

## Effectiveness of Paradoxical Couple Therapy on Self-Differentiation and Marital Intimacy in Couples with Marital Conflict


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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introduction presents a good overview of the topic, but I would recommend expanding the rationale behind why paradoxical couple therapy (PTC) was chosen for this specific study. How does PTC compare to other forms of couple therapy in terms of efficacy for resolving marital conflicts? Including this comparison will provide greater context for the reader and reinforce the importance of the study.

The section on communication skills in couples therapy could be strengthened by including more recent studies (from the past five years). For example, you might want to cite recent meta-analyses or systematic reviews on communication skills training and its impact on marital satisfaction (e.g., Lawrence & Bradbury, 2023). This will help demonstrate the relevance and timeliness of the proposed intervention.

The statistical analysis section should provide a more detailed justification for the use of the repeated measures ANOVA. For instance, how were violations of assumptions (e.g., sphericity) addressed? Was the Greenhouse-Geisser correction applied? Additionally, I suggest reporting effect sizes for all major tests to offer a clearer picture of the practical significance of your findings.

The descriptive statistics provide valuable information, but the lack of a confidence interval (CI) for means is a notable omission. Reporting 95% CIs for the means and standard deviations would increase the precision of your findings and offer more comprehensive insights into the variability of your data.

The tables would benefit from clearer labels and notes. For example, in Table 2, the column titles “Pre-test” and “Post-test” should specify the exact time intervals (e.g., “Pre-test (Week 1)” and “Post-test (Week 6)” to clarify the timeframes being referenced). This would help readers follow the progression of the intervention more easily.

The reported F-values are useful, but the presentation would be improved if you included a more thorough explanation of what these values represent in the context of your research questions. Specifically, the interaction effects (e.g., Time × Group) could be discussed in greater depth. What does the significant interaction tell us about the specific nature of the changes across the groups?

The finding of a significant effect for time ( $F = 92.148, p < 0.001$ ) is robust, but there should be more interpretation of what this means in a practical context. Does the observed change in scores represent clinically meaningful improvement in marital satisfaction or self-differentiation?

The Bonferroni post-hoc tests reported in Table 5 provide important insights into pairwise comparisons. However, there is no discussion of the practical implications of these findings in the text. I suggest adding a paragraph that elaborates on what the post-hoc results mean in terms of intervention impact, particularly in terms of effect size and clinical relevance.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

While you have referenced several studies, the literature review lacks a critical analysis of the findings from previous studies. For example, in the sentence “Research has shown that couple therapy significantly reduces marital conflict,” it would be more effective if you included specific studies with corresponding effect sizes or meta-analytic results to bolster this claim. How do these studies compare to your findings?

The description of participant demographics lacks detail regarding inclusion and exclusion criteria. Specifically, the text mentions that participants had marital conflict but does not clarify whether this was self-reported, observed, or clinically diagnosed. Clearer definitions of participant characteristics would allow readers to better understand the external validity of your results.

The intervention protocol section needs to include more information on how adherence to the paradoxical tasks was measured. Were there any self-report measures or therapist observations to track participants' adherence? Providing specific tools used for monitoring this adherence would enhance the transparency of your methodology.

While the session summaries are useful, the description of the therapeutic techniques and their theoretical basis (such as “paradoxical time scheduling”) could benefit from a deeper explanation. You should clarify how the paradoxical techniques are expected to elicit change in marital conflicts. For example, in Session 1, it would be beneficial to elaborate on the rationale behind assigning “minimal paradoxical time scheduling tasks.” Are these tasks designed to be counterintuitive to conventional therapeutic interventions, and if so, how?

The discussion could benefit from a more thorough comparison with previous studies. For instance, when stating, “Results of the current study are consistent with previous research by Yalcin and Karahan (2017),” it would be helpful to explicitly compare the findings. How does your effect size for paradoxical couple therapy compare to the one reported by Yalcin and Karahan? Are there differences in the populations studied that might explain these differences?

The implications for practice would be strengthened if you discussed how the results could be generalized beyond the study sample. For example, could this intervention be effectively applied in non-clinical settings (e.g., marriage enrichment programs)? Adding such details would increase the applicability of your findings.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.