




# Comparison of the Effectiveness of Narrative Therapy and Schema Therapy on the Character Strengths of Middle-Aged Women

Masoumeh. Shekohideh<sup>1</sup>, Ahmad. Ghazanfari<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master of Science in General Psychology, Department of Psychology, Bor.C., Islamic Azad University, Borujen, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, ShK.C., Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord, Iran.

\* Corresponding author email address: Ahmadghazanfari1964@iau.ac.ir

E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Silvia Helena Koller  Faculty member, Universidade Federal do Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil silvia.koller@pq.cnpq.br	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Farideh Dokanehi Fard  Associate Professor, Counseling Department, Roudehen Branch, Islamic Azad University, Roudehen, Iran. Email: f.dokaneifard@riau.ac.ir <b>Reviewer 2:</b> 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:

The first paragraph provides a good overview of character strengths, but it lacks a clear definition. Consider adding a concise definition of character strengths, such as: "Character strengths refer to positive traits that contribute to individual flourishing, encompassing virtues such as wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence (Peterson & Seligman, 2023)."

The description of the study design is clear, but the rationale for choosing a quasi-experimental design should be explained. Add a sentence like: "A quasi-experimental design was chosen due to the practical constraints of randomization in a clinical setting, while still allowing for comparison between groups."

The VIA-S is mentioned as the primary tool, but its psychometric properties in the Iranian context should be highlighted. Consider adding: "The VIA-S has demonstrated robust psychometric properties in Iranian research contexts, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.87 to 0.91 (Khodabakhsh et al., 2015)."

The use of MANCOVA is appropriate, but the rationale for controlling for pretest scores should be explained. Add: "MANCOVA was employed to control for pretest scores, ensuring that any observed differences in posttest scores were not due to initial baseline differences."

The table on character strength components is detailed, but the absence of effect sizes limits the interpretation of results. Consider adding effect sizes (e.g., Cohen's  $d$ ) to provide a clearer understanding of the magnitude of differences.

The multivariate covariance analysis results are presented clearly, but the practical significance of the effect sizes should be discussed. Add a sentence like: "The effect sizes indicate moderate to large practical significance, with the largest effect observed in transcendence ( $\eta^2 = 0.322$ )."

The explanation of schema therapy's broad effectiveness is clear, but it lacks a connection to the study's specific results. Add: "This aligns with the study's findings, where schema therapy showed comparable efficacy in enhancing wisdom, humanity, justice, and transcendence, with no significant differences between the two therapies in these domains."

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The sentence "Therapeutic approaches such as narrative therapy and schema therapy have emerged as effective modalities for addressing psychological distress and promoting personal growth" is too general. Provide specific examples or citations to support this claim, e.g., "Therapeutic approaches such as narrative therapy (Gonçalves & Ribeiro, 2023) and schema therapy (Aghili et al., 2020) have demonstrated efficacy in improving mental health outcomes..."

The discussion on narrative therapy's focus on reauthoring personal stories is insightful, but it would benefit from a citation to support this claim. Consider adding: "By externalizing problems and reframing experiences, narrative therapy enables individuals to gain new perspectives and develop adaptive coping strategies (Fazeli et al., 2022)."

The opening paragraph effectively summarizes the findings, but it should explicitly state the hypothesis being tested. Consider revising to: "Consistent with the study's hypothesis, both narrative therapy and schema therapy significantly enhanced character strengths among middle-aged women..."

The sentence "The significant improvement in character strengths observed in both groups underscores the importance of these therapeutic modalities" is a strong point, but it would benefit from a citation linking character strengths to psychological well-being. Add: "Enhancing character strengths has been linked to improved psychological well-being and resilience (Peterson & Seligman, 2023)."

The discussion on narrative therapy's efficacy in courage and temperance is insightful, but it should connect to the study's findings more explicitly. Consider adding: "This finding aligns with the study's results, where narrative therapy demonstrated a larger mean difference in courage (9.75) and temperance (8.75) compared to schema therapy."

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.