

# THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

## Improving Marital Satisfaction by Using Non-Violent Communication Model as an Intervention Technique

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### **Abstract:**

*The Present study examined “Improving marital satisfaction by using Non-violent Communication model as an intervention technique”. Sample size consists of 64 foreign and Indian couple’s students who had low scores on marital satisfaction. It was conducted by pre-test, post-test with control group. After three months, a follow-up test was administered to assess the stability of experiment. Four dimensions of Enrich marital satisfaction (namely couple’s satisfaction, couple’s communication, conflict resolution and sexual relation) were tools of present research. Results of ANOVA repeated measurement show that training Nonviolent Communication skill improved couple’s satisfaction, couple’s communication, conflict resolution and couple’s sexual relation.*

**Keywords:** *Non-violent Communication, marital satisfaction, couple’s communication, conflict resolution, sexual relation*

### **1. Introduction**

Marriage is the most significant social tradition for satisfaction of affective needs of any individual. The major motivations behind a decision for marriage are love and affection, to have a life partner, to satisfy affective-mental expectations and finally, to gain more pleasure (Navvabinejad, 2001).

Marriage has been a central institution in the history of the world. Although it takes many different forms, its functions have remained constant: reproduction, child rearing, and establishing social and economical alliances (Strong et al., 2005). One of the major and most consistent findings is that marriage not only benefits society but contributes to the well-being of the individuals involved. Married people tend to be healthier and happier than those who are unmarried (Bookwala, 2005). According to Oliya et al., (2007) states that a significant aspect of a marital establishment is the pleasure the couples gain from their relationship.

Marital satisfaction is the status in which a husband and his wife in large part feel prosperous and pleased with their marriage (Karney et al., 2000). As researchers began to explore the concept of marriage satisfaction they investigated factors that lead to happy marriages. Terman (1938) asked: “What distinguishes a happy marriage from the one that is unhappy?” (Gottman et al., 1989, p.47). Many researchers have examined marital satisfaction from a variety of perspectives. Some examples of different variables that have been studied are privacy preferences (Craddock, 1994), conflict resolution style (Gottman, 1994), marital interaction processes (Gottman et al., 1998), intimacy and sexuality (Volsky, 1998), marital problem solving (Outlaw, n.d.), couple’s perception of touch behavior and adult attachment styles (Meyers et al., 2002).

The more couples command appropriate communicative skills the higher satisfaction they have and the more pleasure they would receive from their mutual relationship. Satisfied couples command such mental abilities as tolerance in time of anger, empathy, mental control, and deep understanding about mutual needs and sentiments (ciarrochi et al., 2006).

Communicative skills, as idiosyncratic individual abilities, help people to act adequately in conveying symbolic messages to one another and create a sense of pleasure in their partner (Karney et al., 2000).

Many studies have revealed the importance of communication in marital satisfaction (Fowers, 1998; Gottman et al., 1998; Gottman et al., 1989; Zuo, 1992). Empirical evidence leads us to conclude that communication is an important factor in developing and maintaining a happy marriage.

Non-Violent Communication model which adopts humanistic approach is an interactive process which helps; develop a peaceful relationship and blocks contradiction or helps resolves it, if any, thus helping individuals to have an easy relationships with others (Center for Non-Violent Communication, 2005).

## 2. Objectives

- Study whether communicative skills training using the Non Violent Communication method can boost marital satisfaction in the way that the couples by establishing a correct relationship prevent any tensions which might lead to emergence of marital disputes or reduce marital satisfaction.
- To determine the effect of Non Violent Communication on marital satisfaction.
- To determine the effect of Non Violent Communication on couples communication.
- To determine the effect of Non Violent Communication on couples sexual relationship.
- To determine the effect of Non Violent Communication on couples conflict resolution.

## 3. Research Hypotheses

- Training on Non violent communication skill has a positive effect on couple's communication.
- Training on Non violent communication skill boosts marital satisfaction.
- Training on Non violent communication skill improves conflict resolution.
- Training on Non violent communication skill has a positive effect on couple's sexual relationship.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Sample

Samples were collected from five universities in Hyderabad (Jawaharal Nehru Technological University Hyderabad (JNTU), Osmania University (OU), English Foreigner Language (EFLU), University of Hyderabad (UOH), and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU). All couples who respond to the researcher's call had the following conditions: Study in university, to have at least one child, to be above 19 years, to have an experience of conjugal life at least for two years, And to reside in Hyderabad city at least for one year.

### 4.2. Procedure

the researcher administered marital satisfaction inventories on 500 foreign and Indian couple's students as a pre-test, the couples who had low scores on marital satisfaction were chosen, 64 couples were selected, after that they divided into two groups with simple randomize sampling, 32 couples were selected for experimental group and 32 couples were selected for control group researcher has administrated Nonviolent Communication technique for experimental group, In 10 sessions, each 2 hours. In the control group, nothing was introduced. Marital satisfaction questioners were administered to both groups as a post-test, to determine whether communication skill (non violent communication) increase marital satisfaction in experimental group in comparison with control group. After three months, a follow-up test was administered to assess the stability of experiment.

## 5. Intervention Technique

Communication skill training was given to the experimental group, using Non violent communication technique for 10 sessions:

### 5.1. Procedure

#### Session 1:

To introduce the participants to each other, to inform them of the attendance policy and their responsibilities, description of secession goals.

To discuss the importance of communication and Non violent communication skills in increasing marital satisfaction.

#### Session2:

To identify blocking factors on compassion

- Moralistic judgments
- Making comparisons
- Denial of responsibility
- Demand

#### Session 3:

To learn new methods of self expression and listen to others with Non Violent Communication process:

- Whatever we observe
- Whatever we feel
- Whatever we need
- Whatever we request to enrich our lives

Introduce distinguishing observations from evaluations.

Example of observation combined with evaluation... You are too generous.

Example of observation separate from evaluation.... When I see you give all your lunch money to others I think you being too generous.

#### Session 4:

Identifying and expressing feelings

Providing a vocabulary for expressing feelings.

- Our feeling when our needs are being met:

*Excited, peaceful, free, relaxed, satisfaction.*

- Our feeling when our needs are not being met:

*Afraid, angry, lazy, dull, ashamed, mad.*

Ability to distinguish between what we feel and how we think.

Example of expressing feeling..... I feel sad.

Example of expressing thinking.... I feel unimportant to the people with whom I work.

#### **Session 5:**

Identifying of our needs, taking responsibility for our feeling and introduce the factors that create our feelings.

Example of taking responsibility for our feeling..... I was disappointed when you didn't come over, because I wanted to talk over some things that were bothering me.

Example of don't take responsibility for our feeling..... You disappointed me by not coming over last evening.

#### **Session 6:**

Introduce four options for receiving negative messages:

- Blaming ourselves.
- Blaming others.
- Sensing our own feeling and need.
- Sensing others feeling and need.

#### **Session 7:**

To gain the ability how spouse can express their request:

- Using positive action language.
- Making requests consciously.
- Asking for reflection.

Example of specific request..... I d like you tell me one thing that I did that you appreciate.

Example of UN specific request.... I d like you to prepare supper more often.

#### **Session 8:**

To develop correct and advanced empathy between spouses.

Identifying some common behaviors that prevent spouse to connect empathically with others.

- Advising, educating, consoling, storytelling, shutting down.

#### **Session 9:**

To provide spouse with anger management skills.

- Stop. Breathe.
- Identify our judgmental thoughts.
- Connect with our needs.
- Express our feelings and unmet needs.

#### **Session10:**

To share the feeling of the group regarding this program and evaluating the process of group therapy.

## **6. Measurement Tools**

The prepare/enrich inventory was applied in this research. This questioner has been designed by Olson, Olson-Sigg & Larson (2008). Four dimensions of marital satisfaction Questionnaire include: 1. Couple communication 2.conflict resolution 3.sexual relation 4.couples satisfaction.

### *6.1. Validity*

Prepare has high validity in that it discriminates between premarital couples who get separated/divorced from those that are happily married with about 80-85% accuracy This study was done by Dr. Blaine J. Fowers and replicated in a separate study by Dr. Andrea S.Larsen (Fowers and Olson, 1986).

Enrich also has high validity. It can discriminate with 85% accuracy between couples with marriage problems with those who are happily married (Olson, Olson-Sigg, and Larson, 2008).

### *6.2. Reliability*

Reliability of Prepare/Enrich core category scores is high (alpha reliability of .75-.85). Test/Retest Reliability of inventories is high (average correlation is .80).

- The reliability of these four scales includes:
- Test/Retest Reliability of couple satisfaction is .81
- Test/Retest Reliability of sexual relationship is .83
- Test/Retest Reliability of conflict resolution is .83
- Test/Retest Reliability of communication is .83 (www.prepare-enrich.com).

7. Research Findings

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
training	.45	47.54	2	.00

Table 1: Mauchly's Test of Sphericitya

This table shows that the groups are homogenous. Because the value of Mauchly's Test of Sphericity is less than .50 (0.50 > 0.45), and it is significant at level of 0.01 (sig < 0.01).

levels	group	N	couple Communication	couple satisfaction	conflict resolution	sexual relation
			Mean ±Std.	mean± Std.	mean± Std.	mean± Std.
Pre-test	Experimental	32	22.62±2.37	20.50±3.39	22.81±2.78	23.62±3.58
	control	32	21.93±4.39	19.71±3.25	22.12±2.40	23.12±3.00
Post-test	Experimental	32	38.68±2.45	39.37±3.36	38.03±2.53	36.59±2.13
	control	32	21.03±2.50	19.06±3.59	21.31±2.16	22.46±2.92
Follow up	Experimental	32	36.78±2.43	37.96±2.90	36.53±1.86	32.31±4.26
	control	32	20.87±2.41	19.84±3.21	21.53±2.22	22.53±2.60

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Couple Communication, couple satisfaction, conflict resolution, sexual relation in Pre-Test, Post-Test and Follow up levels

This table shows the means of experimental and control groups are same in pre-test level, But means of experimental groups in post-test and follow up levels are higher than means of control groups in post-test and follow up levels.

	source		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
couple Communication	training * group	Sphericity Assumed	2787.26	2	1393.63	196.85	0.00
Couple satisfaction	training * group	Sphericity Assumed	3664.32	2	1832.16	252.30	0.00
conflict resolution	training * group	Sphericity Assumed	2478.94	2	1239.47	318.86	0.00
Sexual relation	training * group	Sphericity Assumed	1550.13	2	775.06	105.33	0.00

Table 3: Tests of Within-Subjects Effects and interaction between training and groups

This table shows that F is significant at the level of 0.00, (p < 0.01) Therefore, there is significant difference between experimental and control groups based on the training.

training	training	couple Communication		couple satisfaction		conflict resolution		sexual relation	
		Mean difference	Sig.	Mean difference	Sig.	Mean difference	Sig.	Mean difference	Sig.
Pre-test	Post-test	7.57*	.00	9.10*	.00	7.20*	.00	6.15*	.00
	Follow up	6.54*	.00	8.79*	.00	6.56*	.00	4.04*	.00
Post-test	Pre-test	7.57*	.00	9.10*	.00	7.20*	.00	6.15*	.00
	Follow up	1.03*	.00	.31**	.08	.64*	.00	2.10*	.00
Follow up	Pre-test	6.54*	.00	8.79*	.00	6.56*	.00	4.04*	.00
	Post-test	1.03*	.00	.31**	.08	.64*	.00	2.10*	.00

Table 4 : Mean Differences in Couple's Communication, Couple Satisfaction, conflict Resolution, Sexual Relation between Pre-Test, Post Test and Follow up levels

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

\*\* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

According to this table, significance of mean differences between (pre- test, post- test levels), (pre-test and follow up levels), (post-test, follow up levels) is  $p=0.00$ , it is significant at 0.01 level ( $p<0.01$ ), so there is significant differences among means of couples communication, couple satisfaction, conflict resolution, sexual relation between (pre test and post test levels),( pre-test and follow up levels), (post-test and follow up levels), but in couple satisfaction, significance of means difference between (post-test ,follow up levels) is  $p=0.08$ , it is significant at 0.05 level ( $P>0.05$ ), therefore there is no significant difference among means of couple satisfaction between(post-test and follow up levels).

	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
couple Communication	11.41*	.46	.00
Couple satisfaction	13.07*	.61	.00
Conflict resolution	10.80*	.42	.00
Sexual relation	8.13*	.56	.00

Table 5: Mean Differences and Significance between Experimental and Control Groups According To Couple's Communication, Couple Satisfaction, conflict Resolution, Sexual Relation.

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .01 level.

This table shows that there is significant difference between means of experimental and control groups at 0.01 level. ( $P<0.01$ ), therefore:

- Training on Non Violence Communication skill has positive effect on couple's communication. Hence hypothesis 1 was accepted.
- Training on Non Violent Communication skill boosts couple satisfaction. Thus hypothesis 2 was accepted.
- Training on Non Violent Communication skill improves conflict resolution. so hypothesis 3 was accepted.
- Training on Non Violence Communication skill has positive effect on couple sexual relationship. Hence hypothesis 4 was accepted.

## 8. Discussion and Conclusion

With regard to the result of the first hypothesis there is significant difference between means of experimental and control groups at 0.01 level. ( $P<0.01$ ); therefore, the result indicate that communication skill training (Non violence communication) has positive effect on couple's communication. This result is consistent with the result of Khojastehmehr et al.,(2007), Esere (2002,2006), Olagunju et al., (2002) they have shown that there is positive effect of communication skill training on couple's communication. Couples who learn communication skills helps them to identify underlying reasons for their destructive conflicts and use more constrictive methods for coping with them; also it helps them convey their messages more accurately and effectively. It leads them to exchange of positive, pleasing behaviors and reduces negative behaviors. Leads them to have positive feelings toward one another, and change attitude regarding negative behavior (Fathi Moghadam, et al, 2012). In present research training in Nonviolent Communication has improved; expressing true feeling between couples, to know how they can talk about the problem, asking whatever they want from each other, Self empathy, empathy and honest self-expression, to be a good listener, to share negative and positive feeling.

With regard to the result of the second hypothesis there is significant difference between means of experimental and control groups at 0.01 level. ( $P<0.01$ ); so training of Non Violent Communication skill boosts couple satisfaction. This result is consistent with the result of Gholamzadeh et al., (2009), Byers (2005), Askari et al.,(2012), Karbaasi Dahuji et al., (2014), they have shown that communication skill training had positive effect on couple's satisfaction.

According to Ciarrochi et al., (2006), with communication skill couples would receive more pleasure from their mutual relationship; they have ability to tolerate themselves in time of anger, and they have deep understanding about mutual needs and sentiments.

Non violent communication helps couples being to change by revising its previous discourse and communicative model learn how to reconstruct the model of expression, how to listen to one another, also couples can select their words on the base of awareness of what they are perceiving, feeling and wanting. With that they learn how to avoid

from communication that blocks compassion such as: moralistic judgment, making comparisons, denial of responsibility and demand (Rosenberg, 2003).In this research Training in Non Violent Communication has improved; Quality of couple's communication, Share more activities that they both found enjoyable, and avoid from communication that blocks compassion.

With regard to the result of the third hypothesis there is significant difference between means of experimental and control groups at 0.01 level. ( $P<0.01$ ); so training on Non Violent Communication skill improves conflict resolution. This result is consistent with the result of Kalkan(2002), Fikret(2007), Christopher(2011),Karahhan(2009), Salamat et al., (2007), they also claimed that

communication skill training improves conflict resolution. Nonviolent Communication holds that most conflicts between individuals or groups arise from miscommunication about their human needs, due to coercive or manipulative language that aims to induce fear, guilt, shame, etc. These "violent" modes of communication, when used during a conflict, divert the attention of the participants away from clarifying their needs, their feelings, their perceptions, and their requests, thus perpetuating the conflict (wikipedia.org).

By doing self empathy couples can development conflict resolution, it affects the attitude of couple and ads to their efficiency and they can cope or overcome to their marital conflicts (olson &olson, 2000).In present research Non Violent Communication has improved; Understanding opinions and ideas, Taking responsibility for the problem, finding different ways for solving disagreements, sharing feelings and ideas.

With regard to the result of the forth hypothesis there is significant difference between means of experimental and control groups at 0.01 level. ( $P < 0.01$ ); so training on Non Violent Communication skill has positive effect on couple's sexual relationship. This result is consistent with the result of Litzinger et al., (2005), Carolyn et al., (2010), Mark et al., (2013), Gue et al., (2005) they showed that there is positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. Pakgohar (2004) indicated that sex education can increase positive feeling, Closeness, intimacy, marital relationship and marital satisfaction , couples know how to start conversation and they are able to discuss sexual desires and issue with their partner(Markman,et al.2003).

According to Hana Yoo, et al (2013) Sexual education makes more emotional intimacy for husbands and wives.

In this research training in non Violent Communication has improved; talking about sexual issues, try to find ways to keep sexual relationship interesting and enjoyable.

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