

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Self-Compassion-Focused Therapy and Stress Inoculation Training on Perceived Stress among Parents of Children with Cancer

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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the Methods and Materials section, the authors report that “The target population consisted of parents of children diagnosed with cancer who attended medical and psychological treatment centers in Tehran.” However, the abstract reports a sample of 250 student couples from branches of the Islamic Azad University in Tehran. The discrepancy between the study population described in the abstract and the population described in the methods raises serious concerns regarding the authenticity and accuracy of the manuscript. The authors must clarify the actual study sample and revise all inconsistent sections accordingly.

The statement “A total of 45 eligible parents were selected and randomly assigned to three groups” is incompatible with the abstract, which reports a correlational path-analysis study involving 250 student couples. Since experimental group assignment is impossible within a correlational design, the authors must clearly identify the true research design and remove contradictory methodological descriptions.

In Table 3, the authors report large partial eta-squared values such as .644 and .589. These effect sizes are substantial and suggest very strong intervention effects. The manuscript would benefit from a discussion regarding the practical significance of these findings and their comparison with prior intervention studies.

The Bonferroni results presented in Table 4 should include confidence intervals for mean differences. Reporting only mean differences, standard errors, and p-values limits the interpretability of the findings. Current reporting standards recommend inclusion of confidence intervals for all pairwise comparisons.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the measurement subsection, the authors exclusively describe the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), while the abstract indicates that the study employed the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), Fear of Intimacy Scale, and Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. None of these instruments are described in the methods section. The authors should provide full psychometric details for all measures actually used in the study.

The intervention subsection describes a Self-Compassion-Focused Therapy protocol consisting of ten sessions. However, the title and abstract describe a non-interventional predictive model examining mediation effects. No intervention is mentioned in the abstract. This contradiction indicates that the manuscript may contain sections from multiple unrelated studies. The authors should thoroughly audit the manuscript and ensure methodological consistency.

The paragraph describing the Stress Inoculation Training intervention includes concepts such as creative hopelessness, acceptance skills, values clarification, cognitive defusion, and psychological flexibility. These concepts are traditionally associated with Acceptance and Commitment Therapy rather than classical Stress Inoculation Training. The authors should justify the theoretical basis of the intervention and explain why ACT components were integrated into a purported SIT protocol.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors state that mixed-design repeated-measures ANOVA was used. However, the abstract reports that data were analyzed through path analysis using AMOS. These are fundamentally different statistical approaches associated with different research designs. The authors should clarify which analytical strategy was actually employed and revise the manuscript accordingly.

The sentence “The descriptive indices of perceived stress, quality of life, and loneliness...” introduces quality of life and loneliness as study variables. However, Table 1 only reports perceived stress dimensions, and neither quality of life nor loneliness appears in the methods section. The authors should explain this inconsistency and ensure that all reported variables correspond to the stated study objectives and instruments.

Table 1 is titled “Descriptive Indices of Perceived Stress in the Experimental and Control Groups” but the variable labels repeatedly refer to “Perceived self-efficacy” and “Perceived helplessness.” The authors should clarify whether these are subscales of the Perceived Stress Scale or separate constructs. More detailed explanation of the scoring structure is required.

The statistical assumptions section reports both Bartlett’s test and Mauchly’s test of sphericity, yet the manuscript does not clearly distinguish which assumptions were evaluated by each test. The authors should provide a more rigorous explanation of assumption testing procedures and include actual test statistics rather than narrative summaries.

Table 2 presents Wilks’ Lambda results for “Perceived self-efficacy,” “Perceived helplessness,” and “Perceived stress, total score.” However, no multivariate model structure is described in sufficient detail. The authors should specify whether a repeated-measures MANOVA or multivariate mixed ANOVA was conducted and provide relevant assumption diagnostics and effect size interpretation.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.