

Full Length Research Paper

Comparison of the effectiveness of family therapy based on rational emotive behavioral therapy (REBT) and person centered therapy (PCT) on self-differentiation among divorce applicant clients

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This study was aimed to compare the effectiveness of the rational-emotive-behavioral therapy (R.E.B.T) and Person-centered therapy (PCT) on self-differentiation among divorced applicant clients. All divorced applicant clients in Sanandaj counseling center were considered as the population under study, 112 of whom were selected through stratified random sampling method for self-differentiation. From those diagnosed with differentiation of self inventory-2 (DSI-2), 42 subjects were randomly assigned to three groups (14 subjects in each group), therefore, three groups were formed; PCT, REBT, and control group. The recovery indices (dependent variables) employed were the subjects of self-differentiation, which were measured twice before and after interventions of (DSI-2 scale). The results showed that REBT and PCT were effective on self-differentiation. Also, they were influential in recovery and self-differentiation in the following up stage.

Key words: Self-differentiation, person-centered therapy (PCT), rational-emotive-behavioral therapy (REBT).

INTRODUCTION

The major forms of treatment used in the rehabilitation of maladjusted individuals may be classified into two broad categories; somatic therapy and psychotherapy. Somatic therapy is the treatment of emotional disorders via physical methods, such as drugs, shock, or surgery, which are meant to modify physiological processes. This treatment which is based on the therapy of restoration of physiological homeostasis will result in improved behavior (Yoosefi and Hosseiny, 2003). Psychotherapy is aimed at strengthening the individual's mental and emotional resources so that they can function more effectively. The two forms of psychotherapy are; person-centered therapy (PCT) and rational-emotive-behavior therapy (REBT), (Francis, 2007).

Person-centered therapy (PCT) is also called self-theory, non directive counseling and Rogerian counseling, Rogers (1902), its originator, labeled it "client-centered therapy". Recently Rogers labeled it "person-centered therapy (PCT)". PCT was originated in America. This approach stresses on the ability of clients

to determine the issues important to them and to solve their problems (Bott, 2002). The most important quality of the counseling relationship is the establishment of warm, permissive and accepting climate that permits clients to explore their self-structure in relation to their unique experiences. The person-centered approach to counseling is based on a very positive view of human nature. The method utilizes active listening, reflection of feelings, clarification and facilitation (Priest, 2002).

Ellis (2002) formulated the rational-emotive-behavior therapy (REBT). He stated that he views humans as both rational and irrational (Ellis, 2002). Emotional problems lie on illogical beliefs. Blame and anger are viewed as dysfunctional and irrational feelings (Backx, 2003). The rational-emotive-behavioral practitioner believes that no person is to be blamed for anything he or she does, but each person is responsible for his or her behavior. Ellis has formulated a theory of personality identified as the A-B-C-D theory (David, 2003; David et al., 2002). When an individual has an emotional reaction point C (the emotional

consequence), after some activating agent, event, or experience has occurred (point A), is viewed as the result of the system (point B). A does not cause C, but the belief system that is held about A leads to C (Ziegler, 2001). Many theorists have attempted to illustrate family functions, one of the more well-known theorists in this area is Bowen (1978) who developed the theory of the family system. It is fundamentally based on the concept of differentiation of self (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2000; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008). Bowen's family systems theory (Goldenberg and Goldenberg, 2000; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008) has played an important role in theoretical and clinical development in the field of family therapy (Bowen, 1978; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008).

Self-differentiation is the most central concept in Bowen's theory, it has both intra-psychoic and interpersonal dimensions. On an intra-psychoic level, differentiation refers to the ability to distinguish emotional feelings from other intellectual processes. With the interpersonal level in mind, differentiation involves the capacity to develop a balance autonomy while maintaining closeness with others. Intra-psychoic dimensions of differentiation include emotional reactivity and difficulty in taking an "I" position, while interpersonal dimensions include emotional cut-off and fusion with others. These persons tend to engage in fusion with or emotional cut-off from others in most of their close relationships when under stress. On the other hand, highly differentiated individuals are not overwhelmed by strong emotions, thus do not feel the need to cut-off emotionally, and are able to take the "I" position in relationships that is to acknowledge ownership of one's thoughts and feelings without the need to conform to others' expectations (Roytburd and Myrna, 2008; Kerr and Bowen, 1988; Skowron and Friedlander, 1998). In interpersonal situations, poorly-differentiated persons are thought to engage in fusion or emotional cut-off in response to stress or overwhelming anxiety (Nichols and Schwartz, 2000). Two major situations characterized couples with poor differentiation:

- (a) a state of fusion, where the anxiety to stay alone leads to diffusion of the boundaries between "I" and "We," or
- (b) a state of emotional cut-off, when the diffusion of the boundaries causes one of the partners to feel anxious about losing oneself, and as a result use physical or emotional avoidance or create conflicted relations with the other (Murphy, 1999; Harrison, 2003).

Mental health is a state defined by well-being, partial release from anxiety symptoms and the capacity for establishing constructive relationships as well as the ability to overcome daily pressures (Kruse, 2007; Arpita, 2006; Asch, 2003). A construction close to mental health

is subjective well-being which consists of positive feelings and satisfaction with life including satisfaction with self and others in domains such as family and work (Showers and Ryff, 1996). Bowen says that low differentiation levels contribute to marital conflicts (Bowen, 1978; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008). In view of this, the marital quality is assessed. When a family struggles with powers related to unity, anxiety arises. If unity overcomes, the family is directed towards more emotional function and person's self-obedience decreases and in the wake of this, his/her mental health falls into jeopardy (Bowen, 1978; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008; Murphy, 1999; Campos, 2007). In marital relationship, whenever the differentiation level reduces, fusion takes place between couples, leading to low marital quality and compatibility (Harrison, 2003; Kruse, 2007). Also, physical and mental health of the family members is endangered (Arpita, 2006).

In particular, Bowen's family systems model (Bowen, 1978; Roytburd and Myrna, 2008) emphasized the strong positive relationship of self-differentiation with psychological well-being. These family patterns are believed largely to reflect the cultural values of individualism and independence (Gushue and Constantine, 2003). Bowen (1978) argued that his theory was universal. Nevertheless, we assumed that Bowen's construct of differentiation seems to have relevancy to Iranian culture as well (Kagiticbasi, 2005; Killen and Wainryb, 2000). Empirical findings support these claims regarding the ability of highly-differentiated individuals to manage the stresses of life. Highly-differentiated individuals were found to suffer from lower levels of avoidant and intrusive thoughts (Kagiticbasi, 2005), general psychiatric distress (Killen and Wainryb, 2000), behavioral dysfunctions, trait anxiety and depression (Bartle-Haring and Gregory, 2003). Empirical researches have supported Bowen's theory that links differentiation with psychological well-being. For instance, Skowron and Friedlander (1998) reported that higher levels of differentiation were related to lower levels of psychological symptoms and that differentiation explained 42% of the variance in psychological distress in the sample.

Using a sample of Israeli students, Peleg-Popko (2002) reported that self-differentiation was negatively correlated with social anxiety and physiological symptoms. Surveying 221 adults, Skowron et al. (2003) also found that differentiation was significantly related to psychological well-being. Using a Philippine sample, Tuason and Friedlander (2000) tested the cross-cultural applicability of Bowen theory and reported a significant influence of differentiation on psychological well-being and anxiety, similar to the results from USA samples. Chung and Gale (2006) tested the cross-cultural applicability of Bowen theory and reported that there was a significantly different differentiation of psychological

well-being, self-esteem and depression mood between Korean and European American students. Most studies concerning couples' differentiation examined its contribution to partners' marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Haber (1984), for example, found that couples with higher levels of differentiation had lower levels of relationship conflicts. Another study of married couples also found a significant relationship between differentiation and marital satisfaction (Richards, 1989). In a similar vein, Skowron (2000) found a positive correlation between differentiation and marital satisfaction, with husbands' emotional cut-off scores particularly correlating with both husbands' and wives' marital satisfaction scores (Beal, 1979).

Preceding researches have examined the relationship between differentiation of self level and subjective well-being (Showers and Ryff, 1996; Bohlander, 1996), mental health dimensions and symptoms of psychic disorders (Elison, 2000; Skowron et al., 2004; Murry et al., 2006), marital adjustment (Tina, 1999), styles of marital relationship (Michele and Hobby, 2004; Baum and Shnit, 2005; Campos, 2007; Hollander, 2007), couple's compatibility (Richter, 1998), marital satisfaction (MC Cullough, 2005; Arpita, 2006), cordiality and sexual satisfaction (Birditt and Antonucci, 2008).

Objectives of the study

This study explored the following:

- 1) Effective working of person-centered therapy (PCT) on self-differentiation;
- 2) The study of effectiveness of rational-emotive behavioral therapy (R.E.B.T) on self-differentiation; and
- 3) A study of the significant difference between PCT and R.E.B.T on self-differentiation.

Totally, the present study will attempt to answer several questions like: Are there effectiveness of rational-emotive behavioral therapy (R.E.B.T) and person-centered therapy (PCT) on self-differentiation?

METHODOLOGY

Interventions

Two groups of divorced applicant clients (male and female) who suffered from marital conflict were exposed to two different therapeutic interventions.

Group one

Subjects in this group were treated through Rogers person-centered therapy procedure individually by a trained counselor in the counseling center and was used as a basic model. The main components of Rogers person-centered therapy were rapport,

empathy, reflective, feelings, active listening, facilitation, catharsis, phenomena change, perception change, unconditional positive regard, and self-actualization of the client. This therapeutic method was offered in 8 one-hour sessions. It was held two times a week. After 8 months therapeutic effects were traced.

Group two

In this experimental group, Ellis' rational-emotive-behavioral therapeutic method was implemented. This method was performed by an experienced and well-informed counselor in the counseling center. The therapeutic procedure involved:

- a) Cognitive therapy, e.g changing irrational ideas and verbal shock.
- b) Emotional methods, e.g sense of humor, modeling, and role playing.
- c) Behavioral methods, involving positive reinforcement, change of behavior, training to stop thought.
- d) Home assignment. The therapy involved 8 one-hour sessions. It was held twice a week and therapeutic effects were traced after 8 months.

Research design

The methodology used in this research involved Quasi-experimental design.

Target population

All divorced applicant clients in counseling centers in Sanandaj Iran, were considered as the target population.

Sample and sampling

All divorced applicant clients in counseling centers were considered as the population under study, 112 of whom were selected through stratified random sampling method for self-differentiation. From those diagnosed with differentiation of self inventory-2 (DSI-2), 42 subjects were randomly assigned to three groups (14 subjects in each group), therefore, three groups were formed; PCT, REBT and control group. Table 1 showed summary of clients characters for demographic variables.

Measurement instrument

Differentiation of self inventory-2 (DSI-2)

The DSI (Skowron, 1995) is a 43-item questionnaire ranging from 1 (not all true for me) to 6 (very true for me) using 6-point type scales. The DSI contains four subscales: Emotional reactivity (ER), "I" position (ID), Emotional Cutoff (EC) and fusion with others (FO). The 11-item ER scale assesses the tendency to respond to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses, emotional flooding. Scores are reversed so that higher scores reflect less emotional reactivity or greater differentiation of self. The 11-item IP scale contains items that reflect a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one's convictions even when pressured to do otherwise. Higher scores indicate an ability to take an "I" position or greater differentiation of self. The 13-item EC scale consists of items reflecting fears of intimacy or engulfment in relationships and the accompanying

Table 1. Summary statistics for demographic variables.

Variables		Males	Females
Sex		n =11	n =31
Age	Mean	35.2	33.1
	SD	3.87	4.67
Religiosity	Islam	n =11	n =31
	No Islam	n =0	n =0
Education	Below Junior high	41	51 %
	High school	33%	44%
	year college	22. %	3%
	Master or Doctor	0.4%	2%
employed	Yes	65%	9%
	No	35%	91%
Length of marriage(year)	Mean	8	9
	SD	14.2	8.8
	range	1-15	2-17
Income(dollar)	Mean	301.34	54.23
	SD	56.13	78.23
Current living situation	Live with spouse	21%	14%
	Live with parents	6%	84%
	Live alone	73%	2%

behavioral defenses against those fears. Higher scores indicate less emotional cutoff or greater differentiation. The 8-item FO scale in its original form reflects emotional involvement with significant others and over differentiation with one's parents-taking in parental values, beliefs and expectations without question.

Higher scores indicate less fusion or greater differentiation of self. CFA by Skowron (2005) has confirmed the mentioned subscales. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha. For ER, ID, EC and FO, we had 0.89, 0.81, 0.84 and 0.86 respectively (Moury et al., 2006). In the present study, this questionnaire was translated and submitted to instructors of the Counseling Department of Isfahan University, in order to examine its content validity. However, the questionnaire was tested on 40 clients (17 men and 23 women). These clients were chosen randomly from among whom were referred to counseling centers throughout Isfahan. The subjects were asked to write down whatever ambiguity or question they had about items. Results have revealed that there is no need to correct items. At the end, Cronbach Alpha mentioned scales was 0.89, 0.91, 0.81 and 0.86 respectively, which is adequate for research goals.

Research hypotheses

This research consisted of the following nine hypotheses:

H₁: Person-centered therapy (PCT) is effective on self-differentiation.

H₂: Rational emotive behavioral therapy (R.E.B.T) is effective on self-differentiation.

H₃: There is a significant difference between PCT and R.E.B.T on self-differentiation.

RESULTS

To analyse the data, descriptive statistics methods (means and standard deviations (SD) and inferential statistics methods (MANCOVA, ANCOVA and Bonferroni-test) were used. Table 2 shows that clients' means and standard deviations were different in self-differentiation in three phases of the study (pre-test, post-test and follow-up). The results presented in Table 3, indicate that in post-test, means of self-differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "i" position, emotional cutoff and fusion with other) for groups, a significant difference was found ($P=0.001$, $F=46.09$). However, the results showed that there was a significant difference between PCT and R.E.B.T on post-test means of subscale (Emotional

Table 2. Means and standard deviations of self- differentiation and sub-scale.

Statistics		Means			SD		
		Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up	Pre-test	Post-test	Follow-up
PCT	Self- differentiation	214.34	87.45	84.67	13.83	13.61	14.28
	Emotional reactivity	52.23	18.78	21.57	9.28	8.48	7.35
	"I" position	49.33	17.56	19.34	10.29	8.65	8.57
	Emotional cutoff	57.12	23.45	21.67	8.18	6.98	8.89
	Fusion with other	39.34	15.12	13.35	12.32	11.76	9.09
REBT	Self- differentiation	201.45	81.54	79.32	11.61	14.23	12.49
	Emotional reactivity	57.34	21.43	18.89	8.17	9.59	9.09
	"I" position	47.21	16.98	20.01	11.31	7.35	14.17
	Emotional cut off	55.35	26.06	24.61	9.56	9.11	11.35
	Fusion with other	37.25	14.42	16.11	17.43	10.47	12.11
Control	Self- Differentiation	201.45	197.02	213.03	14.67	16.35	17.06
	Emotional reactivity	57.34	54.11	59.43	11.28	12.78	14.12
	"I" position	47.21	52.45	56.34	15.54	13.67	17.14
	Emotional cutoff	55.35	52.06	53.32	12.43	14.34	13.45
	Fusion with other	37.25	32.89	39.08	16.49	17.45	16.66

reactivity, "I" position, emotional cutoff and fusion with other) for groups. For finding difference between subscale, results were presented in Table 4 with Mancova analysis of variance.

The results presented in Table 4, indicate that in post-test means of self- differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and fusion with other) for groups, F significant difference was found ($P=0/001$). For finding difference between (PCT) and (R.E.B.T) on post-test means of self- differentiation, results presented in Table 5 with Bonferroni post Hoc test. The results presented in Table 5 indicate that Bonferroni post Hoc test was employed to compare the means of self-differentiation and subscale (Emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cutoff and fusion with other) in various pairs of groups. Bonferroni post Hoc test showed that there was a significant difference for PCT and REBT with control group. The results presented in Table 6 indicate that there was no significant difference in phases of the study post-test and follow-up for PCT and REBT. However, there was no significant difference in the other two phases of the study (post-test and follow-up) for PCT and REBT.

DISCUSSION

As it was seen in analysis of finding section, Bonferroni post Hoc test (indicated that the hypotheses of results) indicated the effect of cognitive therapy method on self-differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and fusion with other). The

finding of the research in this regard is in line with that of other studies about the effectiveness of the cognitive therapy method on improving such variables (Showers and Ryff, 1996; Bohlander, 1996; Elison, 2000; Skowen et al., 2004; Murry et al., 2006). The results of this research are in accordance with the theoretical findings and concepts of this approach, since Ellis' approach is in fact, a direct method and sometimes a therapist moves ahead of the client and uses verbal shock. Based on clinical experiences, it seems that especially in the culture of Kurdistan (united of Iran) this method is more effective on self-differentiation and subscale. Since on self-differentiation and subscale-related, clients have conflict in behaviors of family, a suitable approach should be a kind of harsh and direct encounter rather than a mild and indirect encounter (Jakubasck and Gennfr, 1994). Studies by Daniel et al. (2008) are cases in point. Rational emotive-behavioral therapy is based on the assumption that it is our attitude or opinion and not the event as such that causes worry or conflict.

Related clients possessed irrational opinions of some sorts that caused emotional cut off or fusion with other behaviors. Although in individuals who suffer from emotional cut off due to deficient cognitive cycles and in fact, irrational attitude, Ellis' cognitive method has been effective. The only justification would be that though emotional cut off or fusion with other clients suffer a sort of cognitive change, an indirect counseling method that is a method of empathy, unconditional positive welcome and expression of feeling is more effective (Jakubasck and Hubschmid, 1994). Persuading the clients to be active is more important, with that the client can

Table 3. Multmancova analysis of variance (MMANCOVA) on post-test means of self- differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and Fusion with other) for groups.

Variables	Name of test	Values	DF error	DF Hypoth	F	p	Eta Squared	Observation Power
Self- differentiation	Pillai's trace	0.321	47	6	0.214	0.819	0.04	0.12
	Wilks' lambda	0.783	47	6	0.214	0.819	0.04	0.12
	Hotelling's trace	0.045	47	6	0.214	0.819	0.04	0.12
	Roy's largest root	0.665	47	6	0.214	0.819	0.04	0.12
Pre-test, emotional reactivity	Pillai's trace	0.324	47	6	0.412	0.643	0.03	0.09
	Wilks' lambda	0.872	47	6	0.412	0.643	0.03	0.09
	Hotelling's trace	0.432	47	6	0.412	0.643	0.03	0.09
	Roy's largest root	0.324	47	6	0.412	0/643	0.03	0.09
Pre-test, "I" position	Pillai's trace	0.076	47	6	1.03	0.178	0.091	0.23
	Wilks' lambda	0.432	47	6	1.03	0.178	0.091	0.23
	Hotelling's trace	0.321	47	6	1.03	0.178	0.091	0.23
	Roy's largest root	0.032	47	6	1.03	0.178	0.091	0.23
Pre-test, emotional cut off	Pillai's trace	0.432	47	6	1.88	0.128	0.03	0.56
	Wilks' lambda	0.213	47	6	1.88	0.128	0.03	0.56
	Hotelling's Trace	0.678	47	6	1.88	0.128	0.03	0.56
	Roy's largest root	0.432	47	6	1.88	0.128	0.03	0.56
Pre-test, fusion with other	Pillai's trace	0.987	47	6	1.32	0.341	0.13	0.34
	Wilks' lambda	0.902	47	6	1.32	0.341	0.13	0.34
	Hotelling's trace	0.194	47	6	1.32	0.341	0.13	0.34
	Roy's Largest Root	0.326	47	6	1.32	0.341	0.13	0.34
Groups	Pillai's trace	0.704	107	6	8.45	0.0001	0.46	1.00
	Wilks' lambda	0.074	103	6	46.09	0.0001	0.81	1.00
	Hotelling's trace	9.23	98	6	36.12	0.0001	0.79	1.00
	Roy's largest root	9.45	47	3	125.06	0.0001	0.89	1.00

stimulated. The current study is in conformity with other studies such as Tina (1999), Scowron (2000), Michele and Hobby (2004), Baum and Shnit (2005), Campos (2007), and Hollander (2007). Although the results show that both Ellis' cognitive therapy method and client-centered therapy method have been effective on self-differentiation and subscale, it can be assumed that self-differentiation individuals suffer from cognitive problems such as irrational thinking or that they have a biological tendency of self-destruction. These individuals deal with some sort of obligations subconsciously during the course of self-destruction and these factors bring about self-differentiation and subscale, and agitation in them.

Based on the client-centered view, anxious people suffer from a lack of conformity between 'self' and their 'experiences'. This means that a part of their personality, which has been detached as 'self' does not have

conformity with the individual's experiences and this causes a sort of anxiety. According to the present study, Ellis' cognitive approach sought to change the individual's irrational attitude about the outside event to rational attitude, so that its behavioral consequences could change. This study used methods of insight, training of rational thinking, role playing, emotional method and especially behavioral therapy, that is, positive reinforcement, conditioning and stopping thoughts. According to Roger's method, that is, person-centered method, one can use indirect method, and by providing value conditions and unconditional positive welcome will be possible to provide a kind of client reception. This causes the client to rebuild his personality and form coordination between his 'experiences' and 'self', and use this coordination to reach mental health of some sorts. According to Roger and Ellis's approach, both anxiety

Table 4. Mancova analysis of variance (MANCOVA) on post-test means of self- differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and fusion with other) for groups.

Variables	Source variable	Sum Squared	DF	Means Squared	F	P	Eta Squared	Observation Power
Self- differentiation	Pre-test	9.34	1	8.53	0.436	0.324	67	0.01
	Group	6432.23	2	3613.17	167.34	0.0001	1.00	0.92
	Error	743.64	47	13.35	0.0001			
Emotional reactivity	Pre-test	7.12	1	6.31	0.315		89	0.01
	Group	4211.12	2	1502.28	143.45	0.239	1.00	0.86
	Error	531.23	47	11.02	0.0001	0.0001		
"I" position	Pre-test	5.25	1	7.73	0.421	0.348	74	0.01
	Group	5326.46	2	2419.06	174.16	0.0001	1.00	0.87
	Error	653.34	47	12.13	0.0001			
Emotional cut off	Pre-test	4.73	1	5.94	0.741	0.504	91	0.01
	Group	6149.67	2	2132.43	214.16	0.0001	1.00	0.93
	Error	543.68	47	9.67	0.0001			
Fusion with other	Pre-test	4.98	1	6.31	0.523	0.415	86	0.01
	Group	5948.21	2	2311.04	232.36	0.0001	1.00	0.91
	Error	439.08	47	16.21	0.0001			

Table 5. The results Bonferroni post Hoc test for comprasion means of self-differentiation and subscale (Emotional reactivity, "I" position, Emotional cut off and Fusion with other) in groups.

Parameter	Groups	Means	1	2	3
Self- differentiation	PCT	21.34	—	*(p<0.005)	*(p<0.003)
	R.E.B.T	17.45	*(p<0.004)	—	(p<0.003)
	Control	43.21	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.001)	—
Emotional reactivity	PCT	17.06	—	*(p<0.005)	*(p<0.005)
	R.E.B.T	13.56	*(p<0.003)	—	(p<0.001)
	Control	42.56	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.001)	—
"I" position	PCT	19.79	—	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.001)
	R.E.B.T	16.49	*(p<0.005)	—	(p<0.001)
	Control	41.61	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.005)	—
Emotional cut off	PCT	16.83	—	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.004)
	R.E.B.T	15.06	*(p<0.005)	—	(p<0.001)
	Control	39.32	*(p<0.001)	*(p<0.001)	—
Fusion with other	PCT	18.36	—	*(p<0.005)	*(p<0.005)
	R.E.B.T	17.84	*(p<0.001)	—	(p<0.001)
	Control	37.73	*(p<0.005)	*(p<0.001)	—

therapies have been successful, the results of the curent study is in conformity with studies conducted by Akagy

(2001), Bradshaw and Slade (2003), Saunders (1996) and Shehni (2000). In sum, it can be stated that the

Table 6. Comparing mean differences of post-test and follow-up scores on dependant variables of self-differentiation and subscale (emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and Fusion with other) for groups through t test.

Dependent variable	Groups	Posttest- Follow (t test)	df	p
Self- Differentiation	PCT	3.43	1	0.34
	R.E.B.T	2.21	1	0.317
	Control	3.07	1	0.632
Emotional reactivity	PCT	1.62	1	0.701
	R.E.B.T	2.92	1	0.462
	Control	2.37	1	0.138
"I" position	PCT	4.21	1	0.627
	R.E.B.T	3.38	1	0.784
	Control	3.05	1	0.432
Emotional cut off	PCT	2.72	1	0.226
	R.E.B.T	3.79	1	0.413
	Control	4.93	1	0.514
Fusion with other	PCT	3.24	1	0.852
	R.E.B.T	3.32	1	0.321
	Control	3.36	1	0.902

present study's hypotheses were confirmed. The current study was a valuable study of its kind in the examination of the effects of counseling therapy, especially person-centered methods and rational- emotive- behavioral approach on self-differentiation and subscale (Emotional reactivity, "I" position, emotional cut off and fusion with others). It is hoped that the findings of the current study be noted in Iran and other parts of the world so that counselors and therapists choose appropriate approaches to family behavioral problems in any fields and achieve therapy aims and help the society of affected clients more.

The results of the study point to several issues related to prevention and intervention of psychological distress for Iranian clients and couples. There was valid evidence that adjustment difficulties or marital conflict may be a sign of underlying differentiation in couples rather than simply treating adjustment problems, therefore, therapists may need to focus on how low health levels influence psychological conflicts. Although Iranian individuals are considered collectivistic and thus, it is necessary to encourage individuals to achieve self-differentiation, psychological rational and empathy with one another. we believe that there is a valid need for Iranian individuals to strive for empathy and self-differentiation. As noted by Rogers (2000), in a collectivist culture, respect for the process of actuality is a self means working with, not against the individual's values and norms. Indeed, in

such a situation, clinicians need to be very attentive to the fact that the marital conflict process in the Iranian divorced clients are very different from other cultures. This study clearly shows that both the process of self-differentiation and health are equally necessary for psychological well-being in each culture. It is interesting to note that irrationality is the most important factor for psychological well-being and self-differentiation of individuals. Although, Iranians are likely to over emphasize the process of irrationality and pay less attention to the process of rationality, therapists need to be sensitive to the needs of the process of rationality of the clients while maintaining close relationships and empathy with others.

Furthermore, therapists should not take either/or position in terms of relations of individual's value orientation and differentiation with psychological adjustment, they should rather take a more balanced both/and position, especially when working with clients. In order to increase therapeutic effects on clients and couples who experience marital conflict, counselors and psychotherapists need to make effort to increase the process of rationality and understanding of empathy, which is closely related to well-functioning of an individual. In collectivistic and hierarchical Iranians, individuals functioning level can be improved when therapists using the Ellis and Rogers approaches focus more on the process of rationality and understand empathy and thus protect the dignity of the

individual and honors the good name of the divorced clients. However, effective therapeutic strategies with divorced clients need to incorporate unique self characteristics needs to be highlighted. Considering that the Ellis and Rogers models are one of the most popular models used among Iranian researchers and therapists, the assumption of the models, in particular the concept of process of rationality and understanding of self-differentiation, needs to be examined carefully for their appropriateness and relevance.

It is expected that the results of the present study would have meaningful implications to prevent and treat individuals and families. Future research on this issue should include several type of participants and include individual measures to discern whether the similarities and differences found in the present study result from individual level of value orientation or from belonging to a specific belief. It will also be valuable to examine the problem belief in the relationship of individual functioning with each other, since a high process of rationality and understanding of self-differentiation are assumed to be predicated on family functioning and the definition of marital conflict functioning may be different across different cultures.

Conclusion

Based on the study, it can be concluded that:

- 1) Teams of pschotherapists and counselors with different theoretical backgrounds can work together;
- 2) Decisions to allocate clients to either therapy are based on pragmatic assessments of likelihood of benefit and are theoretically congruent.

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