

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy and Schema Therapy on Emotional Exhaustion and Attachment Styles in Women with Marital Conflict

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The statement “This broader evidence base supports the rationale for examining emotional exhaustion in women experiencing marital conflict...” requires stronger theoretical justification. The manuscript should explicitly explain why women were selected exclusively, beyond caregiving burden assumptions, preferably supported by gender-specific empirical evidence or cultural considerations relevant to Iran.

The manuscript alternates between “marital burnout” and “emotional exhaustion” without fully clarifying whether these constructs are overlapping or distinct. The sentence “the phenomenon often manifests as emotional exhaustion...” would benefit from a conceptual diagram or theoretical clarification distinguishing these constructs.

The sentence “Forty-five participants were selected using purposive sampling...” raises methodological concerns. Please clarify:

Although participants were “randomly assigned”, the manuscript does not specify whether simple randomization, block randomization, or computerized allocation was used. This omission limits methodological reproducibility.

The sentence “The control group received no therapeutic intervention.” requires ethical justification. Please indicate whether participants were offered delayed treatment or referral services after the study.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph introducing attachment theory, the transition from emotional exhaustion to attachment mechanisms appears abrupt. After the sentence “From a developmental and interpersonal perspective, attachment theory offers a coherent framework...”, please explicitly articulate the causal pathway linking attachment insecurity to emotional exhaustion.

Several consecutive citations appear without analytical synthesis. For example, following “internal working models influence emotion regulation strategies...”, the authors should synthesize prior findings rather than listing studies. Consider adding a critical integration paragraph explaining convergent versus divergent findings.

The sentence “Schema therapy... conceptualizes early maladaptive schemas as pervasive patterns...” correctly summarizes theory but does not explain why schema therapy is theoretically comparable to EFCT. The manuscript should explicitly state shared mechanisms versus distinct mechanisms to justify comparative design.

Although literature is extensive, the research gap is implicit. Before the sentence “Accordingly, the aim of the present study was...”, include a concise paragraph explicitly stating:

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.