




# Comparison of the Effectiveness of Functional Communication-Based Intervention Training and Theory of Mind Training on the Sense of Competence in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder


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## 1. Round 1

### 1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

While prevalence is noted with a 2023 reference, you should also include region-specific prevalence data (e.g., Iranian context) to situate the study locally and justify the need for the research in Shahin Shahr.

The definition is correct, but you should further distinguish between perceived competence and related constructs such as self-efficacy and self-esteem to strengthen conceptual clarity.

The phrase “applied in purpose” is unclear. Please rephrase for precision, e.g., “applied in orientation and quasi-experimental in design.”

The description is helpful but still broad. Please indicate whether a validated ToM intervention protocol was followed or whether the sessions were researcher-developed.

Given the relatively small sample size, please clarify whether effect sizes and confidence intervals were emphasized alongside p-values, to avoid overreliance on significance testing.

The table presents means and SDs, but confidence intervals for means would add value. Consider including them to improve statistical transparency.

This paragraph is strong, but you should also acknowledge whether the intervention content itself was culturally adapted (e.g., language, examples, parental engagement styles).

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

### 1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

This paragraph effectively explains FCT, but it would be useful to describe whether FCT has previously been applied in Iranian or Middle Eastern populations to highlight the novelty of your study.

Please specify the age ranges in which ToM training is most effective, with evidence, since your sample involves children; this contextualization would strengthen the rationale.

You note that few studies directly assess competence outcomes, but you should expand on why competence (as opposed to only behavior or cognition) is critical to long-term ASD development.

You should report the exact  $F$ ,  $df$ , and  $p$  values in the narrative (not only in the table), to comply with APA reporting standards.

This is an important claim. You should consider quantifying the “slightly stronger impact” of FCT with effect size differences, rather than qualitative wording.

The link between executive functioning and competence is insightful, but it would be valuable to cite neurocognitive theories (e.g., Barkley’s EF model) to strengthen theoretical grounding.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

## 2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.