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Research Article

The Effectiveness of Time Perspective Therapy on Anxiety Symptoms and Co-Rumination in Adolescent Girls with Body Dissatisfaction

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Abstract

Background: Adolescence is a critical period marked by increased vulnerability to anxiety and body dissatisfaction, with co-rumination potentially exacerbating psychological distress. Time Perspective Therapy (TPT), which promotes adaptive perceptions of the past, present, and future, has shown promise in reducing anxiety and rumination. However, its effects on body dissatisfaction among adolescent girls remain underexplored.

Objectives: the present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of TPT on reducing body dissatisfactionanxiety, and co-rumination among adolescent girls.

Methods: Using a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design, a sample of 28 adolescent girls (aged 15-18) from Rasht were recruited and randomly assigned into an experimental group (n=14) and a control group (n=14). The experimental group participated in eight therapeutic sessions of TPT, conducted twice weekly for 1.5 hours per session. Psychometric data were collected using the Body Shape scale, Beck's Anxiety Inventory, and the Co-rumination scale. Data analysis was performed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) after verifying the homogeneity of regression slopes via the Box test and equality of variances through Levene's test.

Results: The results demonstrated that TPT exerted a statistically significant effect on lowering body dissatisfaction ($F=22.08$, $p<0.001$), anxiety ($F=80.58$, $p<0.001$), and co-rumination ($F=67.34$, $p<0.001$), with substantial effect sizes of 0.63, 0.69, and 0.67, respectively. In conclusion, the findings suggest that TPT is highly effective in alleviating the psychological burden of body dissatisfaction by fostering positive self-awareness and shifting the patient's temporal focus toward constructive aspects of life. Through altering the negative cognitive patterns associated with the past and future, this therapy reduces the tendency toward co-rumination and anxiety.

Conclusion: Hence, it is strongly recommended that clinical psychologists and counselors integrate TPT into their interventions for adolescent girls.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Studies have named adolescence as the period of onset of anxiety disorders (Chavanne et al., 2023). One of the problems that adolescents experience is body dissatisfaction. Among adolescence aged 13 to 19, the rate of body dissatisfaction was 75% (Carvalho et al., 2020). Since adolescence is associated with body dissatisfaction, anxiety and co-rumination, it is necessary to pay attention to psychological therapies. Among the new therapies that have attracted the attention of researchers in recent years is time perspective therapy. In time perspective therapy, techniques such as checking the dimensions of the past, present, and future time perspective are trained, and then people change their negative time perspective towards the past, present, and future to positive perspectives (Sword et al., 2014). Research has confirmed the effectiveness of this therapy in mitigating body dissatisfaction (Amirimanesh et al., 2025), anxiety (Mirzania et al., 2021), and co-rumination (Esmaili et al., 2022a). However, among adolescents with body dissatisfaction, the effectiveness of time perspective therapy has not been examined; thus, the aim of the present study was to inspect the effectiveness of time perspective therapy on body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and common rumination of adolescent girls with body dissatisfaction.

Method

The research method was quasi-experimental with a pre-test and post-test design. The statistical population of this research consisted of female adolescents with body dissatisfaction in adolescents (15 to 18 years-old) in Rasht city. Among them, 28 adolescents agreed to participate in the research and were randomly assigned in two experimental (14 adolescents) and control (14 adolescents) groups.

The Body shape (Cooper et al., 1987), Beck's Anxiety (Beck et al.,1988), and Co-rumination (Rose, 2002; cited in Ariapooran, 2021a) were employed to collect the data. For the experimental group, the intervention based on time perspective therapy (Seward et al., 2014) was implemented in 8 sessions (two 1.5h sessions per week). Data were analyzed using multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) test.

Results

Before performing the multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), the assumption of homogeneity of the regression slope (Box test) was confirmed for body dissatisfaction ($p<0.38$; $F=0.81$), anxiety ($p<0.32$; $F=1.03$), and co-rumination ($p<0.61$; $F=0.27$) F). Further, Levene's test confirmed the equality of variances between groups in the post-test of body dissatisfaction ($p<0.23$; $F=1.48$), anxiety ($p<0.48$; $F = 0.49$), and co-rumination ($P>0.19$; $F=1.80$). The results of the box test also indicated the homogeneity condition of the variance-covariance matrices ($p<0.70$; $F=0.63$).

According to MANCOVA, the effectiveness of time perspective therapy on lowering body dissatisfaction ($p<0.001$; Wilks's lambda $F=22.08$), anxiety ($p<0.001$; Wilks's lambda $F=80.58$), and co-rumination ($p>0.001$; Wilks's lambda $F=67.34$) was significant with pre-test control. It can be stated that body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and co-rumination were diminished after therapy, and the effect sizes of time perspective therapy on lowering body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and joint rumination were 0.63, 0.69, and 67, respectively.

Discussion

The results indicated that time perspective therapy had a significant influence on reducing body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and co-rumination of adolescent girls with body dissatisfaction. It can be stated that this result is consistent with the previous finding that the effectiveness

of this therapy on body dissatisfaction (Amirimanesh et al., 2025), anxiety (Mirzania et al., 2021), and co-rumination of adolescents (Esmaili et al., 2022a) has been confirmed. In time perspective therapy, people become aware of their positive and negative perspectives regarding the past, present, and future, and alter the negative aspects of their time perspective to positive aspects and states (Sword et al., 2014). As such, this therapy teaches adolescents to receive the positive aspects of their lives and gain a positive self-awareness towards the time, which will most likely mitigate body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and co-rumination. In general, based on the results, therapists and counselors are suggested to apply this intervention to reduce the psychological problems of adolescent's girls, including body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and co-rumination. Further, it is suggested that time perspective therapy be held through educational workshops for counselors and psychologists who work with adolescents so that they can use this therapy to reduce psychological problems such as body dissatisfaction, anxiety, and co-rumination of adolescents.

Author Contributions: E.S. and M.A. jointly conceptualized the study, developed the methodology, and drafted and revised the manuscript. M.A. conducted data collection and formal analysis. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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