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Effectiveness of Group Couples Therapy Based on Transactional Analysis on Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Adjustment among Women Seeking Divorce

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis (TA) in improving five conflict resolution styles—integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising—and marital adjustment among women seeking divorce.

Methods and Materials: This quasi-experimental study employed a pretest–posttest design with a control group. The statistical population consisted of women aged 20–60 years seeking divorce who attended family counseling centers, psychological clinics, and treatment centers in Tehran. Thirty eligible participants were selected through non-random purposive sampling and randomly assigned to an experimental group (n=15) and a control group (n=15). The experimental group received eight sessions of group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis, whereas the control group received no intervention during the study period. Data were collected using the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) and Spanier's Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Because the ROCI-II assesses five distinct conflict resolution styles without an overall composite score, each style was analyzed separately as a dependent variable. Data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) and univariate ANCOVA with Bonferroni correction in SPSS-27.

Findings: MANCOVA revealed a significant overall group effect on the combined set of five conflict resolution styles (Wilks' λ=0.40, F(5,22)=6.60, p<0.001, partial η^2=0.60). Univariate analyses demonstrated significant intervention effects on the integrating style (F(1,27)=20.50, p<0.001, partial η^2=0.43), avoiding style (F(1,27)=14.06, p=0.001, partial η^2=0.34), dominating style (F(1,27)=8.58, p=0.007, partial η^2=0.24), compromising style (F(1,27)=8.49, p=0.007, partial η^2=0.24), and marital adjustment (F(1,27)=12.64, p=0.001, partial η^2=0.32). However, the intervention effect on the obliging style was not statistically significant (p=0.264).

Conclusion: Group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis appears effective in modifying most conflict resolution styles and improving marital adjustment among women seeking divorce, although its effects vary across conflict styles.

Keywords: *Transactional Analysis; Group Couples Therapy; Conflict Resolution Styles; Marital Adjustment; Women Seeking Divorce; Divorce.*

1. Introduction

Marriage is one of the most significant interpersonal and social institutions through which individuals seek emotional security, intimacy, companionship, mutual support, and continuity of family life. The quality of marital relationships is closely associated with psychological well-being, family functioning, and the broader stability of the social environment. Nevertheless, marital relationships may become vulnerable to persistent tension when couples experience ineffective communication, repeated unresolved disagreements, unmet emotional needs, rigid interactional patterns, and an inability to negotiate differences constructively. When such problems persist, marital conflict may become chronic, emotional closeness may decline, and the relationship may progressively move toward separation or divorce. Couples seeking divorce often present with a combination of relational dissatisfaction, ineffective communication, reduced intimacy, emotional exhaustion, and recurrent conflict patterns that have become resistant to ordinary attempts at resolution (Abbasi Bourandagh et al., 2023; Panahifar & Momeni, 2021; Saadati Shamir et al., 2018). Divorce, therefore, is rarely the result of a single disagreement; rather, it may represent the cumulative outcome of repetitive maladaptive exchanges, negative interpretations of the partner's behavior, unsuccessful conflict management, and declining marital adjustment over time.

Marital conflict is not inherently pathological because disagreement is a normal component of close relationships. What differentiates adaptive from maladaptive marital functioning is often not the presence of conflict itself but the manner in which spouses interpret, express, regulate, and resolve disagreements. Conflict resolution refers to the behavioral and cognitive strategies individuals use when managing incompatible goals, expectations, needs, or perspectives within interpersonal relationships. Effective conflict management requires flexible communication, recognition of the partner's perspective, emotional regulation, willingness to negotiate, and the ability to select a response appropriate to the relational context (Whatling, 2022). In contrast, persistent use of rigid, coercive, avoidant, overly submissive, or hostile strategies may intensify emotional distance and reduce the likelihood of constructive problem solving. Research has increasingly demonstrated that conflict resolution styles are meaningfully associated with marital satisfaction and marital adjustment, highlighting the importance of examining not simply whether couples experience disagreement, but how they respond to it (Ozguc & Tanriverdi, 2021; Ünal & Akgün, 2020).

A useful framework for conceptualizing conflict management is Rahim's multidimensional model, which distinguishes integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising styles. The integrating style reflects high concern for both self and others and involves open exchange of information, exploration of differences, and efforts to identify mutually acceptable solutions. The dominating style reflects high concern for self and low concern for the other party and is characterized by assertive or controlling attempts to impose one's position. The obliging style emphasizes the concerns of the other person at the expense of one's own preferences, whereas the avoiding style is characterized by withdrawal, postponement, or reluctance to engage directly with conflict. The compromising style occupies an intermediate position and involves reciprocal concessions to reach a workable solution. These styles may have different implications for marital functioning depending on frequency, flexibility, and relational context. Evidence suggests that more collaborative strategies are generally associated with better marital outcomes, whereas rigid avoidance, domination, and chronically dysfunctional patterns may correspond with lower relationship quality and greater psychological strain (Emami et al., 2021; Kraczla, 2023). In couples experiencing severe conflict, therefore, therapeutic interventions should ideally target not only the frequency of disagreements but also the interactional mechanisms through which conflicts are maintained.

Marital adjustment is another central construct in understanding the functioning of couples at risk of separation. It reflects the degree to which spouses achieve satisfactory adaptation to marital life through agreement on important issues, emotional and behavioral cohesion, affectional expression, and overall satisfaction with the relationship. Marital adjustment is multidimensional and involves the capacity to coordinate expectations, manage differences, maintain emotional connection, and sustain a workable balance between individual needs and relational demands. Low marital adjustment often accompanies repeated conflict, communication breakdown, emotional withdrawal, and reduced intimacy. These processes may reinforce each other in a cyclical manner: poor conflict resolution reduces marital adjustment, while low adjustment makes constructive conflict management more difficult. Studies involving couples with psychological and relational difficulties have supported the close association between

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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conflict resolution patterns and marital adjustment (Ozguc & Tanriverdi, 2021; Ünal & Akgün, 2020). Accordingly, interventions that modify interpersonal transactions and conflict-management strategies may simultaneously improve broader marital functioning.

Among the psychotherapeutic approaches developed to address maladaptive interpersonal patterns, Transactional Analysis offers a particularly relevant framework for couple and group interventions. Transactional Analysis was originally developed as an interpersonal and intrapsychic theory emphasizing the relationship between personality structure, communication, repetitive relational patterns, and decision-making. A central proposition of this approach is that individuals communicate from different ego states, conventionally conceptualized as Parent, Adult, and Child, and that the quality of interpersonal exchanges depends partly on the ego states from which transactions originate and are received. Complementary transactions may sustain communication, whereas crossed and ulterior transactions can produce misunderstanding, defensiveness, emotional escalation, and repetitive relational difficulties. Transactional Analysis also emphasizes psychological games, life positions, strokes, and recurring interactional scripts that influence how individuals experience themselves and others in intimate relationships. Contemporary relational applications of Transactional Analysis place particular emphasis on mutuality, emotional engagement, relational patterns, and the therapeutic relationship itself as a context for change (Cook, 2025).

The relevance of Transactional Analysis to marital relationships lies in its focus on recurrent communication cycles rather than isolated symptoms. Many distressed couples repeatedly enact the same interpersonal sequences even when the immediate content of their disagreements changes. One spouse may communicate from a critical or controlling Parent position while the other responds from an adapted or rebellious Child position, creating a cycle of accusation, defensiveness, submission, withdrawal, or counterattack. Over time, these transactions may become automatic and reinforce negative expectations about the relationship. By increasing awareness of ego states and teaching participants to shift toward more Adult-to-Adult communication, Transactional Analysis may help couples identify problematic exchanges before they escalate. The approach also provides a language for understanding hidden relational messages, unmet needs for recognition, repetitive psychological games, and dysfunctional role patterns. These concepts may be particularly useful among couples who have experienced prolonged conflict because they enable participants to reinterpret conflict as part of a modifiable interactional system rather than solely as evidence of personal incompatibility.

Empirical findings increasingly support the application of Transactional Analysis to relational and marital difficulties. Studies have reported beneficial effects of Transactional Analysis on marital adjustment, marital dissatisfaction, communication skills, conflict resolution, intimacy, positive feelings toward one's spouse, and broader indicators of relationship quality. Group-based Transactional Analysis has been associated with improved marital adjustment among couples, suggesting that structured training in ego states, communication, and interactional awareness may promote more adaptive relational functioning (Bahramian et al., 2024; Sedighi et al., 2025). Similarly, improvements in marital satisfaction and quality of life have been observed among women experiencing divorce-related or marital problems following Transactional Analysis interventions (Boostani & Tabatabaeinejad, 2023; Noushadi & Motamedi, 2015). These findings are particularly relevant to women seeking divorce, whose relationships may already have reached a stage characterized by significant emotional deterioration and entrenched conflict patterns.

Transactional Analysis may also influence marital functioning through changes in communication. Communication problems are among the most frequently reported difficulties in distressed marriages because ineffective communication can transform manageable disagreements into repeated cycles of blame, defensiveness, withdrawal, and resentment. Studies have shown that Transactional Analysis training can improve communication skills and reduce maladaptive attributional processes among women experiencing marital incompatibility (Safinia et al., 2020). Evidence from couples facing complex contextual stressors has likewise indicated that Transactional Analysis can modify communication patterns and strengthen more constructive exchanges (Pourshahriari et al., 2021). Comparative studies have further suggested that Transactional Analysis can improve communication skills and conflict resolution in couples attending counseling services (Jalili et al., 2022; Jlili & Eftehkhar, 2020). Such results support the view that the approach may influence both overt communication behavior and the deeper interpersonal structures that shape conflict responses.

The potential benefits of Transactional Analysis extend beyond communication alone. Marital intimacy, emotional closeness, and the ability to experience the partner as

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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psychologically accessible are also central to relationship stability. Recent findings suggest that Transactional Analysis training may influence multiple dimensions of marital intimacy rather than producing a uniform effect across all relational domains (Javid et al., 2025). This differential pattern is important because marital interventions may not affect all components of relationship functioning equally. In women affected by marital betrayal, group therapy based on Transactional Analysis has also been associated with improvements in cognitive emotion regulation and marital intimacy, indicating that the approach may help participants reinterpret emotional experiences and engage more adaptively with painful relational material (Fazel Hamedani & Ghorban Jahromi, 2024). Similarly, Transactional Analysis has demonstrated relevance in helping individuals process psychologically complex experiences outside conventional marital conflict contexts, such as therapeutic work involving perinatal mental illness, suggesting that its relational framework can be applied across diverse psychological presentations (Haynes, 2022).

Theoretical and empirical evidence also indicates that conflict styles may be shaped by enduring cognitive, emotional, and personality-related processes. Early maladaptive schemas, for example, may affect marital quality indirectly through the conflict resolution strategies that individuals employ in intimate relationships (Emami et al., 2021). This implies that conflict behavior is not merely situational but may reflect deeper expectations about self, others, safety, acceptance, power, and emotional needs. Transactional Analysis is particularly relevant in this regard because it addresses life scripts, ego-state functioning, and repetitive interpersonal decisions that may operate beneath observable conflict behavior. Its focus on psychological games also provides a framework for understanding why couples may repeatedly participate in interactions that are unsatisfactory yet familiar. Interventions that promote awareness of these patterns may therefore facilitate greater flexibility in conflict management.

Research comparing Transactional Analysis with other couple-therapy and psychotherapy approaches provides further support for its clinical utility. Transactional Analysis has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing marital conflict among couples seeking divorce, including in comparison with schema-focused approaches (Rasoulirad & Rahmani, 2021). Research comparing schema therapy and Transactional Analysis among women experiencing marital conflict has also found improvements in differentiation of self and conflict resolution strategies, suggesting that Transactional Analysis may influence both intrapersonal autonomy and interpersonal problem solving (Rahnamaei Zekavat & Meshkani, 2025). Other studies have compared Transactional Analysis with Imago-based interventions and reported improvements in communication skills, conflict resolution, and rejection sensitivity (Jalili et al., 2022). Transactional Analysis has also been compared with brief strategic family therapy in addressing verbal contradictions, neglect, and abuse in couple relationships, further indicating its relevance to dysfunctional interpersonal exchanges (Darbani et al., 2019).

The clinical significance of these findings becomes more apparent when considering couples who are actively seeking divorce. Such couples often present after a prolonged history of unresolved difficulties, making brief or single-focus interventions potentially insufficient. Therapeutic programs for this population increasingly integrate multiple relational mechanisms, including compassion, forgiveness, emotional understanding, communication restructuring, and Transactional Analysis concepts (Faghihi et al., 2025). Other couple-therapy approaches have also shown that marital conflict and adjustment can improve among couples seeking divorce, demonstrating that relational distress at this stage does not necessarily imply that change is impossible (Abbasi Bourandagh et al., 2023; Panahifar & Momeni, 2021; Saadati Shamir et al., 2018). Nevertheless, the severity and chronicity of relational dysfunction in this population make it essential to identify which specific dimensions of conflict respond to treatment and which may remain relatively resistant.

This issue is especially important because different conflict resolution styles may not change in the same direction or to the same extent. An intervention that increases integrating and compromising responses may simultaneously reduce dominating and avoiding behavior, while having little influence on obliging behavior. Such differential effects may reflect differences in the psychological functions served by each style. For example, avoidance may decrease when participants gain confidence in direct communication, while domination may decline as individuals learn to identify controlling Parent-state transactions. Integrating and compromising responses may increase as Adult-state functioning and collaborative negotiation improve. Obliging behavior, however, may be more closely tied to entrenched beliefs about self-sacrifice, rejection, dependency, or relational security and may therefore require more intensive or longer-term therapeutic work. Research on ego states and conflict behavior supports

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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the proposition that habitual conflict responses are meaningfully related to broader personality and interaction patterns rather than being interchangeable strategies (Kraczla, 2023).

Additional studies have documented favorable outcomes of Transactional Analysis across diverse relational settings. Transactional Analysis therapy has reduced marital conflict and modified love styles among athlete couples (Samiee Reigi, 2024), while group training has enhanced positive feelings toward spouses among married women (Mozaffaripour & Vakili, 2022). Improvements in marital quality and positive thinking have also been reported among married women receiving Transactional Analysis interventions (Tavakoli Saberi & Shah Nazari, 2020). In a counseling context involving Christian couples, Transactional Analysis has been discussed alongside solution-focused brief therapy as a potentially useful framework for strengthening marital satisfaction (Adzovie, 2023). Collectively, these findings suggest that Transactional Analysis is sufficiently flexible to address cognitive, emotional, communicative, and relational dimensions of couple functioning across different populations and cultural contexts.

Despite the expanding evidence base, several limitations remain in the literature. Many studies have focused on broad outcomes such as marital satisfaction, marital conflict, intimacy, communication, or general marital adjustment without simultaneously examining the distinct conflict resolution styles that may underlie these broader outcomes. This is a meaningful omission because aggregate measures can obscure differential therapeutic effects. A couple may demonstrate overall improvement while continuing to rely on one maladaptive conflict style, or a particular style may change substantially without producing immediate clinical normalization in global marital adjustment. Furthermore, recent Transactional Analysis research suggests that treatment effects may vary across relational dimensions rather than occurring uniformly (Javid et al., 2025; Sedighi et al., 2025). Therefore, examining several conflict-management patterns separately may provide a more precise understanding of how Transactional Analysis produces change.

The use of a group format also warrants specific attention. Group-based couple interventions may offer opportunities for normalization, interpersonal learning, observation of alternative relational patterns, corrective feedback, and rehearsal of new communication skills. Within a Transactional Analysis framework, group interaction may make ego states, strokes, psychological games, and relational positions particularly observable because participants can identify patterns not only in their own relationships but also in the interactions and experiences of others. Previous work has supported the effectiveness of group Transactional Analysis in marital and relational contexts (Bahramian et al., 2024; Fazel Hamedani & Ghorban Jahromi, 2024; Noushadi & Motamedi, 2015). Nevertheless, further investigation is required among women seeking divorce, particularly when the objective is to determine whether the intervention modifies specific conflict resolution styles alongside marital adjustment.

The need for such investigation is further reinforced by the fact that marital adjustment is influenced by both interpersonal and psychological factors. Depression and psychological distress, for example, have been linked with both conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment, indicating that relational functioning cannot be understood independently of individual emotional states (Ozguc & Tanriverdi, 2021). At the same time, structured interventions focused on relational communication and conflict processes can lead to measurable improvements even among highly distressed couples. Transactional Analysis may be especially suitable in this context because it combines psychoeducation, self-observation, interpersonal analysis, and behavioral change within a coherent relational framework. Its emphasis on recognizing maladaptive transactions and replacing them with more conscious, Adult-based communication offers a plausible mechanism for improving both conflict management and marital adaptation.

Recent developments in relational Transactional Analysis have also emphasized that effective couple therapy should move beyond simple communication instruction toward an understanding of the relational system jointly created by partners (Cook, 2025). From this perspective, conflict is not located solely within one partner but emerges from reciprocal patterns that are continuously reinforced through interaction. This relational orientation is compatible with findings showing that marital outcomes are shaped by both partners' conflict styles and by actor–partner effects rather than by isolated individual behavior (Ünal & Akgün, 2020). It also provides a conceptual basis for expecting that changes in one participant's awareness, transactions, and conflict responses may alter the broader relational pattern even when treatment participation is evaluated at the individual level.

Taken together, the available literature indicates that Transactional Analysis has considerable potential for improving marital functioning, communication, intimacy,

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

conflict resolution, and adjustment, yet the evidence remains insufficient regarding its differentiated effects on the five major conflict resolution styles among women seeking divorce. Existing research supports its application to marital dissatisfaction, conflict, communication difficulties, intimacy problems, emotional regulation, and relational quality (Boostani & Tabatabaeinejad, 2023; Fazel Hamedani & Ghorban Jahromi, 2024; Mozaffaripour & Vakili, 2022; Samiee Reigi, 2024), while comparative and integrative interventions further demonstrate its relevance in populations facing substantial marital distress (Faghihi et al., 2025; Rahnamaei Zekavat & Meshkani, 2025; Rasoulirad & Rahmani, 2021). However, a more differentiated analysis is required to determine whether Transactional Analysis produces similar effects across integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising styles and whether such changes are accompanied by improvement in overall marital adjustment.

Accordingly, the present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis on integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment among women seeking divorce.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was applied in terms of purpose and employed a quasi-experimental pretest–posttest design with a control group. In this design, the independent variable, namely group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis, was implemented to examine its effects on the dependent variables of conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment. Initially, participants in both the experimental and control groups completed the pretest assessments. Subsequently, the therapeutic intervention was administered only to the experimental group, while the control group received no psychological intervention during the study period. Following completion of the intervention sessions, both groups were reassessed at the posttest stage. A quasi-experimental design was selected because it provided relative control over potential confounding variables while enabling examination of changes in the dependent variables from pretest to posttest and comparison of these changes between the intervention and control conditions. The statistical population consisted of women aged 20–60 years who were seeking divorce and had referred to family counseling centers, psychological clinics, and treatment centers in Tehran during the period of data collection. A total of 30 eligible participants were selected using non-probability purposive sampling and were subsequently randomly assigned to an experimental group (n=15) and a control group (n=15). Random allocation was employed to reduce the potential influence of extraneous variables and strengthen the internal validity of the study. Inclusion criteria were being between 20 and 60 years of age, having been married for at least two years, possessing at least a high school diploma, having a moderate socioeconomic and cultural background, having adequate reading and writing literacy, and providing informed consent to participate in the intervention sessions and research assessments. Exclusion criteria included receiving another concurrent psychotherapeutic intervention, absence from more than two intervention sessions, presence of a severe psychiatric disorder, use of mood-altering psychotropic medication without stable treatment status, and unwillingness to continue participation in the study. Participants in the control group were placed on a waiting list and were given the opportunity to receive the intervention after completion of the research process. Ethical considerations included obtaining written informed consent from all participants, maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of individual information, informing participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without adverse consequences, and providing sufficient information regarding the objectives, procedures, and general conditions of participation.

2.2. Measures

The Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II (ROCI-II) was used to assess participants' conflict resolution styles. This instrument was developed by Rahim in 1983 to measure five distinct approaches to interpersonal conflict management, including integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising styles. The questionnaire consists of 28 items, with individual items contributing to one of the five conflict management dimensions. Because the instrument conceptualizes the five styles as distinct patterns of responding to interpersonal conflict, it does not generate a meaningful overall composite score; therefore, each subscale was treated separately in the present study. In the original psychometric study conducted on a sample of 1,219 participants, Rahim reported support for the five-factor structure of the instrument as well as satisfactory test–retest reliability and internal consistency coefficients for the

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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subscales. Rahim and Magner subsequently reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.77 for the subscales, and in another study involving 1,474 participants, they demonstrated satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity together with internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.76 to 0.85. Evidence for the reliability of the Persian version has also been reported, with Haghighi et al. finding Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.70 to 0.75 across the subscales. In the present study, the ROCI-II was administered at both the pretest and posttest stages, and the five conflict resolution styles were scored separately according to the standard scoring instructions for the instrument.

Marital adjustment was assessed using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), developed by Spanier in 1976 to evaluate the quality of marital and comparable dyadic relationships. The DAS is a 32-item self-report, paper-and-pencil instrument incorporating five- and six-point Likert-type response formats, two yes/no items, and one final global item. The scale yields four subscale scores, including Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Consensus, and Affectional Expression, together with an overall dyadic adjustment score. Total scores range from 0 to 151, with higher scores indicating better relationship functioning and greater marital adjustment. Scores above 101 generally reflect relatively higher marital adjustment, whereas lower scores indicate poorer adjustment, and total scores below approximately 100 have frequently been used as an indicator of relational distress. Spanier reported evidence supporting the content validity of the scale, its ability to discriminate between married and divorced groups, and its concurrent validity through significant associations with the Locke–Wallace Marital Adjustment Test. The internal consistency coefficient for the total DAS score was reported as 0.96, while Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from 0.73 to 0.94. Evidence from Iranian research has similarly supported the reliability of the instrument, with Mollazadeh et al. reporting an internal consistency coefficient of 0.95. In the present study, the DAS was administered before the intervention as the pretest and immediately after completion of the treatment sessions as the posttest, and scoring was conducted according to the original scoring procedures.

2.3. Intervention

The experimental group participated in eight sessions of group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis. The intervention protocol was developed on the basis of core Transactional Analysis concepts, particularly structural analysis of ego states, strokes, complementary and crossed transactions, ulterior transactions, psychological games in intimate relationships, the Karpman Drama Triangle, strategies for interrupting psychological games, the four existential life positions, and work related to healing the inner child, drawing primarily on the theoretical foundations proposed by Berne, Harris, and later Transactional Analysis scholars. The first session focused on introducing group members, establishing group rules and expectations, and teaching the structural model of the Parent, Adult, and Child ego states; participants were also asked to construct an egogram to increase awareness of their dominant ego-state patterns. The second session addressed the concept of strokes, different forms of positive and negative recognition, and the ways individuals seek and exchange strokes within intimate relationships, followed by exercises designed to identify common stroke patterns. The third session concentrated on complementary and crossed transactions and introduced ulterior transactions, with participants encouraged to identify examples of hidden or indirect transactions in their own interpersonal relationships. The fourth session reviewed previous homework and introduced the concept of psychological games in marriage, including commonly recurring maladaptive interactional patterns between spouses, while participants were asked to record examples of such games in their own relationships. The fifth session introduced the Karpman Drama Triangle, with particular attention to the roles of Victim, Rescuer, and Persecutor, and participants practiced identifying and interpreting the repetitive games characteristic of their own relationships. The sixth session focused on strategies for responding to, interrupting, and terminating dysfunctional psychological games; participants were asked to provide a detailed description of a recurrent game involving themselves and their spouse and to attempt to apply the strategies taught for stopping the game. The seventh session included a review of previous assignments, instruction regarding the four existential positions in Transactional Analysis, and experiential work related to recognizing and healing the inner child, followed by practice in identifying habitual existential positions. The eighth and final session was devoted to reviewing the central concepts covered throughout treatment, addressing participants' remaining questions and ambiguities, consolidating therapeutic learning, and integrating the skills acquired across the

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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intervention. The control group did not receive any psychological intervention during the corresponding period.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistical procedures were first applied to summarize the distribution of the study variables, including calculation of the mean, standard deviation, and observed score range for the conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment at the pretest and posttest stages. Inferential analyses were then conducted after evaluation of the assumptions required for covariance-based procedures. Because the ROCI-II measures five conceptually distinct conflict resolution styles and does not provide a theoretically justified total conflict resolution score, the integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising styles were entered separately as dependent variables. Multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was used to determine whether the experimental and control groups differed significantly in the combined set of posttest conflict resolution outcomes after adjustment for corresponding pretest scores. Following the multivariate analysis, separate univariate analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) were performed to examine the effect of the intervention on each conflict resolution style and on marital adjustment while statistically controlling for baseline differences. Bonferroni correction was applied to the univariate comparisons in order to reduce the probability of Type I error associated with multiple statistical tests. Statistical significance was evaluated using the conventional alpha level of 0.05, and partial eta squared was used as the measure of effect size to estimate the magnitude of the intervention effect on the dependent variables.

3. Findings and Results

A total of 30 women seeking divorce participated in the study, and all participants were female. The mean age of the participants was 42.80 years (SD=4.20), with an age range from 20 to 60 years. Regarding educational attainment, 53.3% of the participants had completed lower secondary education, 30.0% held a high school diploma, and 16.7% had education beyond the high school diploma level. In terms of occupational status, 40.0% were homemakers, 30.0% were self-employed, 13.3% were students, 13.3% were engaged in online occupations, and 3.3% were athletes. With respect to birth order or position among siblings, 50.0% were only children, 43.3% were first-born children, 3.3% were second-born children, and 3.3% were the youngest children in their families. Because the Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventory-II assesses five distinct conflict resolution styles and does not yield a theoretically meaningful overall score, the integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising styles were analyzed separately. Marital adjustment, measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, constituted the additional dependent variable.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Adjustment at Pretest and Posttest

Variable	Group	Pretest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest Mean	Posttest SD
Integrating (7 items)	Experimental	20.00	4.20	26.50	4.40
Integrating (7 items)	Control	20.50	4.10	21.00	4.30
Obliging (6 items)	Experimental	15.50	3.40	17.20	3.50
Obliging (6 items)	Control	15.60	3.20	15.80	3.30
Dominating (5 items)	Experimental	16.20	3.50	12.30	3.20
Dominating (5 items)	Control	16.00	3.40	15.90	3.50
Avoiding (6 items)	Experimental	18.50	3.80	13.20	3.40
Avoiding (6 items)	Control	18.30	3.70	17.90	3.60
Compromising (4 items)	Experimental	12.50	2.80	16.50	3.00
Compromising (4 items)	Control	12.70	2.70	12.90	2.80
Marital adjustment (32 items)	Experimental	30.40	10.20	42.80	10.90
Marital adjustment (32 items)	Control	31.20	9.80	32.90	10.40

As shown in Table 1, the experimental and control groups had relatively similar mean scores at pretest across all study variables, whereas more pronounced changes emerged in the experimental group following the intervention. The mean integrating score in the experimental group increased from 20.00 at pretest to 26.50 at posttest, while the corresponding change in the control group was from 20.50 to 21.00. The mean compromising score in the experimental group

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
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increased from 12.50 to 16.50, compared with a small increase from 12.70 to 12.90 in the control group. The obliging score also increased in the experimental group from 15.50 to 17.20, whereas the control group changed only from 15.60 to 15.80. In contrast, the mean dominating score in the experimental group decreased from 16.20 to 12.30, while the control group remained nearly unchanged, from 16.00 to 15.90. A similar pattern was observed for the avoiding style, for which the experimental group decreased from 18.50 to 13.20, compared with a slight decrease from 18.30 to 17.90 in the control group. Marital adjustment showed an increase from 30.40 to 42.80 in the experimental group, whereas the control group increased only from 31.20 to 32.90. These descriptive patterns suggested improvement in four conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment in the experimental group, although inferential analyses were required to determine whether these differences were statistically significant.

Before conducting the inferential analyses, the assumptions underlying multivariate and univariate analyses of covariance were examined. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that the distributions of all six dependent variables at both pretest and posttest did not significantly deviate from normality, with all p values greater than 0.05. For the five conflict resolution styles, Box's M test was non-significant, F=1.15, p=0.304, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance–covariance matrices was satisfied. The homogeneity of regression slopes was also supported, as none of the interactions between group membership and pretest scores were statistically significant, with all F values below 1.50 and all p values greater than 0.05. Levene's tests for equality of error variances were non-significant for all five conflict resolution styles, with all F values below 1.80 and all p values greater than 0.05. Inspection of scatterplots further supported the assumption of linear relationships between pretest and posttest scores. For marital adjustment, the assumptions were likewise satisfied: the group-by-pretest interaction was non-significant, $F(1,26)=0.44$, $p=0.512$, and Levene's test was also non-significant, $F(1,28)=0.20$, $p=0.654$. The reported variance–covariance assessment for marital adjustment was also non-significant ($p=0.317$). Following confirmation of these assumptions, MANCOVA was conducted for the five conflict resolution styles. The multivariate group effect was statistically significant, Wilks' $\lambda=0.40$, $F(5,22)=6.60$, $p<0.001$, partial $\eta^2=0.60$, indicating that, after controlling for pretest scores, the intervention significantly affected the combined linear composite of conflict resolution styles. The partial eta squared value of 0.60 indicated a substantial multivariate intervention effect. Subsequent univariate ANCOVAs were conducted for the five conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment, and a Bonferroni-adjusted significance level of $\alpha=0.0083$ was used to control for inflation of Type I error across the six outcome tests.

Table 2

Univariate ANCOVA Results for the Effects of the Intervention on Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Adjustment

Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p	Partial η^2	Adjusted Mean: Experimental	Adjusted Mean: Control
Integrating	256.70	1	256.70	20.50	<0.001	0.43	26.70	20.80
Obliging	16.20	1	16.20	1.30	0.264	0.05	17.20	15.80
Dominating	108.30	1	108.30	8.58	0.007	0.24	12.20	16.00
Avoiding	175.70	1	175.70	14.06	0.001	0.34	13.10	18.00
Compromising	97.20	1	97.20	8.49	0.007	0.24	16.60	13.00
Marital adjustment	826.90	1	826.90	12.64	0.001	0.32	43.10	32.60

As presented in Table 2, after controlling for the corresponding pretest scores and applying the Bonferroni-adjusted significance criterion, the intervention had a statistically significant effect on the integrating conflict resolution style, $F(1,27)=20.50$, $p<0.001$, partial $\eta^2=0.43$, with the adjusted posttest mean being higher in the experimental group ($M_{adj}=26.70$) than in the control group ($M_{adj}=20.80$). A significant intervention effect was also found for the avoiding style, $F(1,27)=14.06$, $p=0.001$, partial $\eta^2=0.34$, with the experimental group showing a lower adjusted mean ($M_{adj}=13.10$) than the control group ($M_{adj}=18.00$). The effect on the dominating style was likewise significant, $F(1,27)=8.58$, $p=0.007$, partial $\eta^2=0.24$, with a lower adjusted mean in the experimental group ($M_{adj}=12.20$) compared with the control group ($M_{adj}=16.00$). For the compromising style, the group effect was statistically significant, $F(1,27)=8.49$, $p=0.007$, partial $\eta^2=0.24$, and the adjusted mean was higher in the experimental group ($M_{adj}=16.60$) than in the control group ($M_{adj}=13.00$). Marital adjustment also showed a

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

significant intervention effect, F(1,27)=12.64, p=0.001, partial η^2=0.32, with the experimental group obtaining a higher adjusted posttest mean (M_adj=43.10) than the control group (M_adj=32.60). Nevertheless, the experimental group's raw posttest mean for marital adjustment (M=42.80) remained substantially below the clinical cutoff of approximately 100, indicating that although statistically significant improvement occurred, the average level of marital adjustment remained within the distressed range. In contrast, the intervention did not produce a statistically significant effect on the obliging style, F(1,27)=1.30, p=0.264, partial η^2=0.05. Overall, group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis significantly modified four of the five conflict resolution styles—integrating, dominating, avoiding, and compromising—and significantly improved marital adjustment, whereas the obliging conflict style did not demonstrate a statistically significant response to the intervention.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the effectiveness of group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis on five conflict resolution styles—integrating, dominating, obliging, avoiding, and compromising—and marital adjustment among women seeking divorce. The results showed that the intervention produced a statistically significant multivariate effect on the overall pattern of conflict resolution styles. At the univariate level, participants in the experimental group showed a significant increase in the integrating and compromising styles and a significant decrease in the dominating and avoiding styles compared with the control group. The intervention also significantly improved marital adjustment. However, no statistically significant effect was observed for the obliging conflict resolution style. Although marital adjustment increased significantly following the intervention, the posttest mean of the experimental group remained below the clinical cutoff generally associated with satisfactory dyadic adjustment, indicating that the intervention produced meaningful improvement without fully resolving the participants' underlying marital distress. Overall, the findings suggest that Transactional Analysis can alter several important dimensions of conflict management and improve relationship functioning among women seeking divorce, but its effects are not uniform across all interpersonal styles.

The significant improvement in the integrating conflict resolution style is consistent with the theoretical assumptions of Transactional Analysis and with previous intervention research emphasizing the role of constructive communication in marital functioning. The integrating style requires individuals to express their own needs while simultaneously considering the needs and perspectives of the other party. This process depends on open communication, cognitive flexibility, emotional regulation, and collaborative problem solving. Transactional Analysis may strengthen these capacities by helping participants recognize the ego state from which they communicate and by encouraging a shift from reactive Parent–Child exchanges toward more balanced Adult–Adult transactions. Previous research has shown that Transactional Analysis improves communication skills and conflict resolution among couples, supporting the interpretation that greater awareness of interpersonal exchanges facilitates more collaborative responses to disagreement (Jalili et al., 2022; Jlili & Eftehkhar, 2020). Similar findings have been reported in studies demonstrating improvements in marital communication patterns following Transactional Analysis interventions (Pourshahriari et al., 2021; Safinia et al., 2020). These findings suggest that learning to identify maladaptive transactional sequences may enable participants to suspend automatic reactions and engage more deliberately in joint problem solving.

The increase in the compromising style can be interpreted in a similar manner. Compromise requires both partners to relinquish part of their preferred position in order to reach a mutually acceptable outcome. In highly conflicted relationships, this capacity may be weakened by rigid expectations, defensive responding, perceived injustice, or chronic efforts to win rather than resolve disagreements. Transactional Analysis addresses these patterns by helping individuals recognize recurring psychological games, hidden motives, and dysfunctional relational roles. Once participants become more aware of these repetitive cycles, they may be better able to distinguish between the immediate content of an argument and the deeper transactional pattern maintaining it. This heightened awareness may reduce the need to maintain rigid positions and increase willingness to negotiate. The present finding is consistent with research showing that Transactional Analysis can improve conflict resolution strategies among women experiencing marital conflict (Rahnamaei Zekavat & Meshkani, 2025) and with studies indicating that it can reduce marital conflict among couples seeking divorce (Rasoulirad & Rahmani, 2021). The finding is also compatible with broader evidence that

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

adaptive conflict resolution strategies are associated with better marital adjustment and satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2020).

The significant reduction in the dominating conflict resolution style provides additional evidence that Transactional Analysis can modify coercive or controlling interpersonal responses. A dominating approach reflects a strong concern for one's own position combined with limited attention to the partner's needs and may be expressed through insistence, pressure, criticism, or attempts to impose a preferred solution. In Transactional Analysis terms, such interactions may frequently involve communication from a Critical Parent ego state directed toward the partner's Adapted or Rebellious Child state. The intervention used in the present study explicitly focused on structural analysis of ego states, complementary and crossed transactions, psychological games, and the Karpman Drama Triangle. These components may have helped participants identify situations in which they adopted controlling or persecutory positions and recognize the relational costs of such responses. Training in alternative Adult-state communication may consequently have reduced the tendency to dominate conflict situations. This interpretation is consistent with findings that Transactional Analysis reduces verbal contradictions, neglect, and abusive interaction patterns between couples (Darbani et al., 2019). It also aligns with evidence that Transactional Analysis can reduce marital conflict and improve relationship quality in distressed couples (Bahramian et al., 2024; Samiee Reigi, 2024).

The significant decrease in the avoiding style is also theoretically meaningful. Avoidance can temporarily prevent escalation but, when used habitually, may leave important disagreements unresolved and contribute to emotional distance, resentment, and relational disengagement. Women seeking divorce may have experienced repeated unsuccessful attempts to address conflict and may therefore resort to withdrawal as a protective strategy. Transactional Analysis may reduce this tendency by giving participants a structured language for identifying internal states, relational roles, and the interpersonal sequence underlying a disagreement. When conflict is understood as a predictable transaction rather than as an uncontrollable threat, individuals may become more willing to remain engaged and respond directly. The intervention's emphasis on identifying psychological games and learning how to interrupt them may also have reduced the perceived need to escape or disengage from conflict. This finding is consistent with evidence that conflict resolution patterns are closely related to marital adjustment and psychological well-being (Ozguc & Tanriverdi, 2021; Ünal & Akgün, 2020). It is also supported by studies showing that Transactional Analysis enhances communication and decreases maladaptive relational patterns among incompatible or distressed couples (Jalili et al., 2022; Safinia et al., 2020).

In contrast to the other conflict resolution styles, the obliging style did not change significantly following the intervention. This finding suggests that obliging behavior may be more resistant to short-term Transactional Analysis than other conflict responses. The obliging style is characterized by placing the partner's concerns above one's own and may involve self-sacrifice, accommodation, suppression of personal preferences, or fear of disagreement. Such behavior may be rooted in long-standing interpersonal beliefs, early relational experiences, dependency patterns, rejection sensitivity, or deeply established schemas concerning acceptance and worth. Research has shown that early maladaptive schemas are associated with marital quality through conflict resolution strategies, suggesting that some conflict behaviors may reflect enduring cognitive-emotional structures rather than only current communication habits (Emami et al., 2021). The absence of a significant change in obliging behavior may therefore indicate that eight sessions were sufficient to alter more overt interactional strategies such as domination, avoidance, integration, and compromise, but not sufficient to modify deeply internalized tendencies toward self-subordination.

This interpretation is also consistent with evidence that Transactional Analysis does not necessarily produce uniform effects across all dimensions of couple functioning. Recent research has reported differential effects of Transactional Analysis training across dimensions of marital intimacy, indicating that some relational domains may be more responsive than others (Javid et al., 2025). Similarly, comparative research on Transactional Analysis and schema therapy has suggested that changes in differentiation of self and conflict strategies may depend on the specific psychological processes targeted by treatment (Rahnamaei Zekavat & Meshkani, 2025). The obliging style may be particularly associated with low differentiation, fear of abandonment, excessive accommodation, or longstanding interpersonal scripts. These processes may require additional therapeutic work focused on assertiveness, boundaries, self-worth, or maladaptive schemas. Thus, the non-significant finding should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence that

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

Transactional Analysis is irrelevant to obliging behavior; rather, it may indicate that this dimension requires a longer duration of intervention or integration with complementary therapeutic methods.

The significant improvement in marital adjustment represents another important finding of the study. Transactional Analysis may improve marital adjustment because it targets several mechanisms that contribute directly to dyadic functioning, including communication patterns, emotional responsiveness, awareness of interpersonal needs, conflict management, and repetitive relational games. Previous studies have reported significant improvements in marital adjustment following Transactional Analysis interventions (Bahramian et al., 2024; Sedighi et al., 2025). Similar improvements in marital satisfaction have been documented among women seeking divorce following group Transactional Analysis training (Noushadi & Motamedi, 2015), while reductions in marital dissatisfaction and improvements in quality of life have also been reported in divorced or distressed women (Boostani & Tabatabaeinejad, 2023). These convergent findings support the proposition that Transactional Analysis can positively influence broad dimensions of marital functioning rather than merely isolated communication behaviors.

The improvement in marital adjustment may also be explained through changes in the participants' perception of themselves and their spouses. Transactional Analysis introduces the concept of strokes and emphasizes individuals' need for recognition, validation, and interpersonal acknowledgment. In distressed relationships, partners may become increasingly focused on criticism and negative interpretation, while positive recognition becomes scarce. Training participants to identify the ways they seek and provide strokes may restore awareness of positive interpersonal exchanges. Previous research has shown that Transactional Analysis training can increase positive feelings toward one's spouse (Mozaffaripour & Vakili, 2022) and improve marital quality and positive thinking (Tavakoli Saberi & Shah Nazari, 2020). These changes may help explain why marital adjustment improved in the present study. As participants become more aware of positive transactions and less involved in destructive psychological games, they may perceive the relationship as more manageable and experience greater relational cohesion and satisfaction.

The findings may also be understood through changes in intimacy and emotional regulation. Marital adjustment is not solely a function of behavioral conflict management; it also depends on the emotional quality of the relationship. Transactional Analysis may promote emotional intimacy by helping participants identify vulnerable Child-state experiences, differentiate them from reactive or controlling responses, and communicate needs more directly. Research has demonstrated that Transactional Analysis can improve dimensions of marital intimacy (Javid et al., 2025), while group therapy based on Transactional Analysis has been associated with improved cognitive emotion regulation and marital intimacy among women affected by marital betrayal (Fazel Hamedani & Ghorban Jahromi, 2024). Such findings suggest that the intervention may enhance adjustment partly by enabling individuals to understand the emotional meaning of their reactions rather than responding automatically to perceived rejection or threat.

At the same time, the finding that the posttest marital adjustment mean remained below the clinical cutoff is clinically important. The statistically significant improvement should therefore not be interpreted as complete recovery or normalization of the marital relationship. Participants were women actively seeking divorce, suggesting that they were likely experiencing substantial and possibly chronic relational distress at the outset. Eight sessions of group intervention may be sufficient to initiate improvement but insufficient to reverse long-established relational deterioration. This interpretation is compatible with research indicating that couples seeking divorce often require interventions addressing multiple relational dimensions, including compassion, forgiveness, communication patterns, emotional injuries, and dysfunctional interactional scripts (Faghihi et al., 2025). Other therapeutic approaches have also produced improvements in marital conflict and adjustment among divorce-seeking couples, yet these findings generally indicate that severe marital distress requires sustained and multifaceted intervention (Abbasi Bourandagh et al., 2023; Panahifar & Momeni, 2021; Saadati Shamir et al., 2018).

The present findings also support a relational rather than purely individual interpretation of marital conflict. Contemporary Transactional Analysis increasingly emphasizes the interpersonal field jointly created by partners and the manner in which each person's responses shape the other's subsequent behavior (Cook, 2025). Conflict resolution is similarly understood as an interdependent process rather than an isolated personal characteristic. Research using actor–partner models has shown that one partner's conflict resolution style can influence not only their own marital adjustment but also the partner's adjustment and

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2020). From this perspective, even though the present study focused on women seeking divorce, changes in their transactional responses could potentially alter the broader interactional cycle within the marriage. A reduction in domination and avoidance, accompanied by greater integration and compromise, may change how conflict unfolds even when only one member of the couple has undergone substantial psychological change.

Another important explanatory mechanism concerns psychological games and the Karpman Drama Triangle. Distressed couples may repeatedly move among the roles of Victim, Rescuer, and Persecutor, often without conscious awareness of how these positions maintain conflict. The intervention explicitly trained participants to identify these roles and interrupt repetitive games. Such insight may have contributed to reductions in dominating and avoiding behavior while promoting integrating and compromising responses. A participant who recognizes a persecutory position may be better able to replace criticism with Adult communication, while one who typically occupies a victim position may become more assertive and engaged. This interpretation is compatible with broader Transactional Analysis research demonstrating improvements in communication, conflict resolution, and marital relationships across diverse populations (Adzovie, 2023; Pourshahriari et al., 2021; Samiee Reigi, 2024). Transactional Analysis has also been successfully applied in psychologically complex contexts beyond conventional couple counseling, further supporting the flexibility of its relational framework (Haynes, 2022).

5. Conclusion

Overall, the results indicate a differentiated but coherent pattern of therapeutic change. The intervention strengthened constructive styles involving collaboration and negotiation, reduced maladaptive strategies characterized by control and withdrawal, and improved broader marital adjustment. At the same time, it did not significantly alter obliging behavior, and the level of marital adjustment remained clinically low after treatment. This pattern suggests that Transactional Analysis may be particularly effective in modifying observable interactional processes and increasing awareness of transactional patterns, while deeper self-sacrificing or dependency-related styles may require additional therapeutic attention. The findings therefore extend previous evidence supporting Transactional Analysis for marital conflict, communication problems, intimacy, satisfaction, and adjustment and emphasize the value of examining individual conflict styles separately rather than relying solely on global relationship outcomes (Rahnamaei Zekavat & Meshkani, 2025; Rasoulirad & Rahmani, 2021; Sedighi et al., 2025).

6. Limitations & Suggestions

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. The sample was small and included only 30 women seeking divorce, which limits statistical power and restricts the generalizability of the results to broader populations of married couples, men, or couples with different levels of marital distress. Participants were recruited through purposive sampling from counseling and treatment settings in Tehran, and therefore the sample may not represent women seeking divorce in other geographical, cultural, or socioeconomic contexts. The study included only a pretest and immediate posttest, making it impossible to determine whether the observed improvements were maintained over time. All major outcomes were measured through self-report questionnaires, which may have been influenced by social desirability, recall bias, or participants' expectations regarding treatment. Moreover, although participants were randomly allocated to experimental and control groups after recruitment, the initial sampling process was non-random. Finally, the control group received no active comparison intervention, and therefore the observed effects cannot be completely separated from nonspecific factors such as therapeutic attention, group support, expectancy, and repeated contact with a therapist.

Future studies should replicate the present investigation with larger samples and include participants from different cities, cultural backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups to improve external validity. Research should also include both partners whenever possible so that dyadic changes can be examined rather than relying exclusively on one spouse's report. Longitudinal designs with one-month, three-month, six-month, or longer follow-up assessments are recommended to determine whether changes in conflict resolution styles and marital adjustment remain stable after treatment termination. Future studies could compare Transactional Analysis with other evidence-based approaches such as schema therapy, emotion-focused couple therapy, acceptance and commitment-based couple therapy, or integrative couple interventions. It would also be useful to investigate mediating mechanisms, including changes in ego-state functioning, communication patterns, rejection

AFTJ Applied Family Therapy Journal
E-ISSN: 3041-8798

sensitivity, emotional regulation, differentiation of self, intimacy, and psychological game frequency. Special attention should be given to the obliging style in order to determine whether a longer intervention or a combined approach targeting assertiveness, self-sacrifice, attachment insecurity, and maladaptive schemas can produce more substantial change. Including observational measures of couple interaction, therapist ratings, or spouse reports would also strengthen the methodological rigor of future research.

In clinical practice, group couples therapy based on Transactional Analysis can be considered a useful intervention for women experiencing severe marital conflict and contemplating divorce, particularly when difficulties involve recurrent communication breakdowns, domination, avoidance, and ineffective negotiation. Therapists may benefit from placing particular emphasis on helping clients identify Parent, Adult, and Child ego states during actual marital interactions, recognize crossed and ulterior transactions, and detect repetitive psychological games before they escalate. Practical exercises involving egograms, analysis of real conflict episodes, role-playing, and rehearsal of Adult-to-Adult communication may increase the transfer of therapeutic learning into everyday marital interactions. Because obliging behavior may be relatively resistant to short-term intervention, clinicians should assess whether excessive accommodation is related to fear of rejection, dependency, low assertiveness, or deeply established self-sacrificing patterns and address these mechanisms directly. The finding that marital adjustment remained below the clinical cutoff also suggests that an eight-session program should be viewed as an initial intervention rather than a complete treatment for severely distressed couples. Where substantial dysfunction persists, clinicians should consider extending treatment, incorporating follow-up or booster sessions, involving both partners when clinically appropriate, and combining Transactional Analysis with complementary interventions focused on emotional regulation, attachment, forgiveness, intimacy, and assertiveness.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have equally contributed to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

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