

Comparison of the Effectiveness of the Gottman Couples Therapy Method and the Cognitive-Behavioral Method on Marital Intimacy Among Students of Islamic Azad University, Hamedan Branch

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

This paragraph presents an abundance of general information about marital intimacy without distinguishing clearly between theoretical and empirical sources. A clearer delineation between conceptual definitions and empirical findings would improve clarity and scientific rigor.

The classification of the research design as “experimental” contradicts the later use of “quasi-experimental.” Please clarify and ensure consistent terminology throughout.

The method of participant selection significantly limits the generalizability of findings. Consider discussing potential sampling bias more thoroughly in the limitations section and whether the random assignment to groups mitigated this concern.

The criteria for participant inclusion are extensive but lack clarity regarding how these were operationalized or assessed (e.g., how was absence of psychological disorders verified—self-report, interview, diagnostic tool?).

The concept of “partner influence” is introduced without reference to the Gottman theory’s underlying principles. Providing a citation or brief theoretical explanation would strengthen the protocol’s grounding.

Schema-focused intervention and cognitive restructuring are significant therapeutic components but require citation and alignment with Beck's CBT theory. Consider linking this more explicitly to the theoretical foundation cited (Dattilio & Beck, 2013).

The statistical strategy is sound, but assumptions such as normality and linearity are not addressed. It is essential to include how these were tested or justify their omission.

The table suggests pretest mean differences across groups. Clarify whether these differences were statistically tested and controlled for using MANCOVA, and if not, explain how this affects the interpretation of treatment effects.

The explanation of assumption testing for MANCOVA is welcome but overly simplistic. A more nuanced discussion of the robustness of the test to assumption violations would improve scientific transparency.

You state that the Gottman method "proved particularly effective for students in high-pressure academic settings," yet the study does not assess academic pressure or stress. Consider revising or qualifying this statement.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This claim is striking and should be supported with a more precise and accessible statistical source, preferably an official national database or peer-reviewed longitudinal study.

The explanation of the Gottman therapy method includes detailed terms like "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" without adequate conceptual explanation. Consider briefly defining these four behaviors for international or non-specialist readers.

This is a transitional statement, but it lacks a clear articulation of the research gap. Clarify what previous studies have not yet compared these two approaches or how this study addresses a specific limitation in the literature.

While reliability and validity scores are provided, no psychometric properties from the current sample are reported. Please include Cronbach's alpha or other reliability statistics from this study's data.

The effect sizes ($\eta^2 = 0.754$ and 0.815) are very large. While this is statistically valid, it warrants a more critical reflection on potential inflation due to small sample sizes or lack of follow-up data.

The one-way ANOVA is used after MANCOVA, which already compares group differences. Justify why ANOVA was conducted and whether it adds any additional interpretive value.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.