




Comparison of the Effectiveness of Narrative Therapy and Schema Therapy on Self-Actualization in Middle-Aged Women

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The authors write, "Maslow's hierarchy places self-actualization at the apex...". While accurate, it would enhance academic depth to reference Ryff's multidimensional model here in parallel, especially as Ryff's framework is cited later in paragraph 2.

The phrase "barriers to these dimensions due to accumulated life stressors..." needs specific examples of such stressors (e.g., caregiving burden, job stagnation) to provide a clearer picture of the population studied.

The comparison between narrative and schema therapies is insightful. However, the sentence "Both approaches operate on the assumption that psychological distress is shaped by internalized frameworks..." is somewhat abstract. Consider clarifying the nature of these frameworks with brief operational definitions.

The reference to "protocolized interventions tailored to midlife developmental tasks" is compelling. However, the article would benefit from stating whether the current study used these exact protocols (e.g., White, 2025; Jardim, 2023) verbatim or adapted versions.

The phrase "cultural expectations around aging and femininity" is relevant but not expanded. A brief mention of what these expectations are in the Iranian or regional context would greatly enhance cultural sensitivity.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The authors state, "Narrative therapy... empowers individuals to disengage from problem-saturated identities...". While theoretically strong, this paragraph would benefit from referencing empirical support (e.g., Kim & Lee, 2023) earlier in the paragraph, not just at the end.

The sentence, "These schemas, when left unaddressed, interfere with emotional regulation...", could be supported with a brief explanation or example of a specific early maladaptive schema relevant to midlife women (e.g., unrelenting standards or emotional deprivation).

Percentages are given (e.g., "37.1% were illiterate") but raw numbers are not provided. It is standard to report both (e.g., "37.1% [$n = 7$]"), particularly given the small sample size.

The sentence "This finding is consistent with the theoretical foundation of narrative therapy..." should also include a brief synthesis of the mechanisms of change (e.g., externalization, meaning-making) that distinguish narrative therapy from schema therapy.

The discussion references the greater effectiveness of narrative therapy due to developmental congruence but lacks neuroscientific or cognitive-behavioral explanations (e.g., engagement of autobiographical memory processes). Including this could broaden the theoretical framework.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.