

Comparison of the Effectiveness of Schema Therapy-Based Couple Therapy and Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy on Attachment Behaviors in Incompatible Couples


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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The introduction effectively presents the background, but the transition from general marital discord to specific therapeutic interventions could be clearer. For example, the paragraph starting with “When examining effective components in marital adjustment...” should explicitly state why schema therapy and EFT were selected over other models.

The EFT description discusses general concepts but does not specify how emotional engagement was measured or tracked during sessions. Were couples encouraged to practice exercises between sessions, and if so, how was adherence assessed?

The results provide means and standard deviations, but no confidence intervals are reported. Including confidence intervals would improve the clarity of effect size interpretations.

The manuscript reports a Greenhouse-Geisser correction due to a violation of sphericity, but does not report whether Mauchly's test was significant. Include these values to provide a full statistical justification.

The Bonferroni post hoc comparisons in Table 3 show non-significant differences between post-test and follow-up scores. Could this suggest a potential short-term effect rather than long-term improvement? A discussion of possible regression to the mean is warranted.

The discussion states, "both therapy approaches had comparable effectiveness," but does not provide a direct explanation of why this was the case. Were certain attachment behaviors more responsive to one therapy over the other?

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

While the discussion of attachment behaviors and marital discord is well-founded, the study lacks a direct theoretical framework linking schema therapy and emotionally focused therapy to attachment improvements. Consider elaborating on how these approaches theoretically influence attachment behaviors.

The intervention description for schema therapy provides a general outline but lacks sufficient detail on specific techniques used in sessions. For example, in the session on "cognitive techniques," were participants asked to complete schema-related assignments outside of therapy?

The table reports significant differences in accessibility and responsiveness scores, but there is little discussion about whether these differences were clinically meaningful. Adding effect size interpretations beyond statistical significance would strengthen the analysis.

The manuscript briefly mentions, "suppressive norms regarding negative emotion expression in Iranian culture may hinder couples from properly accessing and expressing their emotions." This is an important consideration but needs more empirical support. Are there prior studies showing that emotional suppression moderates the effectiveness of couple therapy in this context?

The study argues that schema therapy modifies maladaptive schemas, while EFT fosters relational repair. However, without mediation analysis, this claim remains theoretical. A suggestion for future research could be to assess mechanisms of change through mediator variables.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.