

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Relational Imagery Therapy and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on We-Ness Experience in Women Exposed to Marital Infidelity

Kiana. Ghasemnejhad¹, Seyedeh Zahra. Sadati^{2*}

¹ Department of Psychology, To.C., Islamic Azad University, Tonekabon, Iran

² Department of Psychology, Qas.C., Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: sz.sadati@iau.ac.ir

Editor

John S. Carlson
Distinguished Professor of the Department of Educational Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, United States
carlsoj@msu.edu

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Mohammad Hassan Ghanifar
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran. Email: ghanifar@iaubir.ac.ir
Reviewer 2: Mohsen Kachooei
Assistant Professor of Health Psychology, Department of Psychology, Humanities Faculty, University of Science and Culture, Tehran, Iran. kachooei.m@usc.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the discussion opening paragraph, the claim that “both therapeutic interventions were effective... but relational imagery therapy demonstrated greater effectiveness” repeats the same interpretive error found in the abstract and findings. Because the reported means favor ACT, the theoretical explanation that follows is built on an apparently incorrect empirical premise. The entire discussion should be revised after resolving this data-interpretation contradiction.

In the title page and citation information, there is an authorship inconsistency. The manuscript lists Behnoush Shariati, Mehrdad Sabet, Tahereh Ranjbaripour, and Sheida Sodagar as authors, but the “How to cite this article” section adds “Mohammadi Shirmahaleh, F.” as an additional author. This discrepancy must be resolved because authorship accuracy is an ethical and bibliographic requirement.

In the “How to cite this article” section, the journal name is written as “KMAN Conseling and Psychology Nexus,” while elsewhere it appears as “KMAN Counseling & Psychology Nexus.” The spelling error “Conseling” should be corrected, and the journal title should be standardized throughout the manuscript.

In the measures section, the original WCRQ is described as having 47 items, but the Persian standardized version is described as having 46 items after one item was removed. The manuscript should explicitly state which version was administered in the present study, the possible score range, and whether the scoring in Table 1 corresponds to the 46-item Persian version.

In the data analysis section, the authors state that Shapiro–Wilk tests were used “to determine the equality of the groups in terms of the dependent variables at the pretest stage,” but Shapiro–Wilk tests assess normality, not group equivalence. Group equivalence should be examined using ANOVA, chi-square tests, or appropriate nonparametric tests. This sentence should be corrected to avoid a fundamental statistical misstatement.

In the data analysis section, mixed multivariate analysis of variance is mentioned, but the manuscript does not report key assumptions such as normality, homogeneity of variance, homogeneity of covariance matrices, sphericity, or corrections such as Greenhouse–Geisser. Because Table 3 reports fractional degrees of freedom, the authors appear to have used a correction, but this is not explained. Assumption testing and correction procedures should be reported explicitly.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the methods section, the paragraph beginning “This study was quasi-experimental...” repeats information about the population, sampling, group allocation, and sample size in a redundant manner. The authors should restructure this paragraph so that design, population, sampling, eligibility criteria, random assignment, and study timeline are presented once, in a clear sequence, without repetition.

In the methods section, the statement “GPower software was used. The total adequate sample size estimated by this software was 45 participants” is insufficient for methodological transparency. The authors should report the exact GPower parameters, including statistical test family, assumed effect size, alpha level, desired power, number of groups, number of repeated measurements, assumed correlation among repeated measures, and nonsphericity correction.

In the participant selection paragraph, the manuscript states that participants were selected purposively and then randomly assigned to groups. This is acceptable for a quasi-experimental design, but the randomization procedure itself is not described. The authors should specify whether random assignment was done using random numbers, sealed envelopes, block randomization, or another method, and whether allocation concealment was implemented.

In the inclusion criteria paragraph, the phrase “experience of marital infidelity by the spouse based on the individual’s self-report and/or confirmation by the relevant counselor or social worker” needs stronger operational definition. The authors should clarify how marital infidelity was defined, whether emotional, sexual, online, or repeated infidelity were included, and whether severity, time since disclosure, and current marital status were assessed.

In the methods section, the exclusion criterion “absence from more than two therapy sessions” should be linked to actual attrition reporting. The manuscript should report whether any participants were excluded after allocation, whether all 45 completed posttest and follow-up, and whether intention-to-treat or per-protocol analysis was used. Without this information, the internal validity of the intervention comparison remains unclear.

In the intervention section, both experimental protocols are described session by session, but treatment fidelity is not sufficiently documented. The authors should report whether sessions were manualized, whether therapists received training or supervision, whether adherence checklists were completed, and whether independent raters evaluated fidelity to relational imagery therapy and ACT protocols.

In the intervention paragraph, it is stated that “the sessions were conducted and facilitated by the center’s official therapist.” Because two different therapeutic approaches were compared, therapist effects may confound the results. The authors should clarify whether the same therapist delivered both interventions, whether therapist competence was equivalent across approaches, and how allegiance bias was minimized.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.