




## Comparison of Compassion-Based Positive Couple Therapy and Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy on Emotional Experience Toward Spouse Among Young Couples in Tehran


Fatemeh. Mehdipour<sup>1</sup>, Naser. Amini<sup>1\*</sup>, Marjan Albehbahani<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Bu.C., Islamic Azad University, Bushehr, Iran



<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, Shi.C., Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

\* Corresponding author email address: amini.n@iau.ac.ir

### Editor

Monika Szczygiel<sup>1</sup>  
Department of Psychology,  
Jagiellonian University, Krakow,  
Poland  
monika.szczygiel@uj.edu.pl

### Reviewers

**Reviewer 1:** Abolghasem Khoshkanesh<sup>1</sup>  
Assistant Professor, Counseling Department, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran,  
Iran.  
Email: akhoshkonesh@sbu.ac.ir  
**Reviewer 2:** Thseen Nazir<sup>1</sup>  
Professor of Psychology and Counseling Department, Ibn Haldun University,  
Istanbul, Turkey.  
Email: thseen.nazir@ihu.edu.tr

## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Young couples are particularly vulnerable to emotional instability and relational tensions...,” the authors discuss developmental vulnerabilities among young couples but fail to operationally define the term “young couples.” Later in the methods section, the age range is reported as 18–30 years and marriage duration less than ten years; however, this definition should appear earlier in the introduction to improve conceptual precision and consistency between theoretical framing and methodological implementation.

In the “Study Design and Participant” section, the authors describe the study as “semi-experimental” while simultaneously reporting assignment into experimental and control groups. However, the manuscript does not clarify whether random assignment was performed after purposive sampling. This omission is methodologically important because it directly affects internal validity and interpretation of causal inferences. The procedure for group allocation must be explicitly described.

The sentence “Sample size estimation was conducted based on Cohen’s sample size table (1981)” is insufficiently detailed. The manuscript should specify the expected effect size, statistical power level, alpha level, and whether repeated-measures considerations were incorporated into the sample size calculation. Simply citing Cohen’s table without presenting statistical assumptions weakens methodological transparency.

The inclusion criterion stating that participants “demonstrate normal mental health status” is methodologically problematic because no standardized diagnostic procedure or screening instrument is reported. The authors should specify how psychological disorders were assessed, whether structured clinical interviews were conducted, and who determined participants’ mental health status. Otherwise, the criterion remains vague and potentially unreliable.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The literature review paragraph starting with “Recent studies have increasingly focused on therapeutic interventions designed to improve emotional functioning...” contains several generalized claims regarding the empirical support for emotionally focused couple therapy. However, the review would benefit from a more critical synthesis of prior findings rather than a sequential listing of supportive studies. For example, the authors should discuss inconsistencies across findings, effect size variability, cultural limitations, or methodological weaknesses in prior EFT studies to better justify the current investigation.

In the section discussing compassion-based interventions, particularly the sentence “Compassion-focused approaches assume that many marital conflicts arise from shame, emotional defensiveness, self-criticism, and maladaptive emotional regulation patterns,” the manuscript lacks citation of foundational compassion-focused therapy theorists such as Paul Gilbert. The theoretical explanation appears incomplete without reference to the original conceptualization of compassion-focused therapy and the tripartite affect regulation system. Including these foundations would substantially increase theoretical rigor.

The paragraph beginning “Positive couple therapy has also received growing attention...” merges positive psychology principles with compassion-based therapy but does not clearly distinguish whether the intervention implemented in this study is primarily compassion-focused, positive psychology-based, or an integrated hybrid protocol. This conceptual ambiguity creates difficulty in understanding the exact nature of the intervention. The authors should provide a clearer intervention taxonomy and identify the specific treatment manual or model guiding the protocol.

The statement “Despite the growing body of evidence supporting both emotionally focused and compassion-based therapeutic approaches, comparative investigations examining their differential effects...” appropriately identifies the research gap; however, the manuscript does not formulate explicit hypotheses. Given the comparative design, the authors should specify directional hypotheses regarding whether one intervention was expected to outperform the other on positive or negative emotional experience dimensions.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.