented in table 7.

Table 5. The results of T-test to compare the difference of means of marital satisfaction based on the test group and control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Levin test for equality of the variances</th>
<th>The value of T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital satisfaction</td>
<td>The equality hypothesis of the variances</td>
<td>6.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in the second output of T-test, the significant level of Levin test is less than 0.05. So, the variances between two groups are not equal, and the second row is used to explain the results of T-test with two independent samples. According to the significant level of T-test (0.01) which is less than 0.05, it can be said that there is a significant difference between two studied control and test groups, statistically.

Table 6. Levin test to evaluate the homogeneity of variances of increasing marital satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levin Index</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increment of marital satisfaction</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

65
The results of the table indicate that hypothesis of homogeneity of variances about increasing marital satisfaction \( (F=1.16, P=0.29) \) has been realized.

This research's hypothesis states that teaching cooperative principle will increase the marital satisfaction. Covariance analysis has been used to evaluate the accuracy of the hypothesis, according to the interval scale and ethics of hypothesis the necessity to moderate the effect of group in evaluation of differences cooperative principle's pre-test and post-test in two control and test groups. The results of covariance analysis have been reported in the following table;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of changes</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Means of squares</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significant level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendant variable (pre-test scores)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1534.69</td>
<td>914.59</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of group (test-control)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>241.82</td>
<td>144.11</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The revised total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 8, according to \( F=914.59 \) and \( P=0.000 \), the effect of attendant variable is significant, that is, there is a significant difference between the scores of pre-test and post-test. According to \( F=144.11 \) and \( P=0.000 \), the effect of group is significant, as well, that is, there is a significant difference between control group and test group in terms of cooperative principle's effect on increasing the marital satisfaction.

**DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the efficiency of teaching Cooperative Principle on increasing the marital satisfaction. Teaching cooperative principle is the independent variable and marital satisfaction is the dependent variable including ten dimensions. Evaluation of descriptive findings of the variable of marital satisfaction showed that the mean of marital satisfaction has been increased after holding seven educational sessions based on Grice Cooperative Principle and by reviewing it in post-test stage. In group control in which there was no interference, the mean of marital satisfaction had no significant change in pre-test and post-test stage, but also it has decreased. Consequential evaluation by SPSS software emphasizes the point that holding training courses of Grice Cooperative Principles had a significant effect on increasing women's marital satisfaction. But it's not significant for the control group which experienced no interference. Therefore, findings indicated that holding training courses of efficiency of teaching cooperative principle had a significant effect on increasing the marital satisfaction.

Relationship in family refers to procedures that verbal and non-verbal knowledge exchanges between family members by using them (Epestin, 1993, quoted from Peterson & Gerin, 1999). Other researchers have reported a stable relationship between communication patterns and marital satisfaction (Peterson & Gerin, 1999). Since interference in communication program of couples can be used as an important factor in increasing agreement and decreasing disagreement between them (Marat & Karahan, 2006). The results of these researches are also along with the previous researches.

Conflict resolution, financial affairs, children affairs and religious satisfaction, right process of transferring knowledge and attention of counterparty to it play a role in each of communication components. Thereby, satisfaction in these affairs will be obtained if agreement between couples increases and disputes between them decreases through communication skills. Relationship is effective both in perception and understanding sexual differences and in apprehension attitudes, feelings and needs of couple (Gatman, 1991, Estefan, 1992, quoted from Ferch, 2001). In an educational program, researchers found that the group, who were taught educational skills, was significantly more successful in understanding attitudes and needs of their spouse (Garland, 1981). A higher level of marital satisfaction will be reported when couples are satisfied and meet their needs and expectations in the marital relationship (Baner & Hil, 1998, quoted from Heidari, 2008).

In a cultural research (2001), there was a significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and emotional management, verbal expression, listening skills and insight which are components of communicative skills, as well. Ghalili (2005) in his research found that verbal communication is a characteristic specific to human and people convey their attitudes in the form of words, so teaching verbal skills is one of the most important approaches in sustainability and preservation of marital relationship, and components such as attention to the word of counterpart, following up the discussion and reflection skills are indicators of active listening skill. Listening is the most important communication skill which can make intimacy and maintain it. These skills can lead to increase of satisfaction in family life (Marat & Karahan, 2006). Emotional management can be also considered as an effective
factor in this regard. In a research Gatman found that couples who are trying to get divorce use negative emotions more than positive emotions in their marital interactions (Gatman, quoted from Ghalil, 2005).

These findings are consistent with study of Garland (1981), Peterson & Gerin (1999), Ferch (2001), Marat & Karahan (2006), Banner & Hil (1998) quoted from Heidari (2004), Rasouli (2001), Aslani (2004), Khoshkam (2006), Ebrahimi & Jan Bozorgi (2008), Mardane & Rouzi Talab (2009) which have studied the effect of life skill training on marital satisfaction among married women in their researches. In general, holding educational courses on marital issues led to an increase in marital satisfaction. As it can be seen in studies of Rezaii et.al (2012), Veisi (2009), Manjezi et.al (2012), they have achieved similar results studying the increase of satisfaction and the role of different factors in marital satisfaction.

This study suggests that due to the influence of verbal communication in marital relationship, if couples have enough skills in this regard, they would experience a higher level of marital satisfaction. Teaching Grice Cooperative Principle provides this possibility for couples, especially for women who are more interested in communicating with their husbands verbally, so they would achieve more and better marital satisfaction by enriching this type of relationship.

REFERENCES


