

## EFFECTIVENESS OF NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC) WORKSHOP ON MARITAL ADJUSTMENT

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*Key words:* Nonviolent communication, Marital adjustment

### Abstract

The present study examined the effectiveness of nonviolent communication (NVC) workshop on marital adjustment. The hypothesis was receiving nonviolent communication (NVC) workshop has positive impact on marital adjustment. The independent variable was NVC workshop and the dependent variable was marital adjustment score. For conducting this research, repeated measures design was followed and 20 Bangladeshi married people participated in it. The results have shown that there was a statistically significant difference ( $F = 16.790, p < 0.05$ ) in marital adjustment score of experimental group over the three time periods and pairwise comparisons indicate that there was significant difference between pretest and post-test and also between pretest and follow-up test at the 0.05 level. Results also have shown that, there was statistically significant difference of marital adjustment score between experimental and control group in posttest ( $t = 4.276, p < 0.05$ ) and follow-up test ( $t = 4.176, p < 0.05$ ). Thus, after receiving NVC workshop the marital adjustment score of experimental group increased significantly ( $F = 16.79, p < 0.001$ ) in post-test measure and also remain constant in follow-up, whereas the marital adjustment score of control group had no significant change. This implied a significant positive impact of participation in NVC workshop on marital adjustment.

### Introduction

The term communication refers to the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another<sup>(1)</sup>. Communication is derived from the Latin word, *communis*, which means common, that is, underscores the fact that unless a common understanding results from the exchange of information, there is no communication<sup>(2)</sup>. Thus, communication is a process by which on the one hand we express our own thought, feelings, and needs and on the other hand receive other's thoughts, feelings, and needs.

Nonviolent Communication (NVC) is an approach to communicating - both speaking and listening - that leads us to give from heart, connecting us with ourselves and with

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each other in a way that allows our natural compassion to flourish<sup>(3)</sup>. NVC is composed of four components, such as observations, feelings, needs and requests<sup>(3)</sup>. From the bedroom to the boardroom, classroom to the war zone, NVC is changing lives every day<sup>(4)</sup>. In an organization NVC trained staff increased their use of nonviolent resolution and decreased their use of violent resolution than their counterparts<sup>(5)</sup>. Like many other context NVC process can be used in marital relationship which is the focus of present study.

Marriage is the legally or formally recognized union of a man and a woman, therefore marital adjustment is the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage as well as with each other<sup>(6)</sup>. Disturbance in communication can affect marital adjustment and contribute to marital disharmony<sup>(7)</sup>. The communication system of the couple is a vital force, determining much of their happiness together<sup>(8)</sup>. Any attempt at improving marital relationships must start with working on the communication between husband and wife<sup>(9)</sup>. Couples experiencing marital difficulties either fail to attempt communicating, or the attempts they make prove unsatisfactory, often leading to argument<sup>(10)</sup>. It was found that the wives low in marital adjustment wanted their husbands to communicate with them more, to show more appreciation for the things they did well, to express their emotions more clearly, and to give them more attention<sup>(11)</sup>. Another study showed that the best indicators of marital satisfaction were the couple's capacity to discuss problems effectively<sup>(12)</sup>. Many models of marital satisfaction stress on affective expression and problem-solving ability of couples<sup>(13)</sup>. A survey results showed that effective communications were significantly related to the low incidence of 14 (41%) of the family problems<sup>(14)</sup>. Similarly, behaviors bothering marital satisfaction are self disclosure<sup>(15)</sup>, being sensitive to the feelings of each other<sup>(9)</sup>, to listen to and respond<sup>(16)</sup>, and showing respect and esteem<sup>(17)</sup>. Different marriage enrichment programs help couples enhance their relationship by developing their ability to initiate changes in their relationship<sup>(18)</sup>. Helping couples to communicate, negotiate, make decisions, and solve problems is viewed as preventive rather than therapeutic<sup>(19)</sup>. Current research aims to understand whether nonviolent communication (NVC) influences marital adjustment. It was hypothesized that NVC workshop would have positive impact on marital adjustment. The independent variable was NVC workshop whereas the dependent variable was marital adjustment score.

### **Materials and Methods**

Twenty Bangladeshi married people were the participants of this study. Initially 52 married people from different places of Dhaka city were requested to participate in this study and finally 20 participants agreed to participate. Then the participants were divided into two groups called experimental and control group by using simple random technique.

To conduct this research NVC workshop module and Locke Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (LWMAT) were used as materials whereas repeated measures design was followed as the participants were tested three time periods. The data collection procedure is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Data collection procedure of the research.**

Groups	Pretest	Treatment	Post-test	Follow up
Experimental	LWMAT	NVC workshop	LWMAT	LWMAT
Control	LWMAT	No treatment	LWMAT	LWMAT

All the participants of this study signed consent forms where they were informed about the topic, activities, risk and confidentiality of this research. NVC workshop was arranged only for the experimental group. Before starting workshop, each participant of experimental group filled up LWMAT as pretest measure. Then the workshop started with two role plays of both violent and nonviolent communication. In this two hours' workshop the experimental group were taught various aspects of NVC and participated spontaneously in different exercises. The workshop ended with the written as well as verbal feedbacks and completion of LWMAT as post-test measure of the participants. Then 10 days later a follow up test was taken. On the other hand, the participants of control group filled up LWMAT in three time periods, but they did not get NVC workshop as treatment. Instead of NVC workshop they were entertained by a documentary on drug addiction. Hence, all the conditions such as facilitators, settings, refreshments, weather and number of tests were same for both experimental and controlled group except the NVC workshop as treatment.

### Results and Discussion

By one-way within groups ANOVA the difference in marital adjustment of both experimental and control group over three time periods was seen. For experimental group the mean, standard deviation, and  $F$  value are shown in Table 2, and pairwise comparison in Table 3. For control group the mean, standard deviation and  $F$  value are shown in Table 4.

Table 2 shows that there was a statistically significant difference ( $F = 16.790$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) in marital adjustment score of experimental group over the three time periods

In Table 3, pair wise comparisons indicate that there was significant difference between pretest and post-test and also between pretest and follow up test at the 0.001 level. However, there was no significance difference between post-test and follow up test.

Table 4 shows that there was no statistically significant difference ( $F = 0.214$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.812$ ) in marital adjustment score of control group over the three time periods.

**Table 2. Mean, Sd and F-value of marital adjustment score over three time periods of experimental group.**

Time periods	Mean	Sd	N	F	Sig.
Pretest	41.3000	12.73708	10		
Post-test	70.8000	19.75292	10	16.790 ( $df = 2$ )	0.001
Follow up	70.4000	19.97888	10		

**Table 3. Pairwise comparisons showing mean differences of marital adjustment score over three time periods of experimental group.**

(I)MA	(J)MA	Mean difference (I-J)	Sd	Sig.
1	2	-29.500*	4.817	0.001
	3	-29.100*	4.852	0.001
2	1	29.500*	4.817	0.001
	3	0.400	0.653	1.000
3	1	29.100*	4.852	0.001
	2	-0.400	0.652	1.000

**Table 4. Mean, Sd and F-value of marital adjustment score over three time periods of control group.**

Time periods	Mean	Sd	N	F	Sig.
Pretest	39.8000	11.78323	10		
Post-test	39.9000	11.49348	10	0.214 ( $df = 2$ )	0.812
Follow up	40.000	11.43095	10		

To see the difference in marital adjustment over three time periods between experimental and control group the independent-samples t-test was used. The data are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that there was no significant difference of marital adjustment score between experimental and control group in pretest ( $t = 0.273$ ,  $p = 0.788$ ). However, as hypothesized, there was statistically significant difference of marital adjustment score between experimental and control group in post-test ( $t = 4.276$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and follow up ( $t = 4.176$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

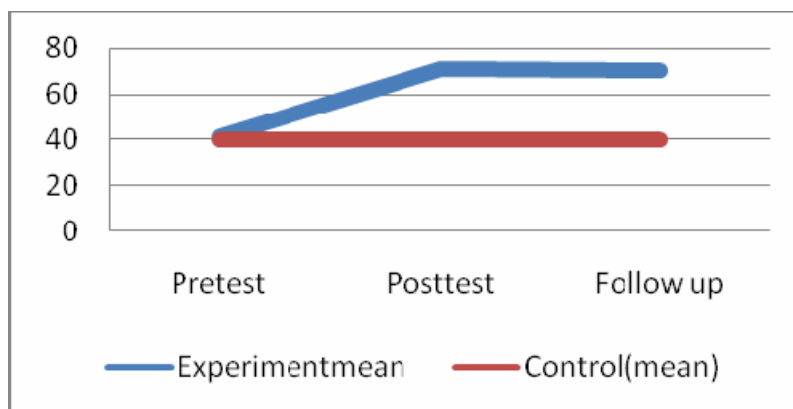


Fig. 1. Graphical representation of difference in marital adjustment score over three time periods between experimental and control group.

**Table 5. Independent-samples t-test showing differences in marital adjustment score between two groups over three time periods.**

Time periods	Group	N	Mean	Sd	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pretest	Experimental	10	41.3000	12.73708	0.273	0.788
	Control	10	39.8000	11.78323	0.273	0.788
Post-test	Experimental	10	70.8000	19.75292	4.276*	0.000
	Control	10	39.9000	11.49348	4.276*	0.001
Follow up	Experimental	10	70.4000	19.97888	4.176*	0.001
	Control	10	40.0000	11.43095	7.176*	0.001

The findings of current research points out that participation of NVC workshop increases the marital adjustment score. After receiving NVC workshop the marital adjustment score of experimental group has significantly increased compared to the score of pretest of same group ( $F = 16.790$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) as well as the post-test score of control group ( $t = 4.276$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Thus, the marital adjustment score of control group neither increases nor decreases as they did not receive NVC workshop as treatment. It was hypothesized that NVC workshop has positive impact on the marital adjustment. Hence, the independent variable of this research was NVC workshop and the dependent variable was marital adjustment score. For conducting this research, repeated measures design was followed and 20 Bangladeshi married people participated in it. To see the effectiveness of NVC workshop the participants were divided into experimental and control group randomly. The participants basically deferred in terms of treatment. The experimental group was given NVC workshop as treatment whereas the control group

was entertained by a documentary on drug addiction instead of NVC workshop, thus, they did not get the treatment. However, both groups filled up Locke Wallace Marital Adjustment Test thrice as pretest, post-test, and follow up measures. As a result, in post-test and follow up test the marital adjustment score of control group remained constant as pretest. The age, sex, education level, duration of married life, number of children etc. of experimental and control group were almost same. Thus, according to the findings of this research it can be said that NVC influences marital adjustment. Communication system of the couple is a vital force, determining much of their happiness together<sup>(8)</sup>, therefore, the findings of this research agree with previous research findings. The findings of present research also supported its hypothesis. Consequently, as future implication, the mental health practitioners of Bangladesh can use Nonviolent Communication (NVC) as an intervention tool for marriage and couple therapy confidently based on the findings of this research.

Finally, it is obvious that this study is not beyond limitations. Only 20 participants were taken in this study due to shortage of time, hence, greater number of participants could be used in this study. Therefore, the findings may not generalize the married people for diverse professions, socioeconomic statuses, educational backgrounds, religions or age groups. Moreover, though the participants were divided into experimental and control groups randomly, however, in initial selection of participants, the convenient sampling technique was used whereas usually random sampling technique is used in experimental research.

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*(Manuscript received on 17 November, 2016; revised on 15 January, 2017)*