




## Impact of a Forgiveness-Based Intervention on Marital Commitment and Trust Restoration

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
Maryam Fatehizade  Professor of Counseling Department, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Isfahan University, Iran m.fatehizade@edu.ui.ac.ir	<b>Reviewer 1:</b> Mohammad Hassan Ghanifar  Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Birjand Branch, Islamic Azad University, Birjand, Iran. Email: ghanifar@iaubir.ac.ir <b>Reviewer 2:</b> Mehdi Rostami  Department of Psychology and Counseling, KMAN Research Institute, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada. Email: dr.mrostami@kmanresce.ca

### 1. Round 1

#### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In paragraph 3 of the Introduction, the phrase “Research has shown that commitment is positively associated with forgiveness...” lacks contextual detail. Clarify whether the association is unidirectional or reciprocal, and cite mechanisms explaining how forgiveness enhances commitment.

In the paragraph beginning with “Several studies have supported the effectiveness...”, you refer to “integrated couples therapy, which included forgiveness training.” Please delineate what aspects of the integrated therapy were specific to forgiveness—otherwise the causal pathway is ambiguous.

In the same paragraph, the phrase “enhanced forgiveness processes” is vague. Consider specifying what dimensions of forgiveness were measured or observed (e.g., decisional forgiveness vs. emotional forgiveness).

The paragraph beginning “Forgiveness in marriage is also influenced by personality traits...” cites Farsani (2021). To strengthen this point, include brief details on the methodological design (e.g., was it cross-sectional or longitudinal?) to justify its relevance.

The sentence in the last paragraph of the Introduction—“The present study aims to address these gaps...” —could be made more robust by explicitly stating the hypothesis and distinguishing between primary and secondary outcome variables.

In the Methods section, under “Study Design and Participants,” clarify whether both members of each couple were treated as individual data points or as dyadic pairs. The unit of analysis (individual vs. couple) should be explicitly stated for transparency in the repeated measures ANOVA.

Under the “Measures” section for Trust, while the use of the Rempel et al. scale is appropriate, the description omits whether this tool has been validated in an Indonesian cultural context. If not, mention whether any adaptation or pilot testing was conducted.

In the Data Analysis section, the authors write, “Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$ ...” It is advisable to state whether any corrections for multiple comparisons were applied across the two main outcomes to control for Type I error inflation.

In the Findings section, you report: “At baseline, both groups were comparable...” However, you should include the results of a statistical test (e.g., t-test) confirming baseline equivalence between groups for marital commitment and trust.

Table 1 could be enhanced by reporting confidence intervals or minimum-maximum values alongside means and standard deviations to provide a fuller picture of distributional spread.

In the Discussion, paragraph 2, the authors state: “Such emotional reframing appears to have taken place...” This is speculative. Unless qualitative data were collected, this assertion should be framed as a plausible interpretation rather than a factual conclusion.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the second paragraph of the Introduction, you state, “Trust is a fundamental component in all intimate relationships.” This generalization should be qualified with reference to specific theoretical or empirical frameworks that distinguish between emotional trust and behavioral trust in intimate partnerships.

In the paragraph beginning “Cultural context also plays a significant role...,” the statement “forgiveness is often emphasized as a communal value” would benefit from specifying how forgiveness is conceptualized within collectivist societies (e.g., as a duty, virtue, or conflict resolution strategy).

In the same paragraph, you cite Riaz et al. (2024) to discuss gendered dimensions of forgiveness. It would be scientifically sound to briefly clarify whether the study focused on differential predictors, outcomes, or both, in relation to gender.

In the paragraph beginning “Beyond its emotional and cognitive effects...,” the citation to Brudek and Kaleta (2021) would benefit from clarification on how gerotranscendence theory informs the operationalization of forgiveness. Currently, the theoretical linkage is implied but not articulated.

In the Intervention section, Session 3 on “Developing Empathy and Perspective-Taking” would benefit from inclusion of any fidelity-check procedures or therapist qualifications that ensured consistent delivery of role-reversal exercises.

In the same section, Session 6 refers to a “Relationship Agreement.” Please clarify whether this was therapist-facilitated or self-guided, and whether its content was standardized across participants.

Response: Revised and uploaded the manuscript.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.