



A Comparison of the Effectiveness of the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) Program and the Premarital SYMBIS Model in Improving the Fear of Marriage among Unmarried Girls

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article type

Original research

Pages: 31-37

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Email: masomebehbodi@gmail.com

Article history:

Received: 2022/02/26

Revised: 2022/07/01

Accepted: 2022/07/10

Published online: 2022/09/07

Keywords:

Premarital, PICK, SYMBIS, Fear of marriage, Unmarried girls

ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: Youth marriage has become a major challenge in Iranian society. Young people avoid marriage for various reasons, and the phenomenon of marriage delay has emerged as a problem; hence, the present study aimed to compare the effectiveness of the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) program and the premarital SYMBIS model (Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts) in improving the fear of marriage among unmarried girls. **Methods:** The research was semi-experimental (pretest-posttest with a control group and a one-month follow-up). The statistical population of the research consisted of unmarried female students over 30 years of age at Islamic Azad University, South Tehran branch. After citation at the university (through placing an advertisement and invitation on the student social networks) and after screening of 53 volunteer female students according to research criteria by the fear of marriage questionnaire by Samiei et al. (2013), 45 girls were selected and 15 girls were randomly assigned to the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) program group (2006) by Van Epp, and 15 girls were assigned to the premarital SYMBIS model group (Parrott and Parrott (2016), and 15 girls were assigned to the control group. The data were analyzed using the repeated-measures analysis of variance. **Results:** According to the results, the intervention based on the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) and the Premarital SYMBIS Model affected the fear of spouse ($F=38.80$, $P=0.001$), fear of financial management inability ($F=19.71$, $P=0.001$), fear of spouse's limitations ($F=28.00$, $P=0.001$), self-fear ($F=18.63$, $P=0.001$), fear of spouse's betrayal ($F=31.13$, $P=0.001$), and financial fear ($F=14.33$, $P=0.001$). The effect was stable in the follow-up stage. **Conclusion:** Based on the results, it is necessary to use the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) program and the Premarital SYMBIS model to reduce the fear of marriage and marriage inefficiency beliefs in unmarried girls on the verge of marriage. Therefore, psychologists and marriage therapists can take the advantage of the premarital training method based on the PICK program and SYMBIS model along with other training methods to reduce the fear of marriage in girls on the verge of marriage.



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How to Cite This Article: Hashemi, S., Behboodi, M., & Dokanehi Fard, F. (2022). A Comparison of the Effectiveness of the Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) Program and the Premarital SYMBIS Model in Improving the Fear of Marriage among Unmarried Girls. *jayps*, 3(1): 31-37

Introduction

A look at the available statistics shows that the average age of marriage of girls has faced a major change. Accordingly, between 1985 and 2011, it was accompanied by a gradual increase, and this increase has accelerated in the last one or two decades. So that the age of marriage in Iran in 1985 was 19 years; in 1996, 20 years; In 2001, 21 years old; In 2006, it was 22 years; and in 2011, it was 23.5 years, and the average age of marriage for girls increased from 18 to 28 years (Bahirani & Hazrati Soumae, 2011).

One of the factors that prevent the right choice of a spouse is the fear that a person has towards marriage (Shiri, Golmohamedian & Hojjatkah, 2015). This fear of marriage may have originated from the family and community environment, or it may have turned into inflexible beliefs about marriage with self-talk and whispers, which have prevented marriage (Rostami, Navabinjad, & Farzad, 2019). All over the world, many men and women do not bear the responsibility of marriage until the end of their lives due to the fear of marriage and remaining single. Girls also show more resistance to marriage because they are worried that after marriage, they will go into the role of a traditional woman and be required to obey the man as the head of the family (Allameh, 2017). Factors such as fear of problems after marriage, not having a job and housing, weak communication skills, not trusting the opposite sex, continuing education, fear of betrayal, fear of self and unsuccessful experiences are among the issues that delay marriage. Moreover, studies indicate that, over time, people have doubts about choosing a spouse, which is partly due to cognitive distortions, the type of schemas and their effects on the criteria for choosing a spouse, and unrealistic and ineffective expectations. Many people consider intimacy and a good marriage to be an illusion due to difficult childhood experiences and unsuccessful adult relationships. Therefore, it is necessary to be aware of fundamental attitudes and beliefs about marriage and correct them to have a satisfactory marriage; Research shows that modifying the schema and replacing adaptive beliefs can effectively reduce the fear of marriage (Mokhtari, Yousefi, & Manshai, 1400).

One of the programs used in the area of premarital education is the premarital awareness and interpersonal choices program (PICK). This program was developed based on the Relational Attachment Model (RAM) by Van Epp (2006) as

a model for examining close relationships. The program (PICK) organizes these five communication components into two parts: intellectual knowledge and heart knowledge; the intellectual knowledge part refers to the knowledge and ready hand knowledge of the spouse or fiancée in the stage of familiarity and romantic relationships narrowly and profoundly. These five characteristics are recognized by the acronym (FACES), namely, family background (F), conscientious attitudes and actions (A), potential adaptation (C), patterns of relating to others (E), and communication skills (S). The knowledge of the heart part, the components of trust, encouragement, and contact, refers to the development of emotional connection or feeling of love between people in the acquaintance stage. In this part, the participants learn the way of growth, commitment, and expansion of attachment in a relationship and how to balance these factors and strengthen the boundaries in a relationship (Van Epp, Futris, Van Epp, & Campbell, 2008).

Another premarital counseling training program is the "Strengthening Marriage Before It Begins (SYMBIS)" model. This relatively new preventive program prepares people for marriage so that they can learn about the unspoken rules to free them to accept. The rejection or change of rules caused by the main family will increase, which will destabilize their future relationship (Mirahmadi, Fatehizadeh, Etemidi, Jazayeri, and Pasandideh, 2018). By emphasizing seven basic categories in the dating and engagement stage, this model leads couples to acquire these skills and enrich communication skills (Parrot & Parrot, 2016). This model was designed by the Relationship Development Center affiliated with Seattle Pacific University. Les Parrott & Leslie Parrott (1995; quoted from Parrott & Parrott, 2006), in collaboration with the psychology department of the university, designed an educational program with the aim of preventive measures and improvement of couple relationships before and after marriage called SYMBIS, which now is a part of the university student's curriculum. The name of this model is derived from the first letters of the words "consolidation of marriage before the beginning". Over the past several years, hundreds of couples have participated in this program, and enrollment in these courses is increasing; A unique feature of this program is the Marriage

Counselors Club, which connects young couples in their first year of life with experienced, working couples (Marks, 2007). According to the mentioned materials, premarital skills training can improve skills, change attitudes toward marriage, and empower young people to prepare for marriage. Thus, today, methods to increase young people's self-esteem, increase interpersonal skills, and modify behavioral patterns will reduce the fear of marriage. So, the current research aims to compare the effectiveness of the awareness and interpersonal choices program and the marriage consolidation model before marriage (Symbis) on the fear of marriage in unmarried girls.

Method

The current research is semi-experimental (pre-test - post-test with a control group and a one-month follow-up). The statistical population of this study included unmarried female students over 30 years from Azad University, South Tehran Branch, who, after announcing the invitation to the university (through posting advertisements and invitations on the students' social networks) and after screening with the fear of marriage questionnaire from among 53 volunteer students with Following the research criteria, 45 students were selected. For these people, the research plan includes the number of meetings at the venue, the duration of each meeting, and the issues raised and fully explained in the meetings. After obtaining their satisfaction and willingness to the research company, a written consent form was obtained. Their names were included in the research list. In this research, 15 students in the pre-marriage program group using interpersonal awareness and choice, 15 students in the Simbis pre-marriage model group, and 15 other students were randomly assigned to the control group.

Research Tools

1. Premarital Fears Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed, validated, and standardized by Samii, Yousefi, and Neshat Dost (2013). It contains 83 items that are graded on a five-point scale from completely agree to completely disagree. Also, this questionnaire has six factors which include: fear of spouse (29 questions), fear of financial management inability (19 questions), fear of spouse's limitations (9 questions), fear of self (11 questions), fear of spouse's betrayal (6 questions) and financial fear (7 questions). The internal consistency of this questionnaire was

reported based on Cronbach's alpha of 0.97. Convergent validity and construct validity have also been reported. Also, Cronbach's alpha of the factors was 0.66, 0.73, 0.84, 0.91, 0.86, 0.88, and 0.86, respectively.

Implementation

After selecting the research samples and obtaining consent, and announcing the confidentiality of the research results, before starting the interventions, all three experimental groups (a) and experimental (b), and the control group responded to the questionnaire on attitudes towards marriage and fear of marriage; Then the experimental group (A) was trained in a pre-marriage program in 8 sessions for 90 minutes weekly, and the experimental group (B) was also trained in 8 sessions for 90 minutes weekly. A group of Simbis pre-marriage models was placed, But the control group did not receive any intervention during this period. After the treatment sessions, all three groups (experimental (a) and (b) and the control group) answered the questionnaire on attitudes towards marriage and fear of marriage. The collected data were analyzed using repeated measures analysis of variance. In order to comply with the ethical standards after the end of the research, the control group was also divided into two groups, with five couples in each group, and in 8 sessions of 90 minutes, they were trained in the pre-marriage program in the manner of the interpersonal awareness and choice program and the pre-marriage SYMBIS model. Premarital program in the way of interpersonal awareness and choice program: one of the programs used in the field of premarital education is the Premarital Awareness and Interpersonal Choice Program (PICK). This program was developed based on the Relational Attachment Model (RAM) by Van Ip (2006) as a model for examining close relationships. This theoretical model is a representation of communication links in a relationship.

Premarital counseling based on SYMBIS model: In this research, premarital counseling was based on SYMBIS model, which was created by Les and Leslie Parrott (2016), and in the research of Ghezelseflu and Rostami (1400), Rostami and Ghezelseflu (2017), Mirahmadi and colleagues (2018) and Rostami et al. (2019) were confirmed and used.

Results

The mean and standard deviation of the age of the participants of the PICK test group is 33.33

(1.96) years, the mean and the standard deviation of the age of the participants of the SYMBIS test group is 32.75 (1.28), and the mean and the standard deviation of the control group is 33.91 (88 /1) is the year. The level of education of the participants of the PICK experimental group was one undergraduate student (8.3%), six master's students (50%), and five doctoral students (41.7%), respectively, the educational level of the SYMBIS experimental group was 1 (8.3%), seven people (58.3%) and four people (33.3%) and the level of education of the control group was three undergraduate students (25%), six master's students (50%) and three doctoral students (25%), respectively. The information in the table 2 shows that the scores of the experimental groups compared to the control group in the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of spouse's infidelity, and financial fear in both experimental groups of unmarried girls. It has shown improvement in the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of spouse's infidelity, and financial fear in the post-test phase and its stability in the follow-up phase.

Based on the obtained results, the significance level of the repeated measurement variance analysis shows that the repetition of the test means that the average difference of all the subscales of fear of marriage in the three stages of measurement is significant ($P < 0.01$). The effect of this "practical meaningfulness" in the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of spouse's infidelity, and financial fear is 0.57, 0.40, and 0.49, respectively. , 0.39, 0.52, and 0.40, that is, respectively, 57, 40, 49, 39, 52, and 40% of the total variance or individual differences in reducing the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear Among the wife's limitations, fear of self, fear of wife's betrayal and financial fear in unmarried girls can be explained through experimental variables. According to the obtained results, the results of the three stages were done separately for each group.

The results of the Bonferroni test show that the difference in the mean of the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of spouse's infidelity, and financial fear between

pre-test, post-test and follow-up stages is significant ($P = 0.001$).) but the average difference between the post-test and the follow-up is insignificant, indicating that the results obtained in the follow-up stage did not return and the effect of the intervention was stable. Table 6 compared the effect of two intervention approaches on dependent variables (fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of spouse's infidelity, and financial fear). As can be seen in the above table, between the two groups of the Interpersonal Awareness and Choice Program (PICK) and the SYMBIS premarital model in the subscales of fear of spouse, fear of inability to manage finances, fear of spouse's limitations, fear of self, fear of There is no significant difference between spouse's betrayal and financial fear in the post-test and follow-up stages. These results mean the effectiveness of both methods in the mentioned subscales.

Conclusion

Despite the existing studies concerning increasing the age of marriage, we have seen fewer studies on the issue of intervention in the crisis of marriage and choosing a spouse. Since marriage is considered the most important decision and one of the necessities of human life, the investigation of psychological interventions effective in reducing the fear of marriage among young people seems to be necessary, and conducting this research will increase knowledge in the region of young people's marriage. The existence of incompatible schemas, lack of correct communication skills, and wrong and ineffective portrayal of marriage are important reasons and factors that are likely to cause fear of marriage among young people. Based on this, this research aimed to compare the effectiveness of the pre-marriage program in the manner of interpersonal awareness and choice program (PICK) and SYMBIS pre-marriage model (SYMBIS) on the fear of marriage among unmarried girls. The results showed. The results indicate that the participants of both experimental groups showed a significant decrease in their attitude towards choosing a spouse and its factors, as well as the fear of marriage at the end of the intervention. Furthermore, these results showed that no intervention was superior to another by comparing the groups two by two in Tukey's posthoc test. In the present study, unmarried girls learned to manage their fear of marriage by

removing the focus from dysfunctional mental beliefs about marriage and focusing on more realistic beliefs, and the other hand, on the weak points of their communication skills, which is considered as one of the barriers to marriage. Find and seek to improve their skills (Qazlesflo and Rostami, 1400).

According to the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the interpersonal awareness and choice program (PICK) and the SYMBIS pre-marriage model (SYMBIS) can adapt to pre-marriage training, and the results were somewhat supportive of the theoretical model. In fact, one of the special conditions that a person faces is deciding to get married; This decision requires considering various aspects such as adapting to another person's situation, becoming mentally and emotionally independent from parents, taking on life responsibilities, etc. People have a vague fear of marriage and their future because they are unaware of the methods of organizing themselves and do not show much desire in this field. It is important to note that since the sample of this research was only female students and the sampling is available, the generalization of the results to other segments of society (especially unmarried boys about to get married) should be made with caution. In the end, the model considered in the research should be tested by using different tools and having the characteristics of the cultural and religious background of the society. In order to develop a broader and more complete model, other variables related to the fear of marriage should be measured (including We can refer to personality variables, identity styles, attachment styles, marriage desires, marriage values, and paternal family experience). Finally, marriage counselors are suggested to use these two methods for marriage counseling to increase their productivity according to the effectiveness of the pre-marriage program in the manner of interpersonal awareness and choice program (PICK) and SYMBIS pre-marriage model.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article have no conflict of interest in conducting and writing it.

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