

## The Effectiveness of Cognitive Emotion Regulation Training on Experiential Avoidance of Women with Obsessive- Compulsive Disorder

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of cognitive emotion regulation training on the experiential avoidance of women with obsessive-compulsive disorder. The present study was a quasi-experimental. The quasi-experimental design of the present study was pre-test, post-test and follow-up with a control group. In order to select the participants of the study, using Cochran formula, 1500 women aged 20 to 45 years were selected by available sampling. Of the 169 people who received the diagnosis of OCD, 40 people were randomly selected and matched and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The members were assigned in such a way that 20 people in the experimental group receive treatment protocol related to cognitive emotion regulation training and 20 people in the control group did not receive any intervention. For data analysis, the method of analysis of variance with repeated measures was used.

**Keywords:** Cognitive emotion regulation, experiential avoidance, obsessive-compulsive disorder, women.

### Introduction

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is one of the most common mental disorders, which despite its high prevalence is one of the most resistant disorders to treatment. Obsessive-compulsive disorder sufferers experience a range of emotional responses when confronted with situations that provoke obsessive thoughts and actions. There are intrapersonal differences related to sensitivity to these emotions and how they are regulated, which is called emotional regulation (Hoffman, Carpenter, & Joshua, 2016). In recent years, much attention has been paid to experiential avoidance as a pathological factor in various types of mental disorders. Structural empirical avoidance is used to avoid painful experiences and is one of the most important multidimensional structures associated with obsession. This structure consists of two components. Shamli, et al (2018) In a study entitled The effectiveness of emotion-focused therapy on emotion regulation styles and the severity of obsessive-compulsive disorder in women with obsessive-compulsive disorder, the results showed that emotion-focused therapy in two stages: post-test and follow-up. It leads to an increase in the style of concealment emotion regulation and a decrease in the severity of obsessive-compulsive symptoms in the experimental group compared to the control group. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of cognitive emotion regulation training on the experiential avoidance

of women with obsessive-compulsive disorder in Kermanshah. Therefore, in the present study, the hypothesis of the effect of group training on cognitive emotion regulation on the experimental avoidance of women with obsessive-compulsive disorder was tested.

## Method

The present study was an applied research in terms of purpose and quasi-experimental in terms of data collection. The quasi-experimental design of the present study was pre-test, post-test and first and second follow-up with a time interval of one month with the control group. The statistical population of this study consisted of all women aged 20 to 45 years (with at least a third of middle school education) in 2018. Purposeful sampling method was used to select the sample size.

**The Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Scale:** The Yale Brown-Obsessive-Compulsive Scale is a semi-structured interview to assess the severity of obsessive-compulsive disorder. In Iran, in the research of Rajazi, et al (2011), internal stability in the two parts of the token list (SC) and intensity scale (SS), respectively 0.97 and 0.95, the validity of halving for the list Signs and severity scales were 0.93 and 0.89 and retest validity was 0.99, respectively, and its cut-off point (9) was suggested for patient / healthy differentiation. The internal consistency of this questionnaire in the present study was 0.92 and 0.90 for symptom checklist (SC) and severity scale (SS), respectively.

**Multidimensional Experiential Avoidance Questionnaire (MEAQ):** This questionnaire is a self-report tool designed by Gomez, et al (2011) to measure empirical avoidance. Gomez et al. (2011) set the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the subscales of behavioral avoidance 0.85, disgust disruption 0.84, procrastination 0.89, distraction / stop 0.89, repression and denial 0.86, and turbulence tolerance / 87. 0 reported in the range of 80 to 0.85 and 0.92 for the whole test. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the total scale score was 0.842, behavioral avoidance 0.891, disgust 0.828, procrastination 0.794, distraction / stop 0.681, denial / suppression 0.822 and turbulence tolerance 0.818.

## Results

Data using descriptive statistics, the difference between the mean and standard error covariance with repeated measures test in statistical software spss-23 were analyzed.

The results of the table below show that there is a significant difference between the scores of dependent variables in pre-test, post-test and first and second follow-up in the experimental and control groups, in other words, there is an interaction between time and group.

Table 1: Results of multivariate tests of scores of dependent variables

Title of test	The value of test statistics	F	Df hypothesis	Df error	Significance level	Chi-Square	Test power
Pillai's Trace	0.992	82.34	23	16	0.001	0.992	1
Wilks Lambda	0.008	82.34	23	16	0.001	0.992	1
Hotelling's Trace	118.37	82.34	23	16	0.001	0.992	1
Roy's Largest Root	118.37	82.34	23	16	0.001	0.992	1

In order to investigate the differences between the mean scores of the experimental avoidance components in the pre-test, post-test and the first and second follow-up, repeated measures analysis of variance was used.

Table 2: Results of repeated analysis of variance

Sources of changes	Total squares	Freedom degree	Mean of squares	F	Significance level	Chi-Square	Test power
Disgust and confusion	876.60	1	876.60	16.36	0.001	0.81	1
Distraction	680.62	1	680.62	15.47	0.001	0.23	0.97
Repression	761.25	1	761.25	18.77	0.001	0.33	0.99
Tolerance of distress	765.62	1	765.62	34.54	0.001	0.48	1
Delay	406.40	1	406.40	23.76	0.001	0.39	0.99
Behavioral avoidance	372.10	1	372.10	16.38	0.001	0.30	0.98

The results of repeated measures analysis of variance test for the components of experimental avoidance in pre-test, post-test, first follow-up and second follow-up indicate that there is a significant difference in the effect of cognitive emotion regulation training in the experimental group compared to the control group.

## Conclusion

The first limitation of the present study is the small sample size. Although this study did not yield a drop in subjects, the small sample size of this study is one of the limitations that prevent accurate estimation of the effect size of the program. It is recommended to use larger samples to achieve the true effect of the program. It is suggested that in addition to drug treatment, other treatment methods be used to control and reduce obsessive thoughts and behaviors and to

tolerate confusion and disgust. At the practical level, it is suggested that these trainings be taught to therapists in a specialized workshop so that they can take a practical step by using this treatment for patients with OCD to reduce the symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder, experimental avoidance of patients.

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