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DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF - A LIFE SKILL” - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY AMONG MARRIED WOMEN



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Abstract:Life skills are the abilities that help and promote mental well being and competence in people that they face the realities of life. According to World Health Organization, life skill education is designed to facilitate the practice and reinforcement of psychological skills in a culturally and developmentally appropriate way. It contributes to the promotion of personal and social development, the prevention of health and social problems and protection of human rights. Since life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, it enables individual to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life.

Keywords:Empirical Study , Life Skill , Married Women , Health Organization.

INTRODUCTION:

Differentiation of self is the key concept of Bowen Family theory and therapy. Of the various constructs that compose Bowen theory, differentiation of self is the personality variable most critical to development to the maturity and the attainment of psychological health.

Differentiation of self is the degree to which one is able to balance 'emotional and intellectual' functioning and 'intimacy and autonomy' in relationships (Bowen 1978). On an intra-psychoic level, differentiation refers to the ability to distinguish thoughts from feelings and choose between being guided by one's intellect or one's emotions when circumstances dictate. Flexible, adaptable, and better able to cope with the stress, more differentiated individuals operate equally well on both emotional and rational levels, while maintaining a measure of autonomy within their intimate relationships. In contrast, poorly differentiated persons tend to be more emotionally reactive (Kerr & Bowen, 1998), finding it difficult to remain calm in response to the emotionality of others. They tend to make decisions on the basis of what 'feels right'. In short, they are trapped in an emotional world.

On an interpersonal level, differentiation of self refers to the ability to experience intimacy with and independence from others. More differentiated persons are capable of taking 'I position' in relationships, maintaining a clearly defined sense of self and thoughtfully adhering to personal convictions when pressured by others to do otherwise (Bowen 1978). Highly differentiated individuals remain satisfying contact with their families of origin, establish more satisfying marriages, effective problem solvers and are best leaders.

Life skills highlight the abilities of decision making, creative and critical thinking, problem solving and negotiation skills, self awareness, empathy, interpersonal relationships and effective communication etc. A closer

observation reveals that differentiation of self lead to the qualities of life skill mentioned above. Therefore differentiation of self as a psychological skill refers life skill. The authors conducted a study on 'differentiation of self' among married women in Central Travancore. From the study the researcher understood that 'differentiation of self' is the best life skill, which promotes self awareness, autonomy and independence, intimacy, risk taking and coping with stresses and failures. The present research paper is highlights the discussions on the study conducted.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

From the literature, the researcher understood that differentiation of self will enhance daily functioning and psychological as well as the physical well being. According to degree of differentiation of self a person is able to handle logic and emotions, intimacy and autonomy when circumstances dictate. Low the differentiation of self, the person mostly may be in emotional and not able to keep autonomy and intimacy. The researcher felt that enriching 'differentiation of self' will enhance the empowerment of women. So she decided to conduct a study on 'differentiation of self' of women.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1.To find out the level of differentiation of self of women
- 2.To find out the relationship among dimensions of differentiation of self
- 3.To find out the most contributing factor of differentiation of self
- 4.To suggests means to achieve differentiation of self.

Hypotheses

- 1.There is a significant difference between mean ranks of initiating factors of differentiation of self
- 2.There is a significant relationship between

'I position' and 'emotional reactivity'
 'I position' and 'Emotional cut off'
 'I position' and 'Fusion with others'
 'Emotional cut off' and 'emotional reactivity'
 'Emotional cut off' and 'Fusion with others'
 'Emotional reactivity' and 'Fusion with others'

3. There is significant association between level of differentiation of self of women with respect to their level of education

RESEARCH DESIGN

The design of the study is descriptive and diagnostic

LOCALE AND SAMPLES OF THE STUDY

Sample of the study was married women of the Syrian Catholic Community at Central Travancore in Kerala State. The Syrian Catholics of Central Travancore are divided into 9 dioceses of the Syrian Catholic Church. For the study 18 parishes are selected from the 6 dioceses using Purposive Sampling Technique, where the investigator exercises her discretion in the matter of selection.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major purpose of the present study is to find out the 'Differentiation of Self of Women in Central Travancore.

The study was detained only for the Syrian Catholic Women

In spite of all these limitations, it is trusted that the study would provide useful information regarding the differentiation of self of women. Moreover, in the view of results, suitable programme can be organised for the women, so as to enable them grow up in differentiation of self.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

Differentiation of Self Inventory of Elizabeth Skowron and Myrna L Friedlander (1998) is well modified scale to measure differentiation of self. It contains 43 items with 4 dimensions in a 6 point scale from which the minimum score is 43 and maximum score is 258. There are four dimensions namely 'Emotional reactivity', 'I Position', 'Emotional cut off' and 'Fusion with others'. The scoring scheme adopted for the scale is as follows. For positive statement the scoring was 6,5,4,3,2, and 1, and for the negative statements, the scoring was 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. Since it is a standardized foreign tool, a preliminary study is conducted to know the Reliability. Statistical analysis - Cronbach's Alpha - is done. Value of Cronbach's Alpha for 'Differentiation of Self inventory' of Elizabeth Skowron is found 0.722. So inventory is reliable at 72% level. Hence it is accepted.

STATISTICAL TOOLS AND METHOD

1. Correlation is used to know the relationship between the variables
 2. Friedman test is used to find the difference between the mean ranks of the dimensions of the differentiation of self
 3. Chi Square test is used to find whether there is any association between variables and its dimensions
- Inferential Analysis

Inferential analysis is applied in order to find the difference and relationship between variables. The following hypotheses were statistically verified and discussed. The results are tabulated and the interpretations are as follows

Level of Differentiation of Self of Women at Central Travancore

Range	Frequency	Percent
Low	87	32.0
Average	128	47.0
High	57	21.0
Total	272	100.0

From the table, it is clear that, 32 % of women are in low level, 47 % are in average level and 21 % are in high level of Differentiation of self. Hence it is inferred that majority of the women in Central Travancore are in average level of differentiation of self.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference between mean ranks of initiating factors of differentiation of self

Friedman test for significance of difference between mean ranks of dimensions of Differentiation of Self of women

Dimensions	Mean Rank	Chi-Square value	P value
Emotional cut -off	3.51	610.245	0.000**
Emotional Reactivity	2.24		
Fusion with Others	1.04		
I Position	3.21		

Note: ** Denotes significant at 1% level

Since P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1 percent level of significance. Hence, concluded that there is a significant difference between mean ranks of dimensions of Differentiation of Self. Based on mean rank Emotional cut-off (3.51) is most contributing dimension to the Differentiation of Self, is followed by I position (3.21), Emotional Reactivity (2.24) and Fusion with Others (1.04). Emotional cut-off, I position and Emotional Reactivity are the most contributing factors towards the Differentiation of Self of the Women. Differentiation of Self of women can be improved by reduction and regulation of 'Fusion with Others', 'Emotional Cut-off' and 'Emotional Reactivity', and by boosting of 'I Position'.

Hypotheses 2: - There is a significant relationship between

- 'I position and emotional reactivity'
- 'I position and Emotional cut off'
- 'I position and Fusion with others'
- Emotional cut off and Emotional Reactivity'
- Emotional Cut – Off and Fusion with Others'
- 'Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with others'

Coefficient of Correlation for significant relationship between dimensions of Differentiation of Self

Sample	Variables	Correlation Coefficient	P Value
272	I Position	0.034	0.571
	Emotional Reactivity		
272	I Position	-0.076	0.209
	Emotional Cut off		
272	I Position	-0.334	0.000**
	Fusion with Others		
272	Emotional cutoff	0.491	0.000**
	Emotional reactivity		
272	Emotional Cut off	0.187	0.002**
	Fusion with Others		
272	Fusion with Others	0.276	0.000**
	Emotional Reactivity		

Note:** denotes significant at 1% level (amount of confidence is99%).

The co-efficient of correlation between 'I Position and Emotional Reactivity' for whole sample (N=272) is 0.034, which indicates 3.4% positive relationship between I position and emotional reactivity and is not significant at 5% level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. So it can be inferred that there is no significant relationship between 'I Position and Emotional Reactivity'.

The co-efficient of correlation between 'I Position and Emotional Cut-off' for whole sample (N=272) is -0.076, which indicates 7.6% negative relationship between 'I Position and Emotional Cut-off' and is not significant at 5% level. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. So it can be inferred that there is no significant relationship between 'I Position and Emotional Cut-off'. And since the correlation is negative, increase in 'I Position' will result in corresponding decrease in 'Emotional Cut-off' and vice versa.

The co-efficient of correlation between 'I Position and Fusion with others' for whole sample (N=272) is -0.334, which indicates 33.4% negative relationship between I Position and Fusion with others and is significant at 1% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between 'I Position and Fusion with Others'. Since it is a negative correlation, the relationship shows considerable dependence of variables on one another. The increase in I Position will result in the corresponding decrease in the Fusion with Others and vice

versa.

The co-efficient of correlation between 'Emotional Cut-off and Emotional Reactivity' for whole sample (N=272) is 0.491 which indicates 49.1% positive relationship between 'Emotional Cut-off and Emotional Reactivity' and is significant at 1% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between 'Emotional Cut-off and Emotional Reactivity'. Since it is a positive correlation, the relationship shows considerable dependence of variables on one another. The increase in 'Emotional Cut – off' will result in the corresponding increase in the 'Emotional Reactivity' and vice versa.

The co-efficient of correlation between 'Emotional Cut-off and Fusion with Others' for whole sample (N=272) is 0.187 which indicates 18.7% positive relationship between 'Emotional Cut-off and Fusion with Others' and is significant at 1% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between 'Emotional Cut-off and Fusion with others'. Since it is a positive correlation, the relationship shows considerable dependence of variables on one another. The increase in 'Emotional Cut – off' will result in the corresponding increase in the 'Fusion with Others' and vice versa

The co-efficient of correlation between 'Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with others' for whole sample (N=272) is 0.276 which indicates 27.6% positive relationship between 'Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with Others' and is significant at 1% level. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. So it can be inferred that there is a significant relationship between 'Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with others'. Since it is a positive correlation, the relationship shows considerable dependence of variables on one another. The increase in 'Emotional Reactivity' will result in the corresponding increase in the 'Fusion with Others' and vice versa

Hypothesis 3: There is significant association between levels of differentiation of self of female with respect to their level of education

Chi-square test for association between Education and Level of Differentiation of Self of Women

Level of Education	Level of Differentiation of Self			Total	Chi-square Value	P value
	Low	Average	High			
Non Formal Education	0 (0) [0]	1 (100) [0.8]	0 (0) [0]	1	20.14	0.064
Below SSLC	6 (37.5) [6.9]	8 (50) [6.3]	2 (12.5) [3.5]	16		
SSLC	33 (37.9) [37.9]	44 (50.6) [34.4]	10 (11.5) [17.52]	87		
PDC	35 (35.0) [40.2]	42 (42.0) [32.8]	23 (23.0) [40.4]	100		
Graduation	11 (22.4) [12.6]	25 (51.0) [19.5]	13 (26.5) [22.8]	49		
Post Graduation	2 (12.5) [2.3]	6 (37.5) [4.7]	8 (50.0) [14.0]	16		
Above	0 (0) [0]	2 (66.7) [1.6]	1 (33.3) [1.8]	3		
Total	87	128	57	272		

Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage – Percentage within education
2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage- Percentage within level of differentiation of self

Since P value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, concluded that there is no association between level of education and level of differentiation of self of women.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- 1.The Majority of the women from the Central Travancore are having average level (47%) of 'Differentiation of Self'.
- 2.I position is the most contributing factors towards the Differentiation of self of the Women. Differentiation of Self of Women can be improved by reduction and regulation of 'Fusion with others', 'Emotional Cut-off' and 'Emotional Reactivity' and by boosting of 'I Position'.
- 3.From the correlation analysis of dimensions, it is clear that there is no significant relationship between 'I Position' with respect to 'Emotional Cut- off' and 'Emotional Reactivity'. But the correlation between 'I position' and 'Emotional Cut-off' is negative (-7.6%), which implies the increase in 'I Position' will result in decrease in 'Emotional cut off' at 7.6% level and vice versa.
- 4.From the correlation analysis of dimension, there is significant relationship between 'I Position' and 'Fusion with Others' (-33.4%). Since correlation between 'I Position and Fusion with Others' is negative, the increase in 'I Position' will result in the corresponding decrease in the 'Fusion with Others' and vice versa.
- 5.There is significant positive relationship between 'Emotional Cut off and Emotional Reactivity' (49.1%), 'Emotional Reactivity and Fusion with Others' (27.6%), 'Emotional Cut off and Fusion with Others' (18.7%). Since it is a positive correlation, the increase in 'Emotional Cut off' will result in increase of 'Emotional Reactivity'; increase in 'Fusion with Others' result in increase in 'Emotional Reactivity' and increase in 'Emotional Cut off' will result in increase in 'Fusion with Others'.
- 6.Since 'I Position and Fusion with Others' shows negative correlation and 'Fusion with Others' shows positive relationship with 'Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cut off', increase in 'I Position' will result in corresponding decrease in other three variables. Because increase in 'I Position' will reduce the "Fusion with Others' and decrease in 'Fusion with Others' will be resulted in decrease in 'Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cut off'. Hence, concluded that increase in degree of 'I Position' will result in increase the degree of 'Differentiation of Self'.
- 7.From the Chi square test, it is understood that there is no significant association between level of 'Differentiation of Self and Level of Education' of Women. So it can be inferred that the existing curriculum is not suitable to increase the 'I position of women' so as to increase the 'Differentiation of Self' of women.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The study revealed that 79% of the women are in moderate and low level of 'differentiation of self' and there is a need for

enhancing and improving the 'differentiation of self' of women.

The correlation studies revealed that 'I Position and Fusion with Others' shows negative correlation and 'Fusion with Others' shows positive correlation with 'Emotional Reactivity and Emotional Cut off'. These results reinforce the need to enhance and inculcate 'I Position' among women to reduce their 'Fusion with Others' and further reduce 'Emotional Cut off' and 'Emotional Reactivity'.

8. The results based on chi square test revealed that 'Level of Education' of women has no significant association with 'differentiation of self'. There is a need to change the 'existing curriculum' to increase 'I position' of women and the need for programs and training to increase 'I Position' and reduce 'Emotional Fusion, Emotional Cut off and Emotional Reactivity' of the women students.

CONCLUSION

From the study it is obvious that, differentiation of self is depends on the increase in 'I position' and corresponding decrease in 'fusion with others', 'emotional cut-off' and 'emotional reactivity'. I position enhance self acceptance, assertiveness, self esteem and emotional regulation. Further, 'I position' in relationships, maintaining a clearly defined sense of self and thoughtfully adhering to personal convictions when pressured by others to do otherwise. So I position is the key to differentiation of self, which helps women to liberate and empower.

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