

## The Effectiveness of the Native Training Model Designed Based on Lazarus Theory and Behavioral Planning Theory in the Consolidation of Family Functioning

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Consolidation of family functioning is considered as one of the most important solutions for elevating and strengthening marital life. This research aims at investigating the effectiveness of the native model based on Lazarus theory and behavioral planning theory on the consolidation of family functioning.

**Methods:** This research was a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-posttest design and control group. The population includes all the couples referring to counseling centers of Yazd Province, in Iran, 2019. Purposive sampling was used to select 34 couples who have the inclusion criteria, and they were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The couples answered the family consolidation questionnaire designed by Movahed. Finally, data analysis was done by SPSS version 16 and an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). The significance level of research was considered to be  $\alpha=0.05$ .

**Results:** The results showed that there is a significant difference between the estimated mean score of the family consolidation in the experimental and control groups. Also, the findings suggest that compared with the control group, the posttest scores of the performance, problem-solving, relationship, emotional involvement, emotional support, role play, behavioral control, media, and superstition have been improved in the experimental group. This significant difference results from the training intervention. However, the variable of religious beliefs has not changed significantly.

**Conclusion:** The training intervention done by the model has developed based on Lazarus theory and behavioral planning theory which can consolidate the family functioning.

**Keywords:** Lazarus multifaceted treatment, Behavioral planning theory, Consolidation of family functioning

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### Introduction

The concept of family is considered as a fundamental social institution for every government and society. So, the family is one of the first institutions that should be stabilized in every society. This stabilization will be only achieved by a scientific understanding of its functions and dysfunctions (1). Family is defined as the platform of the individuals' growth or failure (2). There are various approaches and methods of consolidating family functioning (3). As the family applies different methods for a wide variety of problems, multifaceted treatment is an open system that encourages technical eclecticism. A therapist employing the multifaceted approach derives some techniques from some other treatment systems (4). Lazarus multifaceted approach is based on the principle that a human's complex personality can be classified into seven major areas including behavior, emotional responses, emotions, mental imaginations, cognition, interpersonal relationships, drugs, biological functions of nutrition, and sport (5, 6, 7). Multifaceted treatment begins with a comprehensive evaluation of seven aspects of human performance and their interactions. Full assessment and treatment programs should be developed for every aspect, and cognitive roles are related to every aspect of the personality (8). Various quantitative studies have been performed by domestic and foreign researchers (9, 10, 11). Research (12) has proposed a family consolidation model based on McMaster's model and investigated its effectiveness on couples live in Yazd. This research aims at answering the question of whether the localized model designed based on Lazarus theory and behavioral planning theory can consolidate the family functioning or not. Ardiyan (2018) has performed combined research by interviewing 27 people in four groups including divorce applicant couples, parents, social workers, counselors working in counseling centers, and judges. The sample involved divorce applicants who were referred to the justice department (13). This research has employed the planned behavior theory. Both theories of reasoned action and planned behavior are focused on theoretical structures in the

area of motivating factors as the predictors of the behavior. Studies suggest that the most effective training programs are based on theoretical approaches rooted in behavioral change patterns of planned behavior theory(5,6). According to the theory of reasoned action, intention leads to a special proper action only when behavior is under control. If behaviors are not under the person's control i.e. if acting depends on other people or the person does not have the necessary skills for acting properly, it is assumed that the relationship between the intention and behavior will be weakened. Michi& etal (2005) believed that people pay attention to the consequences of their actions before making a decision(14). Various studies have been performed by domestic researchers (15, 16, 17). The importance of counseling is evident to everyone, and it has gained special significance in people's lives. Moreover, it seems that the use of non-scientific methods that are not proportional to the provincial culture by therapists has led to people's dissatisfaction and distrust. Consequently, this research attempts to apply Lazarus multifaceted treatment approach and behavioral planning theory to propose a native model proportional to the society's needs, to fill the scientific gap, and then to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed model on family consolidation.

### Methods

The present research is a quasi-experimental study with a pretest-posttest design and the control group. From people referring to counseling centers, 34 people were selected and randomly assigned to two groups. The first group received a training intervention, and the second group was considered as the control group. The pretest was performed for both groups. The participants were people who faced problems in their marital life and referred to counseling centers. The group training was provided in eleven 90-min sessions by the researcher who had an experience of family therapy for several years. The subjects were married for more than five years and they have faced several problems. Firstly, the criteria for

participating in group counseling sessions and the goal of establishing the group were explained clearly, and the regulations including on-time attendance, paying no cost, and the title of sessions were addressed. Then, the members get familiar with each other. To analyze the sessions, researchers used descriptive and inferential statistics. Then, data analysis was done by SPSS version 16 and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) with  $\alpha = .05$ .

ANCOVA discovers the variance changes of the dependent variable due to changes in the covariate variable and discriminates it from the variance changes due to changes in the levels of the qualitative variable (18).

the values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Levin test, and test of homogeneity of variances gradient are all insignificant. In other words, the null hypothesis in these tests is confirmed and it can be concluded that the scores are normally distributed, the variances of both experimental and control groups are equal in the pretest, and the regression gradient of variables is also homogeneous. Hence, the presuppositions of the ANCOVA test is approved in the present study.

### Research tools

The tool used in this study is a questionnaire designed by Pourmovahed (12) which final version includes 56 items. The items should be answered based on Likert four-degree scales ranging from quite agree to quite disagree with the respective scores of 1, 2, 3, and 4 (1-4). This questionnaire includes 10 factors or components including the overall performance, problem-solving, communication, emotional support, emotional involvement, role play, behavioral control, religious

beliefs, media, and superstition. Receiving a high score in every component and the whole questionnaire indicates a poor family consolidation. This questionnaire includes 56 items and the score range is 56-224 for the total tool. To evaluate the face and the content validity, the questionnaire was assessed by 9 experts (three psychiatrists, four doctors of psychology, and two masters of psychology). The content validity was obtained as 0.79. McMaster's family assessment device was used for determining the convergent validity, and the correlation between the scores of family consolidation questionnaire and McMaster's family assessment device was calculated (12). The reliability of the family consolidation questionnaire was evaluated by retesting (immediately and after two weeks), internal consistency, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Twenty couples were studied in this research. Besides, the scores of internal consistency were obtained as the followings: The overall performance (0.82), problem-solving (0.70), relationship (0.91), role play (0.86), behavioral control (0.77), emotional involvement (0.86), emotional support (0.81), religious beliefs (0.91), superstition (0.90), and media (0.90). (12).

It should be noted that in this test, a low score indicates better performance and a high score indicates poor performance

This study was performed by observing all the ethical considerations under the ethical code of IR.IAU.YAZD.REC.1398.007.

### Results

The collected data were analyzed by descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics.

Descriptive findings.

**Table1.** The content of the sessions

Session No.	Content (goal)
Session 1	Welcoming, introducing the group members, explaining the criteria of participating in counseling sessions, the goal of establishing the group, rules, and regulation, performing the pretest (consolidation questionnaire) for both groups
Session 2	Discussing the subject, the importance of commitment to the family, intimacy with family members based on the issue of behavior in Lazarus self-control theory, impulsiveness, patience derived from behavioral planning theory
Session 3	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, effective relationship with family members, attending the counseling sessions derived from emotion in Lazarus theory
Session 4	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, the concept of forgiveness as a success factor, acting in / acting out derived from cognition in Lazarus theory
Session 5	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, strengthening the senses, spending time with the family, derived from senses in Lazarus theory
Session 6	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, family reunion, derived from the relationship in Lazarus theory
Session 7	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, self-confidence training, the effect of the media, derived from mental imaginations in Lazarus theory, luxury orientation derived from planning theory
Session 8	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, paying attention to physical dimensions, nutrition variety, sport, derived from physical dimensions in Lazarus theory
Session 9	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, parenting-need meeting, derived from behavioral intention in planning theory
Session 10	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, positive attitude towards marriage, achieving peace in marital life, derived from planning theory
Session 11	Reviewing the assignments of the previous session, final assessment by consolidation questionnaire in both experimental and control groups

**Table 2.** Descriptive indicators for different variables before and after the intervention

	Group	Stage	Mean	SD
Variable	Experimental	Pretest	14.53	2.577
		Posttest	11.29	2.494
Performance	Control	Pretest	14.29	3.837
		Posttest	14.18	3.046
Problem solving	Experimental	Pretest	13.12	2.088
		Posttest	9.71	2.054
	Control	Pretest	10.82	1.912
		Posttest	10.82	2.128
Relationship	Experimental	Pretest	20.24	3.914
		Posttest	14.82	3.302
	Control	Pretest	20.65	5.578
		Posttest	19.94	4.337
Emotional involvement	Experimental	Pretest	13.76	2.905
		Posttest	10.29	3.901
	Control	Pretest	14.24	4.395
		Posttest	14.12	3.276
Emotional support	Experimental	Pretest	10.94	2.680
		Posttest	7.59	1.970
	Control	Pretest	10.94	2.947

	Group	Stage	Mean	SD
Role play	Experimental	Posttest	11.24	2.488
		Pretest	17.29	2.910
	Control	Posttest	11.41	2.476
		Pretest	14.65	4.329
Behavioral control	Experimental	Posttest	14.53	3.659
		Pretest	13.82	2.744
	Control	Posttest	11.76	2.195
		Pretest	12.76	2.195
Religious beliefs	Experimental	Posttest	12.35	2.178
		Pretest	8.65	1.869
	Control	Posttest	9.35	2.827
		Pretest	9.35	2.422
Media	Experimental	Posttest	9.59	2.551
		Pretest	12.24	3.212
	Control	Posttest	6.94	2.633
		Pretest	10.47	3.300
Superstition	Experimental	Posttest	10.47	3.300
		Pretest	8.94	2.794
	Control	Posttest	5.76	1.751
		Pretest	8.59	3.280
Family consolidation	Experimental	Posttest	8.47	2.452
		Pretest	130.41	18.021
	Control	Posttest	97.00	14.133
		Pretest	126.76	20.222
		Posttest	125.71	12.454

Findings suggest that compared to the pretest, the posttest scores of performance, problem-solving, relationship, emotional involvement, emotional support, role play, behavioral control, media, and superstition have decreased in the experimental group; whereas, the scores of religious beliefs have increased. Also, the results presented that the posttest scores of different variables in the control group have not changed compared to the pretest.

In the following section, inferential statistics were used for investigating the hypotheses. The results of covariance pre-assumptions showed that the covariance condition was observed. The results of the Shapiro-Wilk test and the variance equality indicated the normality of the error distribution of

variables in the population ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The results showed that the error distribution of scores was normal in research variables. Levene's test was also utilized to examine the equality of variances (for equality of variances in experimental and control groups). The results indicated that the assumption of the equality of variances was true and the use of analysis of covariance was permitted. Furthermore, the analysis of variance was utilized to test the assumption of homogeneity of line slope. This interaction was not significant, indicating compliance with the assumption of homogeneity of line slope. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of regression line slope was true for research variables; and the analysis of covariance test can be used. ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table3.** The results of the analysis of covariance for investigating the effect of the training intervention

		<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>Degree of freedom</b>	<b>Mean squares</b>	<b>F statistic</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Consolidation of family functioning	Pretest	2109.924	1	2109.924	18.334	0.001
	Group	7704.882	1	7704.882	66.950	0.001
	Error	3567.60	31	115.084		
Improvement of the members' performance	Pretest	105.040	1	105.040	22.777	0.001
	Group	77.048	1	77.048	16.707	0.001
	Error	142.960	31	4.612		
Improvement of the members' problem-solving skill	Pretest	52.510	1	52.510	18.606	0.001
	Group	42.131	1	42.131	14.928	0.001
	Error	87.490	31	2.822		
Improvement of relationship	Pretest	253.940	1	253.940	35.454	0.001
	Group	201.775	1	201.775	28.243	0.001
	Error	221.472	31	7.144		
Improvement of involvement	Pretest	173.649	1	173.649	22.277	0.001
	Group	105.427	1	105.427	13.525	0.001
	Error	241.645	31	7.795		
Improvement of emotional support	Pretest	77.007	1	77.007	28.362	0.001
	Group	113.059	1	113.059	41.640	0.001
	Error	84.170	31	2.715		
Improvement of role play	Pretest	236.825	1	236.82	97.204	0.001
	Group	192.191	1	192.191	78.884	0.001
	Error	75.528	31	2.436		
Improvement of behavioral control	Pretest	81.276	1	81.276	35.157	0.001
	Group	13.026	1	13.026	5.634	0.024
	Error	71.665	31	2.312		
Improvement of religious beliefs	Pretest	141.528	1	141.528	48.494	0.001
	Group	1.681	1	1.681	0.576	0.454
	Error	90.472	31	2.918		
Improvement of the use of media	Pretest	131.802	1	131.802	26.640	0.001
	Group	168.975	1	168.975	34.153	0.001
	Error	153.374	31	4.948		
The decrease in superstitious attitudes	Pretest	62.318	1	62.318	23.282	0.001
	Group	69.645	1	69.645	26.019	0.001
	Error	82.976	31	2.677		



**Table4.** The results of estimated Marginal Means for experimental and control groups

variables	Marginal means	
	Control	Experimental
Family consolidation	126/479	96/227
Performance	14/242	11/229
Problem solving	11/558	8/972
Relationship	19/821	14/944
Emotional support	13/971	10/441
Emotional involvement	11/235	7/588
Role play	15/506	10/436
Behavioral control	12/693	11/425
Religious beliefs	9/245	9/696
Media	11/021	6/391
Superstition	8/551	5/684

As seen in the table3, family consolidation training based on Lazarus theory and behavioral planning theory was effective considering all areas. Regarding the type of the variables, role play has had the highest effectiveness, and problem-solving improvement has had the least effectiveness. These effects have been significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). It should be mentioned that the effect of the training program on religion was not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). table4 shows estimated Marginal Means for experimental and control groups in dimensions of family consolidations.

### Discussion

This study aims at investigate the effectiveness of the native model designed based on Lazarus theory and behavioral planning theory on the consolidation of family functioning. The results suggest that training this model has improved family consolidation by 37.2% (at the significance level of 0.001). The results of this research are consistent with the findings of another study (19) suggesting that group training by Lazarus multifaceted approach is effective in the increase of marital adjustment in women. Also, this research is consistent with the combined research performed by Ardiyan (13) using behavioral planning theory and interviewing 27 people in four groups including divorce applicant couples, parents, social workers, counselors of counseling centers, and judges. The study investigated the use of behavioral planning theory in family consolidation.

To explain these findings, it should be noted that as behavioral planning theory is focused on the motivational and attitudinal factors in human behavior, it can also be effective in the consolidation of family functioning and transforming the families' intention and attitude toward their lives.

In a study carried out by Mumy et al. (20) titled "Decreasing marital conflicts by problem-solving training in people referring to the counseling center of Ilam Relief Committee". The results demonstrated a significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of the mean scores of cooperation increase, sexual relation increase, emotional reactions decrease, interpersonal relationship decrease with their relatives, increase of interpersonal relationships with their spouse's relatives and friends, and separating financial matters. Reviewing their research articles that included over 200 papers, Hyman Syerz and Block concluded that important and effective interventions are based on training the couples. In such interventions, couples learn how to control their relationship and avoid negative relationship cycles (21).

Rahmani et al. performed a study titled "The effect of group counseling based on Lazarus multifaceted approach on mothers' relationship with their adolescent daughters". The research was a semi-experimental study with the experimental and control groups. The findings showed a significant difference between the experimental

and control groups in terms of emotional subscales, simulation, and relationship, i.e. the training program had a positive effect on mothers' relationship with their daughters (22). In a study (23) investigating families with an obsessive person, the findings suggested that training has improved the family's overall performance.

Baloukh et al. conducted a study titled "The predictive role of emotion regulation in marital satisfaction". The study was focused on the relationship between the regulation of negative emotions and marital satisfaction. In this regard, an increase in marital adjustment and constructive marriage depends on acquiring mental and communication skills such as self-regulation and self-control (24).

Mahmood Abadi (2017) introduced the six indicators of a healthy family namely the commitment to family, appreciation, and affection, positive relationship, spending enjoyable times with each other, and the ability to bear the pressures and handle the crises. This finding is consistent with the results of the study (25). Zareei Mahmoodabadi and Zareei(2018) believes Self-efficacy in divorce management can help couples to make the right decision and to be aware of its consequences. People who apply for a divorce ask themselves if it is possible to return and continue the marital life (26).

Then, These families can adapt themselves to the changing conditions, while families with poor functioning increase their strict structures and will not act effectively anymore after a while (27,28). One of the limitations of this research is generalization in the research results. Therefore, it is suggested that this study be performed on other women with different characteristics and the result be announced.

### Conclusion

To elucidate these findings, it can be said that family consolidation has different aspects. As

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Lazarus multifaceted theory focused on seven aspects of personality, this research tries to consider these aspects comprehensively to consolidate people's marital lives. So, this intervention has improved the family members' problem-solving, their relationship and so on. One of the factors threatening family consolidation is marital conflicts. These conflicts can have several aspects, so training interventions can be effective on family members' performance, solving conflicts, and improving the members' relationship with each other or with other people. As suggested in this research and other consistent studies, if family members receive proper training in different areas, it will be the best and the most effective way to transform marital life.

As with any other research, this research has been faced with some constraints; because sampling has been done in a purposive manner. So, generalizing the results to other populations should be done with precaution. It is suggested to apply this native model to some of the families referring to the treatment centers to evaluate this model and compare the results with the findings of the present study.

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### Authors' contribution

Conceptualization, J.I. and H.Z.M.; Methodology, S.V. and A.A. Formal Analysis, A.A. Investigation, H.Z.M. Writing, S.V. Original draft J.I. Review and Editing, H.Z. and, A.A.; Resources, J.I. Supervision, H.Z.M.

All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible about and question related to article.

### Conflict of interests

Researches declare no conflict of interest in this research.



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