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1. Master's degree (Level Three) in Family Counseling with an Islamic approach. Qasim ibn al-Hasan (AS) Seminary Higher Education Institute. Tehran, Iran

Email:

[Fateminejad.elena@gmail.com](mailto:Fateminejad.elena@gmail.com)

2. Assistant professor, Department of Psychology and Education of Exceptional Children, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

Email:

[m.b.h.hasanvand06@atu.ac.ir](mailto:m.b.h.hasanvand06@atu.ac.ir)

3. Assistant Professor of Quran and Hadith Department, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

\*. Corresponding Author.

Email:




[Kh.ahmadi@modares.ac.ir](mailto:Kh.ahmadi@modares.ac.ir)

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### The Effectiveness of Emotion-Focused Islamic Couple Therapy on Improving Incompatible Attachment Styles of Couples

Elena Fateminejad<sup>1</sup> , Mohammad Bagher Hasanvand<sup>2</sup>   
, Khadijeh Ahmadi Bighash<sup>3\*</sup> 

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of an Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy (EFCT) model based on an Islamic approach on the attachment styles of incompatible couples. This research is a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up design. The statistical population consisted of all couples referring to the Ava-e Rahai Counseling Center in the second half of the year 1402 in Tehran, whose attachment scores differed by at least one standard deviation from secure attachment. Thirty-six volunteer couples were selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The data collection tool was the Adult Attachment Inventory (AAI) by Basharat. The program was implemented for the experimental group over 10 counseling sessions of 90 minutes each, while the control group did not receive any training. Data analysis was performed using repeated measures analysis of variance (pre-test, post-test, follow-up) with SPSS24 software. Descriptive, analytical, and field examination of the issue indicated that the emotion-focused counseling model based on the Islamic approach could effectively transition incompatible couples from insecure to secure attachment and enhance emotional regulation. In the attachment styles component, there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). However, there was no significant difference between the post-test and follow-up means with 95% confidence ( $P \geq 0.05$ ). This statistic indicates that the therapeutic effects on attachment were maintained until the follow-up stage.

**Keywords:** Emotionality Focused Therapy, Islamic Couple Therapy, Attachment Styles.

## **1-Introduction**

The Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT) approach is one of the couple therapy approaches that emphasizes the importance of expressing and regulating emotions in couples' relationships (Myers, 2006, 292-304). This approach aims to help couples recognize the disturbances in their relationship as unmet attachment needs, enhancing their ability to express their emotions to each other in the form of attachment needs to foster the development of secure attachment bonds. The Emotionally Focused Therapy seeks to reconstruct limited and negative interaction patterns of couples, rebuild positive emotional responses, and expedite the growth and repair of secure attachment bonds (Johnson, 1401, 204-208). In this sense, the Emotionally Focused Therapy is considered the most effective factor in maintaining marital relationships by increasing positive emotions in challenging situations and fostering secure attachment (Ghaderi, 1394, 77-83). Emotionally Focused Therapy, emphasizing concepts such as empathy, self-disclosure, deep understanding of one's and the partner's needs, acceptance, and expression of emotions, as well as the growth of secure attachment, plays a powerful role in creating love and increasing the intimacy of couples (Kirkpatrick, 1992, 209; Jenkins, 2012, 89).

Secure attachment encompasses a wide range of an individual's life, including their relationships with others, their relationship with the divine, their sexual orientation and experience, the impact of attachment on the nature of prayer, the influence of attachment on interaction with religion, and more (Johnson, 2010, 316-306; Byrd, 2001, 24-9). Experimental evidence suggests that adult attachment influences their coping mechanisms with life problems. For instance, individuals with secure attachment levels show more self-confidence in facing life changes. On the other hand, individuals with avoidant and anxious attachment levels, characterized by high levels of distress, have limited access to social support and lower functionality in maintaining resilience (Belisarius, 2011, 97-89). The Emotionally Focused Therapy emphasizes that the type of attachment in childhood predicts individuals' future marital relationships (Hasan, 1987, 511-425).

Moreover, one of the theoretical limitations of attachment theory is the concept of attachment to God and its role in family relationships. Seeking refuge in God during crises and relying on attachment to God for emotional regulation can be effective, and secure attachment to God can extend to secure relationships with other individuals, such as parents and spouses (Kirkpatrick, 1992, 3-28). In other words, religion can provide additional emotional and social support through faith in God and religious organizations, reducing the sense of attachment insecurity or mitigating its negative effects on the unavailability of a spouse (Dumont, 2009, 187).

Couples facing challenges in establishing marital compatibility may also benefit from attention to religious beliefs and commitment to a religious community. Thus, a positive relationship exists between mental health and religious beliefs, as individuals naturally have an

inclination toward growth and unity (Ryan, 2000, 68-78). Since couples' coping styles significantly affect the quality of their marriage (Hosseini, 1390, 17), teaching spiritual and religious coping skills would be useful for resolving conflicts between couples. Spiritual orientation can assist individuals in coping with life challenges by providing support, instilling hope, offering guidance, and being effective in moments of crisis (Straub, 2009, 47). Religion, as a source of coping with challenging situations, provides motivation and purpose, personal control, a sense of comfort, physical health, intimacy with others, or spirituality (Wolfing, 2008, 131).

The concept of attachment is a common ground between Islam and the Emotionally Focused Therapy approach. As God Almighty says, "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought" (Quran, 30:21). According to this verse, God has placed affection and mercy between spouses, which should manifest in their behavior and actions. Spouses need affection that expresses loving behavior and contributes to each other's peace. Mercy, on the other hand, is a psychological impact observed in individuals from witnessing someone lacking perfection and in need of addressing deficiencies. It arouses a sense of obligation to act to meet that need (Tabatabai, 1374, 16/166). Therefore, spouses need affection and mercy in their relationships to understand each other's needs and take action to meet the needs of their spouses. This Quranic principle encompasses the complete and comprehensive principle of attachment targeted in Emotionally Focused Therapy for couples.

Religious directives and ethical teachings play a crucial role in regulating emotions to improve the quality of couples' relationships. With religious teachings, including the Quran and traditions, three types of coping strategies can be observed: cognitive methods (such as faith, reliance on divine justice, belief in divine providence, belief in divine destiny, belief in divine secrets), emotional-spiritual methods (such as remembering God, reciting the Quran, supplication, prayer, hope, and seeking forgiveness during the night), and behavioral methods (such as patience and self-restraint, marriage, family relationships, and maintaining family ties) (Motamediyan, 1388, 87).

In line with the similarities mentioned between the Emotionally Focused Therapy approach and religious interventions, adherence to religious approaches and beliefs proves to be more effective and both quantitatively and qualitatively superior to therapeutic techniques, especially in Islamic countries, in recognizing one's characteristics and vulnerabilities in the emergence of couples' emotions. Examining the Emotionally Focused Therapy approach based on religious intervention propositions can be considered a significant and influential factor in couples' relationships. It adapts to the nature and needs of couples towards providing and, when necessary, draws on Islamic teachings and religious techniques alongside therapeutic

techniques from the Emotionally Focused Therapy approach. In this regard, this research aims to answer the question of how Emotionally Focused Therapy based on Islamic principles influences the improvement of incompatible attachment styles in couples' therapy.

## 2- Literature Review

Couple therapy has been experimented with in various domains. Among the most significant works are:

- Article: "The effectiveness of the couple therapy model from the perspective of the Quran and narratives on the family's efficacy and marital jealousy," written by Fatemeh Jafari, published in the *Applied Family Therapy Journal* (2023). The study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the jealousy reduction couple therapy package with an Islamic approach on the family's efficacy and marital jealousy among incompatible couples.
- Article: "Relational style based on the presence of God in Islamic couple therapy," written by Vahideh Hatami Shendi, published in the *Ma'arif Journal* (2021). The article explores the relational style of spouses based on divine presence in Islamic couple therapy and its foundations.
- Article: "Investigating the effectiveness of Islamic-centered couple therapy on the optimism of couples in Isfahan," written by Atefeh Heyrat, published in the *Research in Cognitive Behavioral Sciences Journal* (2011). The research examined the effectiveness of Islamic-centered couple therapy on the optimism of couples.
- Article: "Extraction of therapeutic components based on the teachings of the Quran," written by Parisa Parn, published in the *Journal of Islamic Psychology* (2016). The study focused on extracting therapeutic components based on the teachings of the Quran.
- Article: "The impact of training in emotion-focused approach on the intimacy of couples," written by Zahra Ghaderi, published in the *Applied Psychology Journal* (2015). The research aimed to investigate the effect of training in the emotion-focused approach on the intimacy of couples.
- Article: "The effectiveness of emotion-focused couple therapy on attitudes toward extramarital relationships and marital dissatisfaction," written by Shifteh Shahabi, published in the *Social Health Journal* (2020). The study examined the effectiveness of structured and short-term emotion-focused couple therapy, which has widespread applications in solving emotional and psychological problems in couples.
- Article: "Comparison of the effectiveness of reality therapy-based couple interventions with emotion-focused interventions on the marital quality of couples," written by Javad Karimi, published in the *Analytical Cognitive Psychology Journal* (2022). The research compared the effectiveness of reality therapy-based couple interventions with emotion-focused interventions on the marital quality of couples.

However, no literature was found that specifically investigates emotion-focused couple therapy based on the Islamic approach and its impact on improving attachment styles in incompatible couples. If the use of the emotion-focused couple therapy model based on the Islamic approach proves effective, it can serve as a practical method to transform many conflicts in couples from insecure attachment to secure attachment. Additionally, it can contribute to the enhancement of the spiritual relationship with the Divine.

### **3- Research Method**

The method of this research was quasi-experimental with a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up design. The statistical population included couples who visited the Ava-e Rahai Counseling Center in Tehran for marital problems in the year 1401-1402. Given the limitations of working in various clinics, convenience sampling was used in this study. Based on similar research in couple therapy, a sample size of 30 couples was determined. Therefore, from all couples who referred to the Ava-e Rahai Counseling Center, the Basharat Attachment Scale test was administered to identify those whose attachment scores were at least 1 standard deviation from the mean. From these, 36 couples were randomly selected as the sample and placed into control and experimental groups. Six couples were excluded from the study due to various issues, resulting in 15 couples in both the experimental (N=15) and control (N=15) groups. The average age of individuals in the experimental group was 40 years, and in the control group, it was 35 years. The average duration of their marriages was 10 years. It is noteworthy that some of these couples had children.

The experimental group underwent 10 sessions of 90-minute Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy based on the Islamic approach, while the control group did not receive any therapy. The inclusion criteria for this study were: willingness to participate, having at least one year and at most 20 years of marriage, having at least elementary education, the ability to attend 10 consecutive counseling sessions together, not participating in any counseling sessions other than the current study, first marriage experience, living together in the same house, and scoring at least 1 standard deviation from the mean on the Basharat Attachment Scale (AAI). The exclusion criteria included: having an extramarital relationship and unwillingness to end it, one spouse being addicted to drugs, and active physical violence between spouses.

The sample size was determined based on previous similar studies in couple therapy, with 30 couples considered sufficient. Thus, from all couples who visited the Ava-e Rahai Counseling Center, the Basharat Attachment Scale test was administered to identify those whose attachment scores were at least 1 standard deviation from the mean. From these, 36 couples were randomly selected and assigned to control and experimental groups. Due to various issues, 6 couples were excluded from the study, leaving 15 couples in each group (N=15 for both the experimental and control groups). The average age of individuals in the

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#### **4- Attachment Styles**

For further clarification regarding the attachment styles studied by psychologists in adult attachment theory, based on individuals' self-perception, emotional and cognitive needs, and perceptions of others in relationships, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) have identified four primary attachment styles. These styles are:

1. **Anxious Attachment Style (Preoccupied):** Individuals with this style experience high levels of anxiety and low levels of avoidance. They seek constant attention from their partners to reduce their insecurity and negative feelings. They often struggle with persistent thoughts and fears of rejection and find it difficult to be soothed during conflicts. They have a negative view of themselves, a positive view of others, and are concerned about others' reactions (Filsinger, 1984, 71).

2. **Avoidant Attachment Style (Dismissive):** Individuals with an avoidant attachment style have low anxiety levels and high avoidance levels. They exhibit characteristics such as avoiding emotional intimacy, emphasizing self-sufficiency and independence, denying vulnerability, suppressing their true feelings in relationships, and avoiding conflicts and negative emotions by suppressing thoughts and feelings. They are constantly focused on maintaining independence and personal space, have a positive view of themselves, a negative view of others, and lack interest in connecting with others (Fraley, 1997, 192).

3. **Fearful-Avoidant Attachment Style (Fearful):** Individuals with this style have both high levels of anxiety and high levels of avoidance. They experience a conflict between avoiding emotional closeness and maintaining emotional relationships. Despite seeking security, love, and assurance from their partners, they also fear emotional harm and rejection. Their behavior is often inconsistent and unpredictable. They may desire closeness with their partners, but when their partner does not respond, they may be inclined to exit the relationship, becoming trapped in this conflicting pattern (Chang, 2014, 52). They have a negative view of

themselves and others, and they lack interest in connecting with others (Adamson, 2013, 712-726).

4. **\*\*Secure Attachment Style:\*\*** Individuals with a secure attachment style provide support to their partners during anxiety and distress, reducing negative feelings and insecurity. They can experience a reduction in negative attachment patterns by relying on each other for support. These individuals can establish appropriate boundaries in their marital relationships through trust and realistic expectations of their partners. They have a positive view of themselves and others, and by accepting support from others, they become supportive and supportive themselves. They possess a strong identity, independence, and self-confidence (Kirkpatrick, 1994, 123-142).

The emotional unavailability of a spouse and a lack of support and empathy between spouses lead to confusion and relationship problems. Individuals with insecure attachment styles fear close relationships and avoid intimacy. Couples with secure attachment styles not only have better emotional regulation but also control their emotions and experience more love in their relationships by interacting positively with their spouses. Attachment styles of spouses influence each other. For example, a spouse with a secure attachment style can reduce the negative effects of an insecure attachment style in the other spouse and nurture a sense of security in them. However, if the other spouse also has an insecure attachment style, these positive interactions may not be confirmed and may gradually organize these effective patterns (Feeney, 2003, 76). Even in relationships with at least one insecure spouse, the sense of security and safety in both individuals may decrease. This sense of insecurity may sometimes intensify and worsen due to the responses of the other spouse. Insecure spouses, in response to a secure spouse, modify their incompatible behaviors (Keshavarz Afshar, 2013, 213). Additionally, in marital relationships with at least one insecure spouse, a sense of security and safety in both may decrease. This sense of insecurity may sometimes intensify and worsen due to the responses of the other spouse. Insecure spouses, in response to a secure spouse, modify their incompatible behaviors (Keshavarz Afshar, 2013, 213).

According to attachment theory, a violation of trust due to lack of support from an attachment figure during times of need, crisis, or abandonment leads to attachment injury. Events such as spousal infidelity, abandonment, or rejection, lack of responsiveness, unavailability, inability to protect the spouse in times of need, etc., result in attachment injury in spouses (Johnson, 2005, 21). All attachment injuries created in response to a significant event convert a secure relationship into an insecure or antagonistic one (Johnson, 1998, 17-1). This transformation, in addition to causing emotional harm to the spouse, robs their trust in the spouse and prevents the effectiveness of any effort to build trust and closeness. Consequently, it leads to experiencing anger, sorrow, anxiety, rumination, avoidance, etc. (Chang, 2014, 93).

These attachment injuries not only cause disruption in attachment but also often lead to the prevalence, intensification, and perpetuation of the negative interaction cycle between spouses, weakening the spouses' inclination to treat their relationship.

#### **4-1. Adult Attachment Scale**

The Adult Attachment Scale, developed using Hazan and Shaver's materials, has been normalized for samples of Iranian students and the general population. This 15-item scale measures three adult attachment styles: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent, on a 5-point Likert scale (Besharat, 2000, 43). The minimum and maximum scores for the subscales of the test are 5 and 25, respectively. This scale has been investigated and confirmed in several studies. In these studies, internal consistency, test-retest reliability, content validity, and concurrent validity of the scale are all significant at the 0.001 level. The results of factor analysis also confirmed the construct validity of the Adult Attachment Scale by identifying three factors: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles (Timorpoor, 2015, 24-15).

#### **5- Emotion-Focused Counseling Model Based on Islamic Approach**

The Adult Attachment Scale, developed by Hazan and Shaver, has been normalized for samples of Iranian students and the general population. It comprises a 15-item test measuring three adult attachment styles: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent, on a 5-point Likert scale (Besharat, 2000, p. 43). The minimum and maximum scores for the subscales are 5 and 25, respectively. This scale has been investigated and confirmed in several studies.

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the sub-scales of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles were calculated for a sample of 1480 students (860 females and 620 males), with values of 0.85, 0.84, and 0.85, respectively, for the entire sample. For female students, the coefficients were 0.86, 0.83, and 0.84, and for male students, they were 0.84, 0.85, and 0.86, indicating good internal consistency of the Adult Attachment Scale.

Correlation coefficients between the scores of a sample of 300 participants in two separate sessions, with a four-week interval, were calculated to assess the test-retest reliability. For the secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles, the coefficients were 0.87, 0.83, and 0.84, respectively, for the entire sample. For female students, the coefficients were 0.86, 0.82, and 0.85, and for male students, they were 0.88, 0.83, and 0.83, indicating satisfactory test-retest reliability of the scale.

The content validity of the Adult Attachment Scale was assessed by measuring the correlation coefficients between the scores of 15 psychologists. In these studies, internal consistency, test-retest reliability, content validity, and concurrent validity of the scale were all significant at the 0.05 level. Factor analysis results also confirmed the structural validity of the



Adult Attachment Scale, identifying three factors of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles (Teimourpour, 2015, pp. 15-24).

### 6- Implementation of Educational Sessions

The objectives and session content of couples therapy in this study were derived from the Emotional-Focused Counseling Protocol based on an Islamic approach. This model was designed based on the components and objectives of the Emotional-Focused Group Counseling Protocol based on an Islamic approach, which was developed and formulated for implementation by Fatemeh Jafari in her master's thesis in Family Counseling at the University of Tehran (Jafari, 2017, pp. 43-67). In this protocol, to assess face and content validity based on the opinions of five experts in psychology and counseling familiar with Islamic approaches, the pre-designed protocol was evaluated based on previous research background using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 10. To convert qualitative judgments of experts into quantitative measurements regarding content validity, the Lash method was utilized. The face and content validity of this model were calculated using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) index, resulting in a value of 0.7125, indicating an acceptable validity coefficient for the final model of Emotional-Focused Group Counseling based on an Islamic approach.

Table 1. Protocol of Emotion-Focused Counseling Model Based on Islamic Approach.

Session Number	Session Connection Session	Title: The counseling and education process in each session involves:
1	acquaintance	<p>A**Pre-Assessment:**                      Conducting a preliminary assessment to gather relevant information about the individuals and their relationship dynamics.</p> <p>B **Establishing Positive Rapport:**                      Introducing members to each other, articulating the objectives, discussing session regulations.</p> <p>C **Conflict Exploration:**                      Describing the latest conflict, understanding the current relationship atmosphere, identifying interactions, evaluating communication issues leading to marital distress. Recognizing strengths in the individuals and their relationship, creating a sense of need and motivation for initiating and continuing counseling sessions.</p> <p>D**Assignment:**                      Documenting the type of action and individuals' reactions in situations where conflicts arise for the couples.</p>
2	<b>Exploration of Emotional Reactions</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment:**                      Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Introduction of the Emotion-Focused Approach:**                      Introducing the emotion-focused approach, making the concept of adult attachment understandable for the couples, identifying the emotional needs of the partners, uncovering attachment barriers, engaging in emotional conflicts.</p> <p>C**Identification of Primary and Secondary Emotions:**                      Recognizing initial and secondary emotions, emphasizing on damaged emotions and feelings, identifying the cycle of negative interactions, analyzing emotional states accompanied by</p>

		<p>challenging cycles, examining problems based on the emotional cycles and attachment needs.</p> <p>D**Assignment:** Taking notes on the emotions and attachment needs of the couples in conflicting interactive situations, creating a distinction between primary emotions (such as anxiety) and secondary emotions (such as anger), expressing primary emotions in their interactions with their spouse until the next week.</p>
3	<b>Exploration of Emotional Reactions Based on Islamic Approach</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment:** Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Overview of Family in Islam:** Providing a general view of the family in Islam, explaining the attachment styles to God, elucidating methods of emotional management and regulation in Islam (self-awareness, self-regulation, self-control).</p> <p>C**Assignment:** Examining the couples' perspective on God in terms of responsiveness or punitive nature, and the controlling aspect of the Almighty, investigating the impact of the relationship with God on their relationship with their spouse.</p>
4	<b>Fostering Harmony Among Spouses Based on the Themes of Forgiveness and Pardon in the Islamic Approach</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment:** Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Recounting and Acknowledging Denied Attachment Needs:** Narrating and listening to the denied attachment needs, accepting and responding to unacknowledged feelings, initiating the reconstruction of interactions, practicing conversation skills, listening to each other among spouses in Islam.</p> <p>C**Confronting the Spouse's Pain and Anger:** Facing the spouse's suffering and anger, developing a new perspective on the spouse, fostering empathy, the process of forgiveness, and differentiating it from similar concepts (such as tolerance, reconciliation, forgetfulness, patience), facilitating forgiveness.</p> <p>D**Assignment:** Taking note of a situation in which they deeply hurt their spouse, placing oneself in the spouse's position, understanding them, grasping their conditions.</p>
5	<b>Strategies for Increasing Love in Married Life Based on the Islamic Approach</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment:** Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Expression of the Concept of Love and Intimacy Between Spouses in the Islamic Approach **: Describing the concept of love and intimacy between spouses in the Islamic perspective, identifying influencing factors, and proposing solutions to enhance them in marital life.</p> <p>C**Identification of Attachment Needs, Fears, and Emotional Engagement **: Recognizing attachment needs, fears, deepening emotional engagement, expressing desires, and fears, and addressing intimacy-related anxieties.</p> <p>D**Assignment **: Implementing the mentioned strategies for increasing love based on Islamic narrations, such as expressing love, making jokes, expressing gratitude, collaboration, consultation, avoiding comparison of the spouse with others, paying attention to each other's strengths, etc., and presenting the results in the next session.</p>

6	<b>Changing the Interaction Pattern of Couples, Teaching the Principles of Spousal Communication from the Perspective of the Islamic Approach</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment:Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B** Emphasis on Expressing Needs, Assisting Spouses in Showing More Emotional Responses, Acceptance of One's Share, and Expressing Comfort:Highlighting the importance of expressing needs, assisting spouses in demonstrating more emotional responses, accepting one's share, and expressing comfort. Reconstructing and creating new emotional experiences, teaching communication principles for husbands and wives from the perspective of Islamic narrations (such as paying attention to psychological differences between women and men, choosing an appropriate time, place, and situation for talking, starting conversations beautifully and politely, showing respect to the spouse, etc.), and facilitating communication knots.</p> <p>C** Assignment:The couples are expected to express their expectations from each other in various situations, considering Islamic communication principles, and present the results.</p>
7	<b>Teaching Spiritual Coping Methods Based on the Islamic Approach in Stressful and Conflict Situations</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment: Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Expressing Spiritual Coping Methods from the Perspective of the Islamic Approach (such as Trust in God, Remembrance of God, Prayer, Hope for God's Mercy, Maintaining Family Ties, Patience, Self-restraint, etc.) and Applying Them in Stressful Life Situations: Describing ways of spiritual coping from the Islamic perspective and applying them in challenging life situations. Reflecting on and confirming the difficulty of new responses and reframing them. Considering obstacles to new behaviors and finding solutions.</p> <p>C**Assignment: Implementing spiritual coping methods and documenting the results.</p>
8	<b>Innovative Solutions for Old Problems: The Positive Effects of Having Good Thoughts in the Islamic Approach</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment: Checking the progress and implementation of the assignment from the previous session.</p> <p>B**Creating a Safe Space, Building Trust, Talking About the Positive Effects of Positive Assumptions in Married Life, Including Comfort and Attraction, Supporting Healthy Interaction Patterns, Increasing Accessibility and Responsiveness, Stabilizing and Integrating New Interaction Situations: Fostering a secure environment, promoting trust, discussing the benefits of positive assumptions in marital life, such as comfort and attraction. Supporting healthy interaction patterns, increasing accessibility, and responsiveness. Stabilizing and integrating new interaction situations.</p> <p>C**Assignment: Taking note of a joyful narrative about one's relationship</p>
9	<b>Highlighting New Patterns: Enhancing Couples' Capacity in Sustaining Genuine Interactions Based on Islamic Teachings</b>	<p>A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment: Checking the progress and practicing the intimate interaction and conversation of the couple from the perspective of Islamic narratives. This includes highlighting strengths, expressing gratitude, supporting constructive interaction patterns, strengthening the current situation, and incorporating new responses. Reminding the couple of their capabilities in maintaining positive relationships and attributing changes to their efforts.</p> <p>B**Training in Interaction and Intimate Communication of the Couple from the Perspective of Islamic Narratives (such as drawing attention to strengths, expressing gratitude and appreciation for each other): Engaging in exercises that involve intimate interaction</p>

		and meaningful conversations between the couple, guided by Islamic teachings. This may include focusing on each other's strengths, expressing gratitude, and appreciating each other. C**Assignment: The couple is tasked with evaluating their performance and the impact of their ability to express emotions, articulate needs, intimacy, and satisfaction with marital life in counseling sessions. They should take notes on their assessments.
10	<b>Conclusion, Appreciation of the Couple, Closing</b>	A**Follow-up on Previous Session's Assignment: Checking the progress of the assignment given in the previous session. B**Final Summary: Summarizing the key points discussed and learned throughout the counseling sessions. C**Invitation to Continued Participation in Counseling Sessions, If Needed: Inviting the couple to continue attending counseling sessions if they feel the need for further support. Expressing appreciation for their commitment to the process. D**Conducting Post-Assessment: Carrying out a post-assessment to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the counseling sessions and the progress made by the couple.

Based on the above table, the protocol for emotion-focused counseling pattern initially focused on describing the variables under study by creating specific counseling groups. Then, utilizing the hypothesis and examining through the couples seeking counseling and their request for tasks that required careful consideration from the couples themselves, the research materials were investigated, analyzed, and examined.

Table 2. Statistical description of attachment scores in three measurement stages, categorized by group.

Group	Variable	Pre-test		Post-test		Follow-up	
		Mean	standard deviation	Mean	standard deviation	Mean	standard deviation
<b>Control</b>	Secure Attachment	10.27	3.615	10.53	3.324	10.13	3.523
	Avoidant Attachment	9.47	2.900	10.07	3.240	9.53	3.662
	Ambivalent Attachment	12.80	3.840	13.07	3.990	12.47	3.962
<b>Experiment</b>	Secure Attachment	9.47	2.900	10.07	3.240	9.53	3.662
	Avoidant Attachment	12.80	3.840	13.07	3.990	12.47	3.962
	Ambivalent Attachment	11.93	2.374	14.47	2.326	13.96	2.529

According to the above table, descriptive statistics related to the mean and standard deviation of attachment scores were presented separately for individuals in the control and experimental groups at three measurement stages (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up). The

results indicate that in the control group, there is not a significant observable change in the mean scores between the pre-test, post-test, and follow-up stages. However, in the experimental group, an increase in scores is observed in the post-test and follow-up stages compared to the pre-test.

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the normality of the data distribution needs to be examined. This involves preparing a suitable statistical test for hypothesis testing. For this purpose, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to identify the type of data distribution. The distribution of data related to the research variables was examined at a significance level of 0.05, and the results are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to examine the normality of score distribution.

Variable	Pre-test		Post-test		Follow-up	
	Z	Significance Level	Z	Significance Level	Z	Significance Level
"Preliminary Attachment Styles Test"	0/147	0/492	0/135	0/600	0/174	0/291
"Post-Assessment of Attachment Styles"	0/083	0/974	0/188	0/213	0/114	0/792
"Follow-up on Attachment Styles"	0/093	0/936	0/088	0/957	0/901	0/945

The above table presented the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to examine the normality of the score distribution for pre-test, post-test, and follow-up. Based on the results shown in the table, the significance level in statistical terms was calculated for all variables greater than 0.05. Therefore, the assumption of normality in the distribution of scores was accepted.

Table 4. Results of the Levene's test to examine the homogeneity of variances.

Variable	F	"Degree of Freedom 1	"Degree of Freedom 2	"Significance Level"
Pre-test Attachment of Secure	0/152	1	28	0/669
Post-test Attachment of Secure	0/129	1	28	0/772
Follow-up Attachment of Secure	0/487	1	28	0/491
Pre-test Attachment of Avoidant	0/039	1	28	0/844
Post-test Attachment of Avoidant	0/802	1	28	0/378
Follow-up Attachment of Avoidant	1/378	1	28	0/250
Pre-test Attachment of Ambivalent	1/139	1	28	0/295
Post-test Attachment of Ambivalent	0/778	1	28	0/385
Follow-up Attachment of Ambivalent	0/306	1	28	0/584

Based on the above table, the results of the Levene's test indicate that there is no significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posits the homogeneity of variances for the variables, is confirmed.

Table 5. Results of the Mauchly's Sphericity test.

Variable	Skewness	Chi square	df	Significance Level
Secure Attachment"	0/627	12/594	2	0/002
Avoidant Attachment	0/861	4/026	2	0/001
Ambivalent Attachment"	0/867	3/839	2	0/001

The examination of the results in the above table indicates that Mauchly's test is statistically significant for the component of attachment style. This suggests a violation of the sphericity assumption, increasing the likelihood of Type II error. Therefore, the obtained p-values in the multivariate test are not reliable. Consequently, Greenhouse-Geisser and Huynh-Feldt corrections, which adjust the degrees of freedom, are utilized.

Table 6. Results of the within-subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to compare attachment styles between control and experimental groups.

Effect		values	F	degrees of freedom for effect	degrees of freedom for error	significance level	impact size
Repetition	Placebo Effect	0/901	7/110	12	104	0/001	0/451
	Lumbad Wielkz	0/134	14/68	12	102	0/001	0/633
	Hotelling Effect	6/173	25/721	12	100	0/001	0/755
	Largest Eigenroot	6/130	53/123	12	52	0/001	0/860
	Repetition* Group	0.881	6/817	12	104	0/001	0/440
Repetition* Group	Placebo Effect	0.141	14/171	12	102	0/001	0/625
	Lumbad Wielkz	5.964	24/848	12	100	0/001	0/749
	Hotelling Effect	5.938	51/465	12	52	0/001	0/856
	Largest Eigenroot						

The above table presents the results of multivariate tests examining the differences in mean scores of attachment styles between the control and experimental groups across the treatment stages. The information in this table indicates that all multivariate tests are statistically significant. This suggests the presence of a main effect related to the repetition factor (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up) as well as an interaction effect between groups and repetition (indicating differences between groups across measurement stages).

Table 7. Results of the within-subjects univariate analysis to compare attachment styles between control and experimental groups.

source	Attachment style	variables	sum of squares	degree of freedom	mean of squares	F	significance level	effect size
repetition	Secure Attachment	Sphericity Assumption	134.830	2	67.415	35.051	0.001	0.556
		Greenhouse-Geisser	134.830	1.457	92.545	35.051	0.001	0.556
		Huynh-Feldt	134.830	1.571	85.808	35.051	0.001	0.556
		Lower Bound	134.830	1	134.830	35.051	0.001	0.556
	Avoidant Attachment	Sphericity Assumption	148.573	2	74.286	58.583	0.001	0.677
		Greenhouse-Geisser	148.573	1.757	84.578	58.583	0.001	0.677
		Huynh-Feldt	148.573	1.932	76.905	58.583	0.001	0.677
		Lower Bound	148.573	1	148.573	58.583	0.001	0.677
	Ambivalent Attachment	Sphericity Assumption	48.067	2	24.033	29.173	0.001	0.510
		Greenhouse-Geisser	48.067	1.766	27.219	29.173	0.001	0.510

		Huynh-Feldt	48.067	1.943	24.736	29.173	0.001	0.510	
		Lower Bound	48.067	1	48.067	29.173	0.001	0.510	
		Sphericity Assumption	173.835	2	86.917	45.190	0.001	0.617	
	Secure Attachment	Greenhouse-Geisser	173.835	1.457	119.317	45.190	0.001	0.617	
		Huynh-Feldt	173.835	1.571	110.631	45.190	0.001	0.617	
		Lower Bound	173.835	1	173.835	45.190	0.001	0.617	
		Sphericity Assumption	92.483	2	46.241	36.466	0.001	0.566	
group repetition	Avoidant Attachment	Greenhouse-Geisser	92.483	1.757	52.648	36.466	0.001	0.566	
		Huynh-Feldt	92.483	1.932	47.872	36.466	0.001	0.566	
		Lower Bound	92.483	1	92.483	36.466	0.001	0.566	
		Sphericity Assumption	87.800	2	43.900	53.289	0.001	0.656	
	Ambivalent Attachment	Greenhouse-Geisser	87.800	1.766	49.719	53.289	0.001	0.656	
		Huynh-Feldt	87.800	1.943	45.183	53.289	0.001	0.656	
		Lower Bound	87.800	1	87.800	53.289	0.001	0.656	
		Sphericity Assumption	107.708	56	1.923	-	-	-	
	error	Secure Attachment	Greenhouse-Geisser	107.708	40.793	2.640	-	-	-
			Huynh-Feldt	107.708	43.997	2.448	-	-	-
			Lower Bound	107.708	28	3.847	-	-	-
			Sphericity Assumption	71.011	56	1.268	-	-	-
Avoidant Attachment		Greenhouse-Geisser	71.011	49.186	1.444	-	-	-	
		Huynh-Feldt	71.011	54.093	1.313	-	-	-	
		Lower Bound	71.011	28	2.536	-	-	-	
		Sphericity Assumption	46.133	56	0.824	-	-	-	
Ambivalent Attachment		Greenhouse-Geisser	46.133	49.446	0.933	-	-	-	
		Huynh-Feldt	46.133	54.409	0.848	-	-	-	
		Lower Bound	46.133	28	1.648	-	-	-	

The above table displays the results of the within-subjects univariate analysis to compare attachment styles between the control and experimental groups. According to the presented results, the F-values corresponding to the interaction effects between groups and repetition (indicating differences between groups across measurement stages) for all components of attachment styles are statistically significant at the 0.001 level ( $p < 0.001$ ). The significance of interaction effects suggests differences in the patterns of changes in attachment style scores between the control and experimental groups across measurement stages. Therefore, the comparison of mean scores across measurement stages utilized a repeated measures ANOVA and its results.



Table 8. Post hoc Bonferroni test to investigate within-group differences.

group		difference in means	standard error	significance
pretest	pretest	12/33	1/12	0/001
	follow-up	12/50	1/15	0/001
post-test	post-test	-12/33	1/12	0/001
	follow-up	0/167	1/15	1/00

Based on the above table, the results of the Bonferroni follow-up test to examine within-group differences in the component of attachment styles between pre-test ( $M = 15.1$ ,  $SD = 50.14$ ), post-test ( $M = 29.70$ ,  $SD = 176.32$ ), and follow-up ( $M = 17.40$ ,  $SD = 100.20$ ) revealed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test ( $p < 0.01$ ). However, there was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of post-test and follow-up, with a mean difference of 16.70, and a 95% confidence interval ( $p > 0.01$ ). This statistical result implies that the treatment effects on attachment were able to be sustained up to the follow-up stage.

Table 9. Results of between-group effects test for comparing the mean scores of attachments.

source of variation	variable	sum of squares	degrees of freedom	mean squared	F	significance level
group	secure attachment	605.284	1	605.284	8.367	0.007
	avoidant attachment	278.080	1	278.080	4.351	0.046
	ambivalent attachment	220.900	1	220.900	9.287	0.005
	secure attachment	2025.561	28	72.341	-	-
error	avoidant attachment	1789.469	28	63.910	-	-
	ambivalent attachment	666	28	23.786	-	-
					-	-

The above table presents the results of the between-subjects analysis to examine the mean scores of attachment styles between control and experimental groups. According to the obtained results, the F-values for all components of attachment styles are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## 7- Results

- Attachment quality forms the foundation of emotional and social relationships for each individual, including couples, in a way that all emotional and affective reactions are

related to the type of attachment between partners. An individual with secure attachment will be better able to establish a direct and less distorted connection with their spouse.

- The emotion-focused approach, by exploring the attachment-related injuries during childhood, the connection with primary caregivers, the disrupted interactive cycle in marital relationships, and suppressed or exaggerated emotions in marital life, can reduce emotional and relational problems for couples, providing them with greater satisfaction and happiness. Emotion-focused couples therapy sessions shape their foundational emotions, facilitate the expression of needs, uncover new solutions to old problems, and create a new situation between partners, strengthening the marital bond.
- The effectiveness of emotion-focused couple therapy based on Islamic principles on incompatible attachment styles in marital relationships was examined using an analysis of variance in three assessment stages (pre-test, post-test, and follow-up). The mean scores of attachment styles in the post-test and follow-up stages were significantly different compared to the pre-test stage. However, there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the post-test and follow-up stages, indicating the stability of treatment effects over time. Also, there was no significant difference in mean scores between the control group in the pre-test stage and the post-test and follow-up stages, as well as between the post-test and follow-up stages.
- The Quran introduces spiritual coping methods in emotion-focused counseling for couples based on Islamic principles, categorizing them into three groups: cognitive methods (faith, reliance, trust in divine justice, belief in divine providence, belief in divine secrets), emotional-spiritual methods (remembering God, reciting the Quran, prayer, night prayer, hope, seeking forgiveness, staying awake at night), and behavioral methods (patience and self-discipline, marriage, family relationships, maintaining family ties). Incorporating religious approaches into the framework of emotion-focused counseling, alongside emotion-focused therapeutic techniques in Islamic couple therapy, and emphasizing the fundamental emotions shared among humans and the ability to encompass various cultures, can effectively contribute to the adaptation of couples and the strength of marital life based on the growth of their secure attachment. This can reduce issues such as incompatibility, divorce, etc.

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## اثر بخشی زوج درمانی هیجان مدار مبتنی بر رویکرد اسلامی بر بهبود

### سبک‌های دلبستگی زوجین

النا فاطمی نژاد<sup>۱</sup>، محمدباقر حسنونند<sup>۲</sup>، خدیجه احمدی بیغش<sup>۳</sup>

#### چکیده

پژوهش حاضر با هدف بررسی اثر بخشی الگوی زوج درمانی هیجان مدار مبتنی بر رویکرد اسلامی بر سبک‌های دلبستگی زوجین ناسازگار انجام پذیرفت. این پژوهش از نوع شبه آزمایشی با طرح پیش آزمون و پس آزمون با گروه پیگیری بود. جامعه آماری کلیه زوجین مراجعه کننده به مرکز مشاوره آوای رهایی در شش ماه ی دوم سال ۱۴۰۲ شهر تهران بوده است که نمره دلبستگی آنها حداقل یک انحراف معیار با دلبستگی ایمن تفاوت داشت، انتخاب و از بین آنها ۳۶ زوج داوطلب و به تصادف در دو گروه آزمایش و گواه جایگزین شدند. ابزار گردآوری اطلاعات مقیاس دلبستگی بزرگسال بشارت (AAI) بود. برنامه به مدت ۱۰ جلسه مشاوره ۹۰ دقیقه‌ای برای گروه آزمایش اجرا شد، اما گروه گواه، آموزشی دریافت نکرد. برای تحلیل داده‌ها از تحلیل واریانس با اندازه گیری مکرر (پیش آزمون، پس آزمون، پیگیری) از نرم افزار spss24 استفاده شد. بررسی توصیفی تحلیلی و میدانی این مسئله نشان می دهد الگوی مشاوره هیجان مدار مبتنی بر رویکرد اسلامی به عنوان روشی کاربردی و مؤثر می تواند زوجین ناسازگار را از حالت دلبستگی نایمن به ایمن و تنظیم هیجانات بیشتر سوق دهد. در مؤلفه سبک‌های دلبستگی، بین پیش آزمون با پس آزمون تفاوت معناداری وجود داشت ( $P \leq 0/05$ ). اما میان میانگین پس آزمون و پیگیری با ۹۵ درصد اطمینان ( $P \geq 0/05$ ) تفاوت معناداری وجود نداشت. این آمار حکایت از حفظ اثرات درمان در دلبستگی را تا مرحله پیگیری دارد.

**کلیدواژگان:** هیجان مدار اسلامی، هیجان مداری، زوج درمانی، سبک‌های دلبستگی.

۱. کارشناسی ارشد (سطح سه) مشاوره خانواده با رویکرد اسلامی، موسسه آموزش عالی حوزوی قاسم بن الحسن (ع)، تهران، ایران.

Email:

[Fateminejad.elena@gmail.com](mailto:Fateminejad.elena@gmail.com)

۲. استادیار گروه روان شناسی و آموزش کودکان استثنائی، دانشکده روان شناسی و علوم تربیتی، دانشگاه علامه طباطبائی، تهران، ایران.

Email:

[m.b.h.hasanvand06@atu.ac.ir](mailto:m.b.h.hasanvand06@atu.ac.ir)

۳. استادیار گروه قرآن و حدیث دانشکده علوم انسانی، دانشگاه تربیت مدرس، تهران، ایران. \* نویسنده مسئول.

Email:

[Kh.ahmadi@modares.ac.ir](mailto:Kh.ahmadi@modares.ac.ir)

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