

# Investigating the Impact of Intimacy Education Enriched by Islamic Teachings on the Satisfaction and Intimacy of Introverted Couples in Yazd, Iran

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## Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Having intimate relationships among married couples is one of the most important factors in creating lasting marriages and lack of intimate relationships is one of the factors causing failure in family life. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of education of intimacy enriched by Islamic teachings on the satisfaction and intimacy of introverted couples.

**Methods:** This is a quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test control group design. The statistical population included all married women referring to Yazd counseling centers due to problems and marital conflicts. A sample of 30 married women who referred to Yazd counseling centers were selected by appropriate sampling after screening and were randomly assigned to two groups of 15. The data were collected using the scale of the Neo Five Big Five Personality Questionnaire, Enrique's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Olia and colleagues' Intimate Inventory of Couples, and the data were analyzed using covariance analysis. In this study, all the ethical considerations have been observed and no conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Results:** The results indicated that there is a significant difference between intervention and control groups in mean scores related to satisfaction and all its sub-scales ( $P < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the overall intimacy score and the scores related to its subscales improved in the experimental group making the difference between the two groups significant ( $P < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** Based on the results of the present study, the education of intimacy enriched by Islamic teachings can be a useful therapeutic and educational program for reducing the problems related to the relationship between the couples.

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## Summary

### Background and Objective

Marriage makes up the core of family and, following it, healthy couples form healthy families and healthy families shape a healthy society (1). Therefore, in order to have a healthy society, the health of the first social unit, i.e., family should be cared about. One of the determining factors in families' health is marital

satisfaction (2). Marital satisfaction refers to the couple's love for each other and their positive attitude towards marriage and overall assessment of the status of marital relationship or the individual's current romantic relationship. Studies on marital satisfaction indicate that there is a significantly positive relationship between marital satisfaction and general health (3, 4), hopefulness and happiness (5) and mental well-being (6).

One of the emotional needs of couples is intimate relationship, which provides the ground for happiness, sense of meaningfulness and a feeling of marital satisfaction in life (7). Bagaruzi believes that intimacy is closeness, similarity and a lovely personal relationship with another person and requires awareness, deep understanding, acceptance and expression of thoughts, sympathy and commitment (8). Sustainable intimacy is one of the requirements of a lasting marriage. Accordingly, when intimacy diminishes, the ability and the desire for solving the problems and overcoming the obstacles and persistence in confronting the fears and doubts and the ability to do that also die down. Besides, when the couples recreate and continue intimacy, commitment, cooperation, faithfulness and creative management of individual differences are also arranged for in their relationship. The results of studies show that development of intimacy between the married couples is one of the important factors leading to a sustainable marriage and sexual satisfaction and avoiding an intimate relationship, on the other hand, causes a failure in one's family life (9, 10).

The existence of many marital problems necessitate not only the existence of experts in this area but also preventive interventions to resolve the potential problems before they become chronic. One of the required measures in this regard is to enrich marriages. The fundamental goal of any marriage enrichment approach is to help the couples develop stronger and stable marital relationships (11). The marriage enrichment movement has a great role in the growth and development of millions of couples. In marital enrichment, the existing factors in a relationship are promoted and changed with the purpose of changing marital dissatisfaction into satisfaction (12).

Numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of different methods of enrichment on intimacy and marital satisfaction. However, few studies have experimentally examined the effects of enrichment based on religious teachings particularly in introverted couples considering the development of educational programs based on the Iranian-Islamic cultural context. Given the fact that Islam is a part of the culture of Iranian families and has a special position in their life, and considering the growing number of divorces and knowing about the ineffectiveness of adaptability in marital relationships and art in creating a balance to preserve solidarity in marital relationships, and, on the other hand, considering the mental and social effects of troubled marital relationships, which sometimes leads to divorce, the present study seeks to investigate the effect of teachings based on the Islamic culture on families. This is an attempt to examine the effectiveness of developing intimacy enriched by Islamic teachings in promoting satisfaction and intimacy among the introverted couples.

#### Methods

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** Explaining the aims of the research to married women referring to counseling centers, the researcher asked them to

participate in this study, if they wish, and in complete uncertainty, and emphasized that their information would be kept confidential. By informing women and obtaining their permission, women were consented to participate in the study.

This is a quasi-experimental study with pre-test and post-test control group design. The statistical population of the study included all married women referring to counseling and psychiatry centers in Yazd, Iran, out of which 30 were selected by accessible sampling method and were randomly assigned to two groups of experimental and control ( $N_o=15$ ). Only the experimental group received the treatment.

The criteria for entering the study included having marital troubles, having physical-mental health, having a guidance school degree, being aged between 20 and 40, having scores with a standard deviation lower than 1 in the scales of marital satisfaction and intimacy, and being introverted, which was determined based on the NEO Big Five Personality Questionnaire (the short form) and interviews. The participants with a history of drugs use and mental illnesses such as depression and personality disorders and those being absent for more than one session were excluded from the study. The instruments used in the study included Neo Big Five Personality Questionnaire, Enrique's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire, Olia and colleagues' Intimate Inventory of Couples. Covariance analysis was used for analyzing the collected data.

#### Results

The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in the scores related to marital satisfaction and all its sub-scales on the posttest ( $p<0.05$ ). Furthermore, the scores related to intimacy and all its sub-scales improved on the posttest in the treatment group making the difference between the two groups significant ( $p<0.05$ ).

#### Conclusion

The findings showed that introverted couples receiving intimacy education enriched by Islamic teachings could more effectively promote their marital intimacy in all dimensions. This finding is in line with that of Ebrahimi, Sana'ei and Nazari (11), Olia et al. (12) and Ghasemi Arganeh (13). Based on the results, it can be concluded that religious teachings has a positive effect on marital intimacy by affecting some important aspects of life. In addition, these couples could also promote their marital satisfaction. The results of the present study were consistent with those of Reza'ei et al. (14), Amiri and Hashemian (15), Javadi et al. (16), Braithwaite et al. (17) and David and Stafford (18).

The results indicate that education enriched by Islamic teachings can be a useful therapeutic and educational program for reducing the interpersonal problems related to the relationship between the couples.

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**Ethical Considerations**

The Ethics Committee in Biomedical Research of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences has confirmed this research.

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**Conflict of interest**

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

**Authors' contributions**

Research Background, Discussion, Conclusions, and Overall Writing Article: First Author; Final guidance and final editing: Second Author; Consultation: Third Author.

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