Comparison of the Effectiveness of Bowenian Systemic Therapy and Minuchin's Structural Therapy on Family Cohesion and Marital Commitment in Conflictual Couples in Mashhad

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning "Family cohesion refers to the emotional bonding…", cohesion and commitment are discussed separately, but their conceptual interrelationship is not explicitly theorized. Please include a brief integrative framework explaining why cohesion is expected to influence commitment within systemic models.

The paragraph starting "Despite the extensive empirical support…" identifies a general gap. However, the gap should be sharpened by explicitly stating which outcome dimensions have not been previously compared and in what populations, and why Mashhad couples represent an important extension.

Although statistical significance is well reported, the manuscript lacks discussion of clinical significance. For example, what does an increase of 17 points in marital commitment practically represent for couples?

The paragraph beginning "Bowenian systemic therapy appears to have facilitated…" provides strong theoretical explanation but should explicitly connect observed quantitative outcomes to these mechanisms.

The claim "structural therapy demonstrated superior effectiveness" (family cooperation dimension) should be cautiously framed, noting that the effect size is modest and limited to a single subdimension.

While cultural relevance is emphasized, there is no description of cultural adaptation of instruments or interventions. Please discuss whether the original Western-based measures were validated for Iranian cultural norms.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The statement "quasi-experimental in terms of research design" should specify the exact type of quasi-experimental design (e.g., non-equivalent control group design) and explain why full randomization was not feasible.

The phrase "diagnosis of marital conflict based on the assessment of the technical supervisor" requires operational definition. Please describe the assessment protocol, criteria, and inter-rater reliability, if applicable.

In the Measures section, reliability is reported extensively, but construct validity evidence (e.g., factor structure or convergent validity) for the Iranian sample is insufficient. Please provide supporting evidence or acknowledge this limitation.

In the Intervention section, both therapy protocols are well described; however, no information is provided regarding treatment fidelity monitoring, therapist training, or supervision procedures. This omission limits internal validity.

The statement "repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA)" is used, but later the text refers to MANOVA. Please clarify the exact analytic model and justify why MANOVA was preferred over separate ANOVAs.

Table 2 shows Group Membership is non-significant for family cohesion ($p = .15$), yet later text states "there is a statistically significant difference between the Bowenian… and Minuchin…". This interpretation requires correction or clearer explanation of which test supports the claim.

In Table 3, partial eta squared values range from .008 to .85. Please include interpretive commentary on the magnitude of these effects according to accepted benchmarks.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2.   Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.