

Divorce and Time Perspective

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The purpose of the present study was to investigate whether a change of time perspective accompanies divorce through an examination of three cases. For the purpose of the present study, we used the following five time periods: the dating period, the newly married period, the divorce strife period, the period immediately after the divorce, and the present period. Lives during the first four periods were examined retrospectively. The Experiential Time Perspective Scale was used in each period except the dating period. In the newly married period, the divorce strife period, and the period immediately after the divorce, the participants responded to the scale retrospectively. In the present period, the participants responded to the scale directly. In the newly married period, in which participants had positive life experiences, a positive experiential time perspective was basically employed. However, in the divorce strife period, in which participants had negative life experiences, a negative experiential time perspective was employed. Next, approaching the present, they began to resume a positive experiential time perspective. Therefore, a change of time perspective was observed to be accompanying divorce in all three cases.

Key words: time perspective, future time perspective, experiential time perspective, divorce, case study

Time perspective is defined as the totality of an individual's view of his or her psychological past, present, and future at a given time. The term future time perspective (FTP) is used when stressing the psychological future.

Positive and negative experiences are thought to play an important role in the formation of FTP. In the present study, we focus on divorce as a negative experience and investigate its relationship with time perspective.

Much research concerning divorce has been conducted. The findings of these studies suggest that divorce leads to mental disorders such as depression and anxiety disorder (Blazer, et al., 1994; Bruce, 1998; Chatav & Whisman, 2007; Vaus, 2002; Wade & Cairney, 2000), lower senses of self-esteem (Doherty et al., 1989; Marks & Lambert, 1998) and self-acceptance (Marks, 1996; Marks & Lambert, 1998), and heightens the sense of isolation (Gerstel et al., 1985; Joung et al., 1997; Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1988). Divorce has also been reported to lead to lower senses of satisfaction with work (Forste & Heaton, 2004), purpose in life (Marks, 1996), and happiness (Aldous & Ganey, 1999; Marks & Lambert, 1998; White, 1992), as well as physical disease and death (Cantor & Slater, 1995; Kposowa, 2000; Rogers, 1995; Zick & Smith, 1991).

Personality traits such as neuroticism (Eysenck, 1980; Jockin et al., 1996; Kurdek, 1993; Richard et al., 1997) and extraversion (Eysenck, 1980), and personal characteristics such as educational status (Fergusson et al., 1984; Graaf & Kalmijin, 2006; Greenstein, 1995, Hoem, 1997; Kurdek, 1993) and intelligence quotient (Holley et al., 2006) have been found to affect divorce. In addition, communication with (Kurdek, 2005) and affection for a partner (Tucker et al., 1998) have been observed to help prevent divorce, and a higher degree of social support has been reported to reduce the shock triggered by divorce (Krumrei et al., 2007).

However, to our knowledge, little research investigating the relationship between divorce and time perspective has been conducted. Therefore, in the present case series, we apply the experiential time perspective, which consists of acceptance of the past, fulfillment, goal-directedness, and hopefulness, using

the Experiential Time Perspective Scale devised by Sirai (1994) to investigate the relationship between divorce and time perspective.

For the purposes of the present case series, we use five different time periods: the dating period, the newly married period, the divorce strife period, the period immediately after the divorce, and the present period. Lives during the first four periods were examined retrospectively. The Experiential Time Perspective Scale was used in each period except the dating period. In the newly married period, the divorce strife period, and the period immediately after the divorce, the participants responded to the scale retrospectively. In the present period, the participants responded to the scale directly.

Method

Participants. Three participants (case A, case B, and case C).

Experiential time perspective scale. This scale, which was devised by Sirai (1994), has four subscales: the first is fulfillment and has five items; the second is hopefulness and has four items; the third is goal-directedness and has five items; and the fourth is acceptance of the past and has four items.

Procedure. For the purposes of the present case study, which examined whether a change of time perspective accompanies divorce, we used five different periods: the dating period, the newly married period, the divorce strife period, the period immediately after the divorce, and the present period. Lives during the first four periods were examined retrospectively. The present live was also examined.

The experiential time perspective scale was used in each period except the dating period. In the newly married period, the divorce strife period, and the period immediately after the divorce, the participants responded to the scale retrospectively. In the present period, the participants responded to the scale directly.

Results

The participants were asked during interviews to describe their life experiences in each period for each case. The results are as follows. Next, the results of experiential time perspective were described in each period for each case.

Case A

Case A was a 48-year-old female nutritionist. She married at the age of 24 and divorced at the age of 38. She had four children.

Dating period. She became acquainted with her husband through a friend. Her husband was the same age when they met. She started dating him because he liked going outdoors and frequently took her for drives and to the movies. She enjoyed being with him and he often made her laugh. She also felt like she could be herself when she was with him. She soon found out that she was pregnant with his son. He was anxious about her physical condition and treated her kindly, which convinced her to marry him. She envisioned having a warm and happy home together. At the time of marriage, the thought of divorce never entered her mind.

Newly married period. He was changed to another post immediately after marriage and became a driver while she remained a housewife in Hiroshima, Japan. He took care of her and helped with domestic chores, including cooking, cleaning, and going to the supermarket. They went for walks together in a nearby park on holidays. Her life was filled with happiness. He took a long vacation and they went on holiday together after she gave birth to two sons and a daughter. He also helped take care of the children. However, at this time, he sometimes went gambling.

The divorce strife period. He began to gamble more frequently. However, the children had a positive relationship with him, so she thought about the good of the children and persevered without talking to anyone

close. However, she did not know how to manage and could not handle the mental stress. Thus, she was leading an unhappy life. He then became involved with another woman and did not come home. She did not know what to do and cried when the children were asleep or out of the house. She did not have any close friends in the area and could not talk with her mother or her friends in Nagasaki. She thought only about protecting the children and hid her pain in front of them. After a few months, her husband suddenly returned home. She wanted to keep him from seeing the children, but then felt as though she could not endure the situation, so she decided that she wanted a divorce, which he agreed to.

Immediately after the divorce. Immediately after the divorce, she moved back to her house in Nagasaki together with her four children. She became a cook and worked hard. She thought that she was causing trouble for her mother. However, after the divorce, she felt more mentally stable. The children were a little lonely because their father was absent, but they still acted kindly and helped her with the housework from time to time.

Present. She has not remarried. She thought about it because raising the children alone was difficult, but decided to remain single. At present, she is a nutritionist. Her two oldest sons are working and have become independent, while her oldest daughter goes to school and works within the prefecture. She thought that she must still work hard because her youngest son is still in junior high school and she will need money for him when he starts attending senior high school. She felt alone because she did not have a counselor when she lived in Hiroshima. Since she came back to Nagasaki, she has had close friends who kindly listen to her when she has problems.

Table 1 The result of case A

	Newly married period	Divorce strife period	Period immediately after divorce	Present
Fulfillment	3.6	2.6	2.8	3.2
Goal-oriented	1.8	1.0	1.0	2.6
Past acceptance	4.8	2.3	2.3	3.0
Hopefulness	3.3	1.8	2.8	3.3

Table 1 shows the experiential time perspective scale scores for case A in each period. The scores for the newly married period are higher for fulfillment, and acceptance of the past. However, these scores decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period. The scores did not change from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, and increased from the period immediately after the divorce to the present. The score for hopefulness was higher in the newly married period to some degree; however, this score decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period, then increased from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, and again from the period immediately after the divorce to the present.

Case B

Case B was a 51-year-old male. He got married when he was 29, but then divorced after 10 months at the age of 30.

Dating period. He became acquainted with his wife, a piano teacher, through a mutual friend. She was two years younger than him. He decided to date her because they enjoyed going to dinner and for drives together. They dated for about a year before deciding to get married. They had a great time together filled with joy and laughter. She was living with her mother. The reason why he marries is that he is able to be acquaintance with her mother. At the time of marriage, he did not think about divorce.

Newly married period. They lived together in her home after they got married. She was always at the home when he returned from work because she taught piano lessons at home and took care of the housekeeping. She and her mother liked listening to music and singing karaoke at home. They all sang together and lead a fulfilling life. However, she and her mother come to warn how to have a bath, strip clothes, and have a meal in detail. Her mother also said that she felt lonely if they were not together until just before going to bed. He had trouble sleeping deeply because of stress. However, he made an effort to please her out of love. However, the marriage began to falter. .

After three months, she and he moved to another apart from the house of her mother. She taught piano lessons in the house of her mother. She was preparing meals for them and for her mother in the house of her mother. Then, she brings it to the apart and eats it there.

The divorce strife period. His wife told him that she wanted a divorce if they could not have a baby. For the parents that look forward to the birth of grandchild, the sense of excuse resulted. He also had trouble sleeping deeply because of stress, and his affection for her started to decrease gradually. Therefore, he decided he wanted a divorce.

Immediately after the divorce. Immediately after the divorce, he returned to his previous home and felt a sense of relaxation. His parents were anxious about his physical state. For the divorce, the sense of regression does not result.

Present. He has remarried a younger woman from his workplace. They had a child together are enjoying a happy life. He decided to remarry because he discussed his past experiences with the woman, who showed him kindness. At present, he does not think about divorce.

Table 2 The result of case B

	Newly married period	Divorce strife period	Period immediately divorce	Present
Fulfillment	3.4	2.6	3.8	4.4
Goal-oriented	1.6	1.0	1.0	2.8
Past acceptance	3.8	2.0	2.8	3.8
Hopefulness	2.5	1.3	3.8	4.0

Table 2 show the experiential time perspective scores for case B in each period. The scores for fulfillment, hopefulness, and acceptance of the past were higher for the newly married period to some degree. However, they decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period, then increased from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, and again from the period immediately after the divorce to the present. The score for goal-directedness was lower in the newly married period; this score decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period, and then did not change from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, before finally increasing from the period immediately after the divorce to the present.

Case C

Case C was a 41-year-old female. She got married at the age of 20 and divorced at the age of 34. She had two children.

Dating period. Her husband had been a classmate of hers in senior high school; he was athletic and had a cheerful personality. He was charismatic and popular among his classmates. She came to like him and they started dating during the summer before her third year of senior high school. Her father was transferred outside the prefecture as soon as she graduated high school, so she started living with her boyfriend within

the prefecture. She became friends with his family, and his parents approved of their relationship. After dating for three years, they decided to get married. His actual house is independent enterprise. She helped him with his work while at home. He worked in maintenance. At the time of marriage, she did not think about divorce.

Newly married period. After marrying, she continued helping out with the shop and lived with his family members happily. Half a year after getting married, they moved to a new house and she remained a housewife. About a year later, they had a daughter. His dream was to have his own maintenance company. He worked hard and saved money. He treated his daughter kindly and took them shopping or to the park together on holidays. They soon had a son. His friends would visit and treat the children with kindness. After several years, he became independent and started his own maintenance company. He worked hard and she did clerical work for him. He had many friends who helped him grow his company into a great success.

The divorce strife period. Several years passed from the time that he opened his maintenance company. She found out that he had become entangled in his friend's economic affairs, which led to his company having to declare bankruptcy. At that time, he left home, so she went out to look for work. He said that he excuses the friend of work and the surround persons after the one week elapse from the time that he leaves the house. He said that he would work inside the prefecture. Thus, they began to live in another house. She told her children that he would work far away but that they could still talk to him on the phone. She received help from his parents, and they lived in another house for two years. However, he did not come home. Gradually, her affection for him disappeared. She thinks to excuse her children for leading the life such as this. At the same time, in the only her income the life becomes hard. She receives the live hood protect. Therefore, she decided that she wanted a divorce.

Immediately after the divorce. She and her children continued living in the house with social assistance from the prefecture. She received qualification as a care worker. After that, she became a helper and started working. She let her children meet her husband whenever they wanted, such as at birthdays and for school events.

Present. She did not remarry. She currently works as a helper. The older daughter is also working and the older son lives in a senior high school dormitory. She and her children often meet her ex-husband.

Table 3 The result of case C

	Newly married period	Divorce strife period	Period immediately divorce	Present
Fulfillment	3.4	1.4	3.2	5.0
Goal-oriented	3.0	1.0	1.8	4.6
Past acceptance	4.0	2.5	1.3	3.0
Hopefulness	3.0	2.0	2.8	4.5

Table 3 shows the experiential time perspective scores for case C in each period. The fulfillment, hopefulness, and goal-directedness scores were higher in the newly married period to some degree. However, these scores decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period, then increased from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, and continued increasing from the period immediately after the divorce to the present. The acceptance of the past score was also higher in the newly married period. However, this score decreased from the newly married to the divorce strife period, and continued decreasing from the divorce strife period to the period immediately after the divorce, before finally increasing from the period immediately after the divorce to the present.

Discussion

Looking at the results from the dating period for case A, her boyfriend treated her kindly and she was leading a happy life full of laughter. In the newly married period, this life continued. Thus, in the newly married period, she had a positive experience. Therefore, in this period, she had a stronger sense of fulfillment and hopefulness to some degree. As her dating period was a happy time, she also had a higher degree of past acceptance.

However, in the divorce strife period, the relationship with her husband became bad in the various faces. Therefore, she had a negative experience, and her sense of fulfillment decreased, along with her goal-directedness. Furthermore, her sense of past acceptance and hopefulness decreased substantially.

Immediately after her divorce, she and her children returned to her previous home and she became more mentally stable. Thus, she had a positive experience, and her sense of hopefulness increased. At present, she lives in her hometown, where she has friends who listen to her, and she works hard to raise her children lovingly. Therefore, her goal-directedness increased. She may also have higher past acceptance scores to some degree. As her life began to stabilize, she started to have a greater sense of hopefulness.

Looking at the results from the dating period for case B, he was leading a happy life, which basically continued into the newly married period. Thus, in this period, he had a positive experience and was living a fulfilling life to some degree. Because of this positive experience, he also had hope for the future to some degree.

However, in the divorce strife period, his relationship with his wife and her mother started to deteriorate. Thus, he had a negative experience, which led to decreased senses of fulfillment, past acceptance, hopefulness, and goal-directedness. Immediately after the divorce, he returned to his previous home and could relax. Thus, he had a positive experience, which led to increased sense of a fulfillment and acceptance of the past, and as hope for the future.

At present, he is remarried and leads a happy life, which provides him with a positive experience. Therefore, his sense of fulfillment and past acceptance continues to increase, as does his degree of goal-directedness.

Looking at the results from the dating period for case C, she was leading a happy and fulfilling life. In the newly married period, this happy life continued. Also, during this period, her husband's company became very successful. Thus, she had a positive experience, which led to higher degrees of goal-directedness, hopefulness, past acceptance, and fulfillment to some degree.

However, in the divorce strife period, he became entangled in his friend's economic affairs. Thus, in this period, she had a negative experience, which led to decreased senses of goal-directedness, fulfillment, past acceptance, and hopefulness. However, immediately after the divorce, she started working hard, with receiving the live hood protect. Thus, she had a positive experience, which led to increased senses of fulfillment, goal-directedness, and hopefulness. At present, her life is stable, and her senses of fulfillment, hopefulness, past acceptance, and goal-directedness continue to increase.

In summary, in the newly married period, in which participants had positive experiences, a positive experiential time perspective was basically observed. However, in the divorce strife period, in which participants had negative experiences, a negative experiential time perspective could be seen. Then, approaching the present, the participants had a positive experiential time perspective again. That is, a change in time perspective accompanying divorce was observed for all three cases.

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