Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions

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Chapter V

Summary, Conclusions and Suggestions

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discussed the results of the current study with relation to the hypotheses in the summary. Limitations of the study were stated and suggestions were made for future research. Finally, contributions and implications of the research were noted.

5.2. Summary

This research represents an attempt to study the effectiveness of Bibliotherapy on marital satisfaction and love styles of distressed married couples. The study throws light on marital satisfaction of every distressed wife and husband studied. The present study was designed to examine the correlations of the three components of Sternberg’s Triangular Love i.e. Intimacy, Passion and Commitment between every distressed wife and husband.

In the light of available related literature the following hypotheses were framed:

\( H_1 \) Intimacy, passion and commitment of wives have significant positive relationship with intimacy, passion and commitment of husbands.

\( H_2 \) Marital satisfaction of wives has significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction of husbands.

\( H_3 \) Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of distressed married couples.

\( H_4 \) Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment of distressed married couples.

\( H_5 \) Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of male partners in distressed married couples.

\( H_6 \) Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment of male partners in distressed married couples.
H_7 Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of female partners in distressed married couples.

H_8 Bibliotherapy has a significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment of female partners in distressed married couples.

For the purpose of this research, data was collected from qualified and reputed organizations such as banks, IT and insurance companies in Pune (India). Total 150 couples (N=300) participated in the research. The dependent variables i.e. intimacy, passion, commitment and marital satisfaction were assessed by using two instruments: Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS) and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). After the scoring process, 30 couples, with the least scores (a score below 71) in Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire were selected for randomized control group pre-test/post-test design. The 30 couples (60 subjects) were randomly assigned into two groups --- experimental and control groups. Bibliotherapy was performed for the experimental group (15 couples) in 12 sessions. The control group (15 couples) did not get any treatment. For the second time, the research tools administrated for both control and experimental groups after Bibliotherapy. After the treatment for experimental group, the goal was to compare scores of control and experimental groups with a proper statistical method. In the end, it was significant to note the effectiveness of Bibliotherapy on marital satisfaction and love styles of distressed married couples. 

After statistical data analyses, following conclusions were drawn: Intimacy, passion, commitment and marital satisfaction of one partner of a married couple are positively linearly related to intimacy, passion and commitment of another partner. High scores on marital satisfaction of each and every wife are paired with high scores on marital satisfaction of each and every husband.

Bibliotherapy was found to be a good intervention in strengthening marital satisfaction of distressed married couples. The positive effects of Bibliotherapy were observed in intimacy, passion and commitment components of Stenberg’s Love Triangle Scale among distressed married couples. Significant improvement was observed in marital satisfaction of male partners due to Bibliotherapy. Besides, significant improvement was observed in marital satisfaction of female partners of distressed married couples. Improvement was also observed in
components of Stenberg’s triangle Love among male partners of distressed married couples due to Bibliotherapy. Visible changes were also observed in components of Stenberg’s triangle Love among female partners of distressed married couples due to Bibliotherapy.

5.3. Conclusions

The present study concluded that Bibliotherapy is an effective treatment in improving Sternberg love styles’ components and marital satisfaction of distressed married couples. Besides, the correlation between intimacy, passion, commitment and marital satisfaction of distressed couples was found to be a useful resource in application of Bibliotherapy.

Following are the conclusions of the study:

- There is a strong positive linear relationship between intimacy, passion & commitment in each and every wife and husband (N=300,150 couples). The results indicate that intimacy, passion and commitment of one partner of a married couple are accompanied by changes in another partner. Since, significant positive correlation was observed in intimacy, passion and commitment of husbands and wives, hypothesis H$_1$ is accepted.

- There is a strong positive linear relationship between marital satisfaction of each and every wife and husband (N=300,150 Couples). The results indicate that marital satisfaction of one partner of a married couple is accompanied by changes in another partner. Since significant positive relationship was observed in marital satisfaction of husbands and wives, hypothesis H$_2$ is accepted.

- Marital satisfaction of distressed married couples was found to have improved significantly after Bibliotherapy. Since Bibliotherapy had significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of distressed married couples, hypothesis H$_3$ is accepted.

- Intimacy, passion and commitment of distressed married couples was found to have improved significantly after Bibliotherapy. Since Bibliotherapy had significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment; all components
of Stenberg’s Triangle Love, among distressed married couples, hypothesis H₄ is accepted.

- There was significant improvement in marital satisfaction of male partners of distressed married couples due to Bibliotherapy. Since Bibliotherapy had significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of male partners of distressed married couples, hypothesis H₅ is accepted.

- The scores on intimacy, passion and commitment were found to have increased significantly after Bibliotherapy in male partners of distressed married couples. Since Bibliotherapy had a significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment of male partners of distressed married couples, hypothesis H₆ is accepted.

- There was significant improvement in marital satisfaction of female partners of distressed married couples due to Bibliotherapy. Since Bibliotherapy had significant positive effect on marital satisfaction of female partners of distressed married couples, hypothesis H₇ is accepted.

- The scores on intimacy, passion and commitment were found to have increased significantly after Bibliotherapy in female partners of distressed married couples. Since Bibliotherapy had a significant positive effect on intimacy, passion and commitment of female partners of distressed married couples, hypothesis H₈ is accepted.

The researcher attempted to stress that reading is a healing experience for all participants. The participants gradually got acquainted with treatment by books. Supporting the functions of bringing books and couples together is a necessary stage in making the experience of Bibliotherapy meaningful, beneficial, and pleasurable for the couples and satisfying for the therapist.

Generally couples seemed excited about their experience with Bibliotherapy. The researcher and the couples had a common slogan: “We read books to find out who we are. What other people, real or imaginary, do and think and feel is an essential guide to our understanding of what we ourselves are and may become.” The couples identified with the character, events, or ideas
presented in a text and relate his or her own situation to the reading. The participants became emotionally involved in the concepts of the books and are able to release pent-up emotions under safe conditions. After catharsis, the researcher led the participants to a constructive discussion of his or her thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Through this intervention, the couples became aware that his/her problems can be resolved, and the researcher recommended courses of action in doing so.

5.4. Limitations of the Present Study

Like any other study, this study too has certain limitations. The use of self-report questionnaires is a limitation as actual behaviors may be different from the self-reported behaviors. Besides, the information collected is inherently subjective in nature (Schwarz, 1999). The data was also collected from a relatively healthy, middle-class Indian sample, limiting the generalizability of the findings to populations with characteristics that vary greatly from the current research sample. The researcher’s native language is neither Hindi nor Marathi, so for her developing a rapport with the couples was not easy. The sample was limited to age group of 25 to 45 years old, so the utility of the treatment for age below 25 years and above 45 years was not evaluated. In depth qualitative analysis could not be carried out due to lack of resources.

5.5. Suggestions for Future Research

The study can be extended to include a broader sample, which would cover people from different age groups. However, for greater generalizability, a more racially and socioeconomically diverse sample would be beneficial for future research. More in-depth, longitudinal analysis of the love components and marital satisfaction of couples should be initiated. Further research should be done on more heterogeneous samples (higher and lower levels of education, unemployed subjects, subjects from urban and rural areas etc.). Researchers would consider newly married and cohabiting couples. Investigating relationships within multicultural settings also would be of interest. This intervention would be useful individually for a person who is faced with a crisis situation like divorce. In addition, it would be particularly useful for research to be conducted in clinical
populations so that a broader perspective could be gained regarding the nature of
the love in distressed marital relationships. For future researches, this study can
provide critical information on the recent status of Bibliotherapy which has been
considered love styles. Bibliotherapy practices demand further investigation. This
is especially true where fiction is employed. Additionally, although hundreds of
articles have been written about Bibliotherapy, little exists about counselor
preparation (Pehrsson & McMillen, 2005).

5.6. Contribution and Implication

In psychology research, the outcomes of martial issues are important for
marital counseling. For instance, the insights given by the present study may
demonstrate a view for formulation of relationship guidance. This study would be
beneficial to therapists and researchers who are interested in the field of conjoint
therapy. This study also enhances the knowledge of applying self-help therapy.
Results of the present research have important implications for three
developmental transitions within the marital relationship: cohabitating/premarital
couples, newly-wed couples, and couples with children. The current research
study provided information on the issues of distressed married couples
particularly on the marital satisfaction and their love styles. The researcher
attempted to demonstrate the practical applications of Bibliotherapy and provided
proper self-help books needed for distressed married couples to improve the
quality of their marital life and love styles. Expectedly, the obtained information
of current research heightens the awareness about proper books which helps
clients to heal and therapist to equip an appropriate and beneficial treatment.

Bibliotherapy is best used by prepared practitioners who are skilled and can
supervise its application. Reading books is recognized as a means to help
individuals deal with deep concerns and can offer strategies specific to
developmental issues. Nevertheless, Bibliotherapy appears to be in its infant
stage. Although empirical research is lacking, few would disagree that stories
affect human emotions.