

## **The Impact of Reality Therapy on Depression Level of Divorced Women: Zanjan (A Case Study)**

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### **Abstract**

The depression is a mood disorder and a common consequence of divorce. It weakens the judgment power and leads to irrational behaviors. However, this study aimed to investigate the impact of reality therapy on depression level of divorced women in Zanjan. Using convenience sampling method, therefore, 30 divorced women were selected as sample. These participants were divided into two groups: 15 participants in treatment group and 15 participants in control group. They were investigated before and after the reality therapy. The Beck's Depression Inventory was used as research tool. The univariate analysis of covariance was used for analyzing the data. The findings showed that the reality therapy impacted on reduction of depression among divorced women. According to existing research literature and the findings of this study, it was concluded that the reality therapy may impact on reduction of depression among divorced women.

**Keywords:** Reality Therapy, Depression, Divorced Women, Zanjan.

## 1. Introduction

The divorce and separation are the main causes of disruption in most basic structure of society, the family. The depression is one of the problems which occurs frequently among divorced women. The depression is the second most common psychological disorder. Martin Seligman (1975), the famous psychologist, defines the depression as a mental cold. It seems that divorced women are more depressed than married women. They experience more stressful events in years after divorce. The depression is a disorder which is associated with reduction of energy and passion, guilty feeling, difficulty in concentration, loss of appetite, and thoughts of death and suicide and leads to changed activity level, cognitive abilities, speech, sleep, and appetite and impaired job performance, social relationships, and interpersonal relationships (Kaplan and Saduk, 1993, translated by Rezaei, 2008). Watts (1974) defines the depression as secondary anxiety which weakens physical, intellectual, and living activities and capabilities. Fares states that the depression may represent a situation in which the individual realizes that all ways to achieve his/her valuable goals are closed and this may be permanent. According to provided definitions, the depression is generally a form of behavior in which the individual neglects the environment and other people (Farzadfar, 2006). The depression is considered a disorder only when it will not be consistent with the occurred event or will last longer than the time which is the starting point for continued improvement for most people. The despair and sadness are two basic characteristics of depression (Tony & Butler, 1984; translated by Karimi Tari, 1999).

Today, the increased depression among divorced women is one of the challenges of psychotherapy. More effort is needed to find a way to reduce depression among divorced women. In this regard, many treatment approaches have been developed and implemented. However, Glasser's Reality Therapy approach (choice theory) is one of the therapeutic approaches which has significant impact on depression (Vubulding & Brickell, 2006). The reality therapy is a collection of techniques, methods, and tools which helps people to move from inefficient behaviors toward efficient behaviors, destructive choices toward constructive choice, and most importantly, from unhappy lifestyle toward happy lifestyle (Glaser, 2010). The reality therapy aims to make individuals responsible and create successful identity. The individual should determine the behavior which wants to reform it, focus all his/her attention on it, have no

excuses to deny his/her responsibility, assess ways of achieving his/her objectives, select the methods which will lead to better results, and experience more positive feelings toward himself/herself (Shafi Abadi & Naseri, 2011). Therefore, considering the objectives and plans of reality therapy, it can be used for treatment of depression among divorced women. However, this study aims to answer this question: Is effective the teaching of reality therapy in reducing depression among divorced women?

## 2. Methodology

This was semi-experimental study; the pretest-posttest was conducted with a control group. Using convenience sampling method, therefore, 30 divorced women were selected as sample. These participants were divided into two groups: 15 participants in treatment group and 15 participants in control group. They were investigated before and after the reality therapy. The Beck's Depression Inventory was used as research tool. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, frequency percentage, mean, SD) and ANCOVA test.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Descriptive statistics of variables:

#### Demographic Statistics:

The demographic characteristics included education level, employment status, have children, and the time of divorce. The frequency and frequency percentage of these variables was calculated and displayed as bar and pie graphs.

#### Age:

The answers for age which were obtained from the questionnaires are provided in table 1:

Table 1: Frequency, frequency percentage, and cumulative frequency percentage of age of participants

Cumulative frequency percentage	Frequency percentage	Frequency	
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6/7	6/7	2	Less than 20 years
26/7	20	6	21 to 25 years
66/7	40	12	26 to 30 years
80/7	20	6	31 to 35 years
100	13/3	4	35 and older
	100	30	Total

According to table 1, 2 (6.7 percent) respondents aged less than 20 years old, 6 (20%) participants aged between 21 and 25 years old, 12 (40%) participants aged between 26 and 30 years old, 6 (20%) participants aged between 31 to 35 years old, and 4 (13.3 percent) participants aged 35 years and older. As it can be seen, the most frequency is for 26 to 30 years old.

Education:

The answers for education which were obtained from the questionnaires are provided in table 2:

Table 2: Frequency, frequency percentage, and cumulative frequency percentage of education of participants

Cumulative frequency percentage	Frequency percentage	Frequency	
26/7	26/7	8	Diploma and lower
46/7	20	6	Associate
80	33/3	10	Bachelor
100	20	6	Master's degree or higher
---	100	30	Total

According to table 2, 8 (26.7 percent) respondents had diploma and lower degrees, 6 (20%) participants had associate degree, 10 (33.3%) participants had bachelor degree, and 6 (20%) participants had master's degree or higher. As it can be seen, the most frequency is for bachelor degree.

Employment status:

The answers for employment status which were obtained from the questionnaires are provided in table 3:

Table 3: Frequency, frequency percentage, and cumulative frequency percentage of employment status of participants

Cumulative frequency percentage	Frequency percentage	Frequency	
60	60	18	Employed
100	40	12	Unemployed
	100	30	Total

According to table 3, 18 (60 percent) respondents were employed and 12 (40%) participants were unemployed.

Having children status:

The answers for having children status which were obtained from the questionnaires are provided in table 4:

Table 4: Frequency, frequency percentage, and cumulative frequency percentage of having children status of participants

Cumulative frequency percentage	Frequency percentage	Frequency	
46/7	46/7	14	Do not have child
100	53/3	16	Have child
	100	30	Total

According to table 4, 14 (46.7 percent) respondents had no child and 16 (53.3%) participants had children.

Time of divorce:

The answers for time of divorce which were obtained from the questionnaires are provided in table 5:

Table 5: Frequency, frequency percentage, and cumulative frequency percentage of time of divorce of participants

Cumulative frequency percentage	Frequency percentage	Frequency	
26/7	26/7	8	Less than 2 years
80	53/3	16	2 to 4 years
100	20	6	4 years and more
	100	30	Total

According to table 5, the divorce time of 8 (26.7 percent) respondents was less than 2 years, for 16 (53.3%) participants was 2-4 years, and for 6 (20%) participants was more than 4 years.

### 3.2 Descriptive statistics of variables:

A total of 30 subjects were assigned into two experimental and control groups. These two groups participated in pre-and post-test.

Depression variable:

Table 6: Mean, standard deviation, minimum score, and maximum score of depression scores in pretest and posttest

Number	Maximum	Minimum	Standard deviation	Mean	Statistical index	Stage	Depression
					Group		
15	79	42	10/630	66	Treatment	Pre-test	
15	82	54	7/462	71/60	Control		
15	46	24	5/501	37/53	Treatment	Post-test	
15	82	54	8/148	72/60	Control		

The table 6 shows the descriptive indicators of depression in pre-test and post-test in both the experimental and control groups. In pre-test, the mean and standard deviation of depression in treatment group were 66 and 10.630 and in control group, they were 71.60 and 7.462, respectively. In post-test, the mean and standard deviation of depression in treatment group were 37.43 and 5.501 and in control group, they were 72.60 and 8.148, respectively.

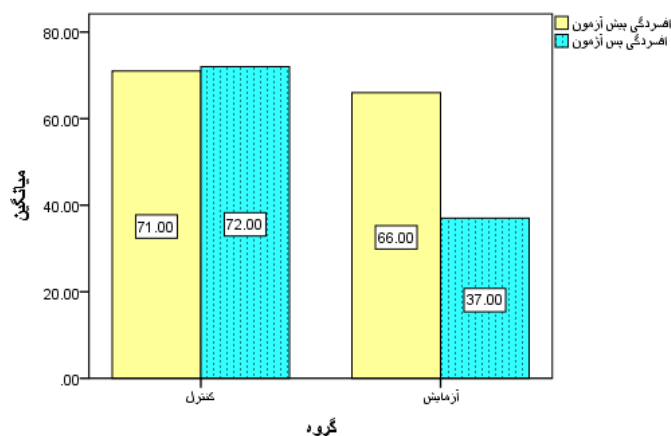


Figure 1: Mean of depression in treatment and control groups in pre-test and post-test

The figure 1 shows the mean of depression scores in treatment and control groups in pre-test and post-test. According to this figure, the mean of depression is reduced in treatment group after reality therapy. In control group, however, there is no change in mean of depression. Comparing the adjusted mean of depression in both groups in post-test, the 37.53 and 72.60 are obtained for treatment group and control group, respectively. It can be seen that the mean of treatment group is lower than the mean of control group.

#### 4. Inferential findings:

The homogeneity (equality) of variance and normal distribution of data should first be investigated in order to use ANCOVA. The normality of data are analyzed using skewness and kurtosis. If skewness and kurtosis will be in the range of +2 and -2, it will be concluded that the two (pre-test and post-test) scores distribution is normal.

Table 7: Skewness and kurtosis of depression scores in pre-test and post-test

Kurtosis	Skewness	Standard deviation	Mean	Maximum	Minimum	Number	
<u>1/279</u>	<u>-1/161</u>	9/462	68/8	82	42	30	Depression in pre-test
<u>-1/634</u>	<u>0/101</u>	19/096	55/066	82	24	30	Depression in post-test

According to table 7, since the skewness and kurtosis of variables are in the range of (+2, -2), their distribution is normal. To be ensured, the Shapiro-Wilk test was also used.

Table 8: Shapiro-Wilk test

Sig. level	Degree of freedom	Test statistics	Group	Variable
<u>0/194</u>	15	0/920	Control	Depression in pre-test
<u>0/083</u>	15	0/896	Treatment	
<u>0/065</u>	15	0/889	Control	Depression in post-test
<u>0/084</u>	15	0/897	Treatment	

According to table 8, the significance level in above test is greater than 0.05. The null hypothesis in Shapiro-Wilk test is following normal distribution. The alternative hypothesis is failure to follow the normal distribution considering the significance level. At this stage, the Levene test is used to investigate the homogeneity of variances.

Table 9: Levene's test results

Sig. level	Second degree of freedom	First degree of freedom	Levene statistics	Variable
<u>0/151</u>	28	1	2/177	Depression in pre-test
<u>0/277</u>	28	1	1/228	



According to Table 9, since the significance levels are greater than 0.05, the hypothesis of homogeneity of variances is confirmed. Considering the normality of distribution and homogeneity of variances, the univariate analysis of covariance is performed.

Table 10: Univariate analysis of covariance to evaluate the impact of reality therapy on depression of divorced women

Sig. level	F value	Mean of Square	Degree of freedom	Sum of squares	Changes source
0/000	166/042	8310/716	1	8310/716	Group
0/846	0/039	1/935	1	1/935	Pre-test
		50/052	27	1351/398	Error
			29	10575/867	Total

According to table 10, since the  $F(1, 27) = 166.042$  in significance level of (0.000) is smaller than 0.05, the research hypothesis is confirmed; it is concluded that the reality therapy impacts on depression of divorced women and the mean of depression among divorced women substantially decreased after reality therapy.

## 5. Conclusion

In the present study, the hypothesis was that the reality therapy impacts on depression of divorced women. According to the results and ( $P < 0.05$ ;  $F = 166.042$ ), it can be concluded that the difference between groups is significant at 95% confidence level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the research hypothesis is confirmed; the divorced women who were under the reality therapy showed less depression than the divorced women in control group. This is consistent with findings of Baragava (2013) and Reader (2011).

In explaining the findings of this study, it can be said that the divorced women are susceptible to depression, stress, anxiety, inability to solve problems, and psychological problems. The group treatment enables participants to form social network with other group members and serve as a basis for changing the environment. The members of group may have cross-group interaction to increase the understanding and acceptance of values and purposes and learn certain behaviors and attitudes (Khodaei, 2006). One of the reasons for effectiveness of reality therapy is that it

teaches people to gain knowledge of themselves and move towards change, because if the lifestyle will be monotonous and deep enough, it may become a grave and bury people under loose due to inactivity. This approach trains people to carefully look for ways to change to have a meaningful life. The acceptance of permanent change, even at the time of comfort, gives happiness to life. In a study, Baragava shows that the reality therapy impacts on reduction of depressive symptoms in deaf adults (Baragava, 2013). In a study that was conducted by Reader on students, the findings suggested that the reality therapy decreases symptoms of depression and increases self-esteem and self-worth (Reader, 2011). Considering the impact of reality therapy on depression, it is suggested that the psychologists and consultants use this method in helping divorced women.

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