

Effectiveness of Existential Group Therapy on Perceived Inadequacy in Adolescents with Neglectful or No Guardians in the Welfare Center of Zanzan City

Zahra. Deljouyi Sarkash¹, Mohammad Ali. Fardin^{1*}, Sana. Nouri Moghadam²

¹ Department of Psychology, Zah.C., Islamic Azad University, Zahedan, Iran

² Department of Psychology, Faculty of Psychology, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: mohammadali.fardin@iau.ac.ir

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Muhammad Rizwan  Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Haripur University, Islamabad, Pakistan muhammad.rizwan@uoh.edu.pk	Reviewer 1: Mohammadreza Zarbakhsh Bahri  Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Tonekabon Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran. Email: M.Zarbakhsh@Toniau.ac.ir Reviewer 2: Seyed Ali Darbani  Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. Email: Ali.darbani@iau.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the introduction, the paragraph beginning “Perceived incompetence—understood as the internalized belief...” cites Gilbert et al. (2004) and Khanipour Hamid et al. (2015). Consider expanding this section by integrating more recent empirical studies (2022–2025) on adolescent self-criticism and neglect to ensure the literature review reflects the most up-to-date scholarship.

Table 1 reports means and standard deviations. However, in the text it says “the reduction in mean perceived incompetence score in the experimental group from pretest to posttest suggests a potential positive effect of existential group therapy.” This interpretation should be reserved for the discussion section. Please restrict the results section to descriptive and inferential reporting.

In the paragraph beginning “Homogeneity of variances: To assess the homogeneity of variances...”, it is reported that Levene’s test was significant ($p < 0.05$). Although you note ANCOVA is robust with equal group sizes, it would strengthen the paper to either justify this more fully with references or to consider alternative analyses (e.g., nonparametric ANCOVA).

In the paragraph beginning “Taken together, the results of this study confirm the efficacy of existential group therapy...”, the manuscript could better connect findings to policy implications. Consider discussing how welfare organizations might implement such programs systematically.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence “Existential therapy provides an opportunity to reconstruct meaning in life and to develop resilience by acknowledging suffering as part of existence rather than as a sign of personal inadequacy (Mata, 2022)” would benefit from more elaboration on Frankl’s logotherapy principles, as this provides a theoretical foundation for the therapeutic approach applied.

In the paragraph beginning “The significance of studying existential therapy in adolescents without parental support...”, you cite Roozbehaneh (2021) and Shooa Kazemi et al. (2025). Please strengthen the cultural relevance by explicitly explaining how Iranian cultural values and welfare systems may shape the adolescents’ existential challenges differently from Western contexts.

In Table 2, the ANCOVA results are presented with “Group (Independent Variable) Sum of Squares = 0.130”. The reporting appears incomplete because the corrected model and covariate statistics are omitted. Please include the full ANCOVA table to ensure transparency.

The discussion paragraph “These results align with the foundational work of Gilbert and colleagues...” primarily restates prior studies. Strengthen this section by critically comparing why the effect sizes in your study (0.452) may be larger or smaller than those reported in earlier Iranian or international studies.

The sentence “By doing so, the intervention likely disrupted maladaptive self-critical cycles and fostered a sense of worthiness and competence” is plausible but speculative. Please consider integrating qualitative evidence or theoretical models to support the proposed mechanisms of change.

The claim “The group format of the therapy may have further amplified these benefits...” is convincing but underdeveloped. Please expand on group therapeutic factors (e.g., universality, interpersonal learning, catharsis) based on Yalom’s theory to substantiate this argument.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.