

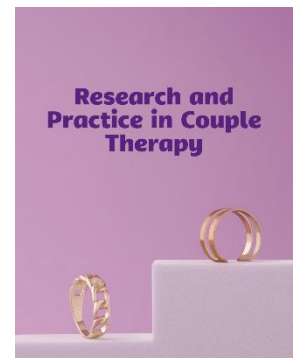


The Effectiveness of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy on Hope, Dyadic Coping, and Relationship Resilience among Couples Facing Economic Stress

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy (SFCT) on hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples experiencing economic stress. This study employed a quasi-experimental design with pretest, posttest, and two-month follow-up assessments using a control group. The statistical population consisted of married couples experiencing significant economic stress in Toronto, Canada. Forty couples (80 individuals) meeting the inclusion criteria were selected through purposive sampling and randomly assigned to an experimental group (20 couples) and a control group (20 couples). The experimental group participated in eight weekly 90-minute sessions of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy, while the control group received no intervention during the study period. Data were collected using the Adult Hope Scale, the Dyadic Coping Inventory, and the Relationship Resilience Assessment Scale. Data analysis was conducted using repeated-measures analysis of variance and Bonferroni post hoc tests in SPSS version 29. The results of repeated-measures analysis of variance revealed significant effects of time, group, and Time \times Group interaction for all dependent variables. For hope, significant effects were observed for time ($F = 51.84, p < .001$), group ($F = 42.27, p < .001$), and Time \times Group interaction ($F = 64.18, p < .001, \eta^2 = .451$). Dyadic coping also demonstrated significant time ($F = 58.73, p < .001$), group ($F = 47.91, p < .001$), and interaction effects ($F = 71.26, p < .001, \eta^2 = .477$). Similarly, relationship resilience showed significant effects for time ($F = 62.54, p < .001$), group ($F = 50.16, p < .001$), and Time \times Group interaction ($F = 75.83, p < .001, \eta^2 = .493$). Bonferroni comparisons indicated significant improvements from pretest to posttest and from pretest to follow-up for all variables ($p < .001$), while no significant differences were found between posttest and follow-up assessments ($p > .05$), indicating maintenance of treatment gains over time. The findings demonstrate that Solution-Focused Couple Therapy is an effective intervention for enhancing hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples facing economic stress. By emphasizing strengths, future-oriented goals, and collaborative problem-solving, the intervention enabled couples to develop adaptive psychological and relational resources that persisted beyond the treatment period. These results support the application of solution-focused approaches as an evidence-based strategy for promoting relational well-being and resilience among couples confronted with financial adversity.

Keywords: Solution-Focused Couple Therapy, Hope, Dyadic Coping, Relationship Resilience, Economic Stress, Couples, Marital Relationships, Family Therapy, Strengths-Based Intervention, Psychological Adaptation.

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Introduction

Economic stress is increasingly recognized as one of the most significant challenges affecting contemporary couples and families. Rising living costs, employment instability, debt accumulation, inflation, and financial uncertainty create persistent stressors that extend beyond economic functioning and profoundly influence emotional well-being, relationship quality, and



family stability. Financial hardship has been associated with increased marital conflict, reduced relationship satisfaction, psychological distress, and a diminished capacity for couples to work collaboratively in managing life challenges. The impact of economic stress is particularly evident in intimate relationships because financial concerns often affect communication patterns, emotional responsiveness, trust, and shared decision-making processes. Research has shown that when couples face prolonged financial difficulties, their ability to maintain positive relational functioning may become compromised, leading to heightened tension and vulnerability within the relationship (Arıcı-Şahin & Köse, 2025; Muhammad et al., 2021).

The family stress literature suggests that economic adversity should not be viewed solely as a financial issue but rather as a multidimensional stressor that affects relational, psychological, and social systems simultaneously. Couples facing financial strain frequently report greater emotional exhaustion, increased conflict frequency, and reduced confidence in their capacity to overcome challenges together. In such contexts, protective psychological and relational resources become particularly important. Among these resources, hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience have emerged as key factors that enable couples to adapt successfully to stressful circumstances and maintain relationship stability despite adversity (Cox et al., 2022; Hassan-Abbas, 2022; Zhang et al., 2023).

Hope is a fundamental psychological construct that reflects individuals' beliefs in their ability to identify pathways toward desired goals and maintain motivation to pursue those goals despite obstacles. Within intimate relationships, hope functions as an adaptive cognitive and emotional resource that supports optimism, persistence, and constructive problem-solving. Couples with higher levels of hope are more likely to perceive challenges as manageable, maintain confidence in their future together, and engage in collaborative efforts to overcome difficulties. Hope contributes not only to individual well-being but also to relationship functioning by promoting positive expectations and reducing feelings of helplessness. Studies examining positive psychological interventions have consistently demonstrated that hope can be strengthened through targeted therapeutic approaches and that increases in hope are associated with improved emotional adjustment and interpersonal functioning (Duan et al., 2022; Joubert & Guse, 2021; Mohamad et al., 2022).

Economic stress often threatens hope by creating uncertainty regarding future outcomes and reducing individuals' perceptions of control over their circumstances. Financial insecurity may undermine confidence in achieving personal and family goals, leading to pessimism and emotional disengagement. Consequently, interventions that strengthen hope may be particularly valuable for couples experiencing economic hardship. Research involving trauma survivors and other vulnerable populations has demonstrated that therapeutic approaches emphasizing strengths, resources, and future-oriented thinking can enhance hope and subjective well-being, suggesting potential benefits for economically stressed couples as well (Franklin et al., 2025; Joubert & Guse, 2021).

Another important construct in understanding couple adaptation to stress is dyadic coping. Dyadic coping refers to the processes through which romantic partners communicate stress, provide support, coordinate coping efforts, and manage challenges together. Unlike individual coping strategies, dyadic coping emphasizes the relational nature of stress management and recognizes that stress experienced by one partner inevitably influences the other partner and the relationship as a whole. Effective dyadic coping involves supportive communication, shared problem-solving, emotional responsiveness, and collaborative action. These behaviors contribute to stronger relationship functioning and facilitate adaptation during periods of adversity (Gu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2024).

The significance of dyadic coping becomes especially apparent under conditions of economic strain. Financial stress frequently requires couples to make joint decisions regarding budgeting, employment, caregiving responsibilities, and resource allocation. Couples who engage in effective dyadic coping are more likely to approach these challenges collaboratively rather than adversarially. Research involving couples facing chronic illness, caregiving demands, and other significant stressors has

consistently demonstrated positive associations between dyadic coping and psychological adjustment, relationship satisfaction, and resilience. Moreover, dyadic coping appears to function as a protective mechanism that buffers the negative consequences of stress on relationship quality (Gu et al., 2023; Hasanzadeh et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

Relationship resilience represents another critical factor influencing how couples respond to adversity. Relationship resilience refers to the capacity of partners to withstand challenges, recover from setbacks, and maintain relational functioning despite stressful experiences. Rather than merely avoiding negative outcomes, resilient couples demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, emotional connectedness, and an ability to derive meaning from adversity. Relationship resilience has gained increasing attention within family and couple research because it provides a framework for understanding positive adaptation under difficult circumstances (Aydoğan et al., 2021; Höltge et al., 2021).

Several studies have highlighted the importance of resilience in promoting healthy relationship functioning during periods of uncertainty and stress. For example, investigations conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that resilience contributed significantly to relationship quality, emotional adjustment, and family functioning. Resilient couples were more likely to maintain positive communication patterns, support one another effectively, and adapt to rapidly changing circumstances. Similar findings have emerged among families facing occupational risks, caregiving burdens, and economic instability, underscoring the role of resilience as a protective relational resource (Aydoğan et al., 2021; Cox et al., 2022; Hassan-Abbas, 2022).

Research has also suggested important connections between resilience, coping, and relationship satisfaction. Couples who demonstrate greater resilience tend to engage in more adaptive coping strategies and report stronger relationship outcomes. Relational resilience has been shown to mediate the association between conflict experiences and relationship satisfaction, indicating that resilience may help transform stressful experiences into opportunities for growth and strengthened partnership (Kaygas & Özbay, 2023). Similarly, studies involving long-distance marriages and families facing unique structural challenges have emphasized the importance of resilience in sustaining emotional bonds and promoting relational stability despite external stressors (Allen & Goldberg, 2021; Priastuty et al., 2023).

Given the importance of hope, dyadic coping, and resilience, there is growing interest in identifying interventions capable of strengthening these protective factors. Among contemporary therapeutic approaches, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) has received considerable empirical and theoretical support. Developed as a strengths-based and future-oriented approach, SFBT emphasizes identifying clients' existing resources, exploring exceptions to problems, constructing preferred futures, and facilitating achievable change through small, meaningful steps. Rather than focusing extensively on deficits or pathology, SFBT directs attention toward strengths, successes, and possibilities for positive change (Franklin et al., 2025; Zidek, 2023).

The theoretical foundation of SFBT aligns closely with constructs such as hope, resilience, and adaptive coping. By encouraging individuals and couples to identify desired outcomes and recognize existing competencies, the approach fosters a sense of agency and optimism. Core techniques such as miracle questions, scaling questions, exception-seeking questions, and resource identification promote future-oriented thinking and strengthen confidence in the capacity for change. These processes are theoretically consistent with mechanisms underlying hope development and resilience enhancement (Ding et al., 2025; Franklin et al., 2025).

An expanding body of evidence supports the effectiveness of SFBT across diverse populations and presenting concerns. Studies have demonstrated positive outcomes in reducing anxiety, improving well-being, enhancing resilience, and promoting adaptive coping. Randomized and quasi-experimental investigations have found that SFBT-based interventions can effectively improve psychological functioning among students, healthcare professionals, and individuals facing stressful life

circumstances. For instance, SFBT interventions have been associated with reductions in anxiety symptoms, increased resilience, improved coping capacities, and enhanced psychological adjustment (Cavour-Więclawek et al., 2025; Ndze et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024).

Evidence also supports the application of solution-focused approaches in health and occupational settings. Studies involving nurses and healthcare workers have demonstrated reductions in burnout and stress alongside improvements in coping and resilience following SFBT-based interventions. These findings suggest that the strengths-based orientation of SFBT may be particularly effective in contexts characterized by chronic stress and high demands (Fu et al., 2025; Kong et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025). Similar conclusions have been drawn from broader examinations of resilience-focused interventions, which consistently emphasize the value of promoting strengths, positive emotions, and adaptive coping processes (Duan et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2025).

Within the field of couple and family therapy, solution-focused approaches have demonstrated promising outcomes. Research involving couples has reported improvements in relationship functioning, communication, satisfaction, and problem-solving following solution-focused interventions. A systematic review focusing specifically on couple relationships concluded that SFBT contributes positively to dyadic functioning and relationship quality across diverse cultural contexts (Naseh et al., 2024). Additional investigations involving neurodiverse couples, grandparents raising grandchildren, and military families have similarly highlighted the benefits of solution-oriented therapeutic approaches in fostering relational strengths and adaptive functioning (Misca & Walker, 2025; Montoro-Rodríguez et al., 2021; Parker & Mosley, 2021).

Furthermore, studies examining couples and families experiencing significant stressors have underscored the importance of interventions that strengthen relational resources rather than focusing exclusively on symptom reduction. Relationship counseling has been associated with improved relational adjustment and family functioning, while strengths-based interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing coping and resilience among individuals facing multiple disadvantages and challenging life circumstances (Cumming et al., 2024; Misca & Walker, 2025). Research involving incarcerated individuals and their romantic partners further suggests that self-efficacy, goal orientation, and positive relationship beliefs play critical roles in relationship adaptation and may be enhanced through interventions emphasizing strengths and future goals (Tadros et al., 2023).

The need for effective interventions targeting economically stressed couples is particularly urgent given the increasing prevalence of financial insecurity globally. Economic stress often co-occurs with heightened conflict, reduced emotional support, and increased vulnerability to relational difficulties. In severe cases, prolonged stress may contribute to relationship deterioration and even increase the risk of harmful interpersonal dynamics (Beni et al., 2023; Periyasamy et al., 2025). Consequently, identifying therapeutic approaches capable of strengthening hope, dyadic coping, and resilience may offer meaningful benefits for couples attempting to navigate financial adversity.

Despite growing evidence supporting the effectiveness of SFBT in various contexts, relatively few studies have specifically examined its impact on hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples facing economic stress. Existing research has largely focused on individual outcomes, educational settings, healthcare populations, or general relationship functioning. Therefore, further investigation is needed to determine whether solution-focused couple therapy can effectively enhance these key protective factors among couples experiencing financial hardship.

The aim of the present study was to examine the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy on hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples facing economic stress.

Methods and Materials

Study Design and Participants

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a pretest–posttest control group framework with a follow-up assessment. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy (SFCT) on hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples experiencing economic stress. The target population consisted of married couples residing in Toronto, Canada, who had reported experiencing significant financial strain and economic-related marital stress during the previous six months. Participants were recruited through community counseling centers, family service agencies, and public advertisements distributed through social media platforms and local community networks. Following an initial screening process, 40 couples (80 individuals) who met the inclusion criteria were selected through purposive sampling and subsequently assigned to either an experimental group or a control group, with 20 couples allocated to each group. Inclusion criteria included being legally married for at least two years, being between 25 and 55 years of age, reporting moderate to high levels of economic stress based on a screening questionnaire, and willingness to participate in all assessment and intervention sessions. Couples were excluded if either partner was receiving concurrent couple therapy, had a severe psychiatric disorder, reported active substance dependence, or experienced a major life crisis unrelated to financial stress during the study period. The experimental group participated in eight weekly sessions of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy, with each session lasting approximately 90 minutes. The intervention was conducted by licensed marriage and family therapists trained in the solution-focused approach. The control group received no therapeutic intervention during the study period and was placed on a waiting list. Assessments were conducted at three time points, including baseline (pretest), immediately after completion of the intervention (posttest), and two months following the intervention (follow-up).

Measures

Hope was assessed using the Adult Hope Scale developed by Snyder et al. (1991). This instrument is one of the most widely used measures of hope and is grounded in Snyder's cognitive model of hope, which conceptualizes hope as a combination of agency thinking and pathways thinking. The scale consists of 12 items, including four agency items, four pathways items, and four filler items. Participants respond to each item using an 8-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (definitely false) to 8 (definitely true). Higher scores indicate greater levels of hope. Total scores are obtained by summing the agency and pathways items, with higher scores reflecting stronger goal-directed motivation and perceived ability to generate routes toward desired goals. Previous studies have demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties for the scale, including strong internal consistency, test–retest reliability, and construct validity across diverse populations. The validity and reliability of the instrument have been confirmed in numerous international studies, including research involving married adults and couples experiencing psychosocial stressors.

Dyadic coping was measured using the Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI) developed by Bodenmann (2008). The DCI is a comprehensive self-report instrument designed to evaluate how romantic partners cope with stress both individually and jointly within the context of their relationship. The inventory consists of 37 items assessing several dimensions of dyadic coping, including stress communication, supportive dyadic coping, delegated dyadic coping, common dyadic coping, and negative dyadic coping. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very rarely) to 5 (very often). Higher scores indicate more effective and adaptive dyadic coping processes within the relationship. The DCI has been extensively used in couple and family research and has demonstrated strong psychometric characteristics across different cultural settings. Previous research has reported high internal consistency coefficients for both total and subscale scores, and evidence supports its

convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity. The instrument has been widely utilized in studies investigating marital adjustment, relationship functioning, and coping with financial and interpersonal stress.

Relationship resilience was assessed using the Relationship Resilience Assessment Scale developed by Whitton et al. (2018). This measure evaluates the capacity of couples to withstand, adapt to, and recover from relational challenges and adversities. The scale contains 27 items covering dimensions such as emotional connectedness, adaptive communication, collaborative problem-solving, mutual support, and relationship recovery following stressful events. Participants rate each statement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores reflect greater resilience within the relationship. The total score is calculated by summing item responses, with elevated scores indicating stronger adaptive relational functioning. Previous studies have established the scale's reliability and validity, reporting acceptable internal consistency coefficients and robust factorial structure. The measure has been successfully employed in research examining couple adaptation to chronic stress, financial hardship, health-related challenges, and other significant life stressors, supporting its suitability for the present study.

Intervention

The Solution-Focused Couple Therapy intervention was implemented according to established principles of solution-focused practice. The therapeutic program emphasized identifying existing strengths and resources within the relationship, constructing preferred future relationship scenarios, developing achievable goals, recognizing exceptions to relationship difficulties, and enhancing couples' confidence in their ability to manage financial stress collaboratively. Throughout the intervention, therapists employed key solution-focused techniques such as miracle questions, scaling questions, exception-seeking questions, coping questions, and positive feedback. The intervention encouraged partners to focus on solutions rather than problems, identify successful coping experiences, and build upon existing competencies that could promote hope, cooperative coping, and relational resilience.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 29. Prior to hypothesis testing, the data were screened for missing values, outliers, and compliance with statistical assumptions. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated for all study variables across assessment points. The assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variances, and sphericity were examined using appropriate statistical tests. To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention across time and between groups, repeated-measures analysis of variance (RM-ANOVA) was performed for each dependent variable, including hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience. Main effects of time, group, and the interaction between time and group were examined. Where significant effects were identified, Bonferroni-adjusted post hoc comparisons were conducted to determine the specific differences between assessment points. Effect sizes were calculated using partial eta squared (η^2) to assess the magnitude of intervention effects. Statistical significance was established at a p-value of less than .05 for all analyses.

Findings and Results

A total of 40 couples (80 individuals) participated in the study and completed all phases of assessment, including pretest, posttest, and two-month follow-up evaluations. No participants withdrew during the intervention period. In the experimental group, the mean age of participants was 38.45 years (SD = 6.71), while the mean age in the control group was 39.12 years (SD = 7.03). The average duration of marriage was 11.28 years (SD = 4.83) in the experimental group and 10.95 years (SD = 5.14)

in the control group. Most participants had completed post-secondary education, and the majority reported experiencing moderate to severe financial strain related to increased living expenses, housing costs, employment instability, or debt burden. Independent-samples t-tests and chi-square analyses revealed no significant differences between the experimental and control groups regarding age, marital duration, educational level, household income, or baseline economic stress indicators ($p > .05$), indicating that the groups were comparable prior to the intervention.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations of Hope, Dyadic Coping, and Relationship Resilience Across Assessment Stages

Variable	Group	Pretest Mean ± SD	Posttest Mean ± SD	Follow-up Mean ± SD
Hope	Experimental	39.84 ± 6.15	52.67 ± 5.74	51.93 ± 5.89
Hope	Control	40.12 ± 6.42	40.76 ± 6.31	40.41 ± 6.26
Dyadic Coping	Experimental	112.45 ± 12.37	136.28 ± 11.51	134.96 ± 11.84
Dyadic Coping	Control	113.71 ± 11.89	114.53 ± 12.10	114.06 ± 12.34
Relationship Resilience	Experimental	83.19 ± 9.48	104.72 ± 8.63	103.38 ± 8.91
Relationship Resilience	Control	84.07 ± 9.21	84.91 ± 9.15	84.35 ± 9.42

The descriptive findings presented in Table 1 indicate notable increases in all outcome variables among couples who participated in Solution-Focused Couple Therapy. For hope, the experimental group demonstrated an increase from a pretest mean of 39.84 to a posttest mean of 52.67, with the improvement largely maintained at follow-up ($M = 51.93$). In contrast, the control group showed only minimal fluctuations across measurement occasions. Similar patterns emerged for dyadic coping, where the experimental group exhibited a substantial increase from 112.45 at baseline to 136.28 at posttest, with scores remaining high during follow-up assessment. Relationship resilience also showed marked improvement in the experimental group, increasing from 83.19 at pretest to 104.72 at posttest and remaining elevated at follow-up. Conversely, participants in the control group displayed relatively stable scores across all three measurement points. The descriptive trends suggest that couples receiving the intervention experienced meaningful improvements in their capacity to maintain hope, engage in collaborative coping strategies, and demonstrate resilience in the face of economic stress.

Table 2. Results of Repeated-Measures Analysis of Variance for Hope, Dyadic Coping, and Relationship Resilience

Variable	Source	F	df	p	Partial η^2
Hope	Time	51.84	2, 156	< .001	.399
	Group	42.27	1, 78	< .001	.352
	Time × Group	64.18	2, 156	< .001	.451
Dyadic Coping	Time	58.73	2, 156	< .001	.429
	Group	47.91	1, 78	< .001	.381
	Time × Group	71.26	2, 156	< .001	.477
Relationship Resilience	Time	62.54	2, 156	< .001	.445
	Group	50.16	1, 78	< .001	.391
	Time × Group	75.83	2, 156	< .001	.493

The results of the repeated-measures analysis of variance revealed statistically significant effects for time, group, and the interaction between time and group across all dependent variables. For hope, the significant time effect ($F = 51.84, p < .001$) indicated that levels of hope changed significantly across assessment occasions, while the significant group effect ($F = 42.27, p < .001$) demonstrated overall differences between the experimental and control groups. Most importantly, the significant Time × Group interaction ($F = 64.18, p < .001, \eta^2 = .451$) showed that the observed improvements were attributable to participation in Solution-Focused Couple Therapy rather than natural fluctuations over time. Similar findings were obtained for dyadic coping, where significant time, group, and interaction effects were observed, with the interaction effect accounting for 47.7% of the variance. Relationship resilience also demonstrated significant effects across all sources of variation, with the

interaction effect yielding the largest effect size ($\eta^2 = .493$), indicating a particularly strong therapeutic impact. According to conventional interpretations of partial eta squared, all observed effect sizes were large, suggesting that the intervention produced substantial and practically meaningful improvements in the psychological and relational functioning of couples facing economic stress.

Table 3. Bonferroni Pairwise Comparisons for the Experimental Group Across Measurement Stages

Variable	Comparison	Mean Difference	Standard Error	p
Hope	Pretest – Posttest	-12.83	1.18	< .001
	Pretest – Follow-up	-12.09	1.21	< .001
	Posttest – Follow-up	0.74	0.84	.982
Dyadic Coping	Pretest – Posttest	-23.83	2.14	< .001
	Pretest – Follow-up	-22.51	2.19	< .001
	Posttest – Follow-up	1.32	1.58	.995
Relationship Resilience	Pretest – Posttest	-21.53	1.89	< .001
	Pretest – Follow-up	-20.19	1.95	< .001
	Posttest – Follow-up	1.34	1.37	.978

To identify the specific nature of changes across time, Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons were conducted for participants in the experimental group. As shown in Table 3, significant improvements were observed between pretest and posttest scores for all study variables. Hope increased significantly from pretest to posttest (MD = -12.83, $p < .001$) and remained significantly higher at follow-up compared with baseline levels (MD = -12.09, $p < .001$). Likewise, dyadic coping demonstrated substantial gains from pretest to posttest (MD = -23.83, $p < .001$), with these improvements persisting at follow-up (MD = -22.51, $p < .001$). Relationship resilience followed the same pattern, showing significant enhancement immediately after treatment and maintenance of gains two months later. Importantly, none of the comparisons between posttest and follow-up reached statistical significance for any outcome variable ($p > .05$). These findings indicate that the therapeutic gains achieved through Solution-Focused Couple Therapy were maintained over time and did not significantly diminish during the follow-up period. Collectively, the results provide strong empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of Solution-Focused Couple Therapy in enhancing hope, strengthening dyadic coping capacities, and promoting relationship resilience among couples experiencing economic stress.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the present study demonstrated that Solution-Focused Couple Therapy (SFCT) produced significant improvements in hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples experiencing economic stress. Participants who received the intervention exhibited substantial increases in all three variables from pretest to posttest, and these improvements were maintained during the two-month follow-up period. In contrast, participants in the control group showed minimal changes across assessment points. The significant interaction effects observed for hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience indicate that the improvements were attributable to the therapeutic intervention rather than the passage of time or natural adaptation. These findings suggest that SFCT is an effective approach for strengthening psychological and relational resources among couples confronting financial challenges.

The first major finding of this study was that Solution-Focused Couple Therapy significantly increased hope among couples facing economic stress. This result is consistent with the theoretical assumptions underlying solution-focused approaches, which emphasize future-oriented thinking, goal clarification, recognition of strengths, and the identification of pathways toward desired outcomes. Economic stress often creates feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, and pessimism regarding the future. Through techniques such as miracle questions, scaling questions, and exception-seeking interventions, participants were

encouraged to focus on possibilities rather than limitations and to recognize existing competencies within themselves and their relationships. As a result, couples may have developed stronger beliefs in their ability to overcome financial difficulties and achieve desired relationship goals.

The positive effect of SFCT on hope is supported by previous research demonstrating that solution-focused interventions foster optimism, self-efficacy, and positive expectations regarding future outcomes. For example, Joubert and Guse reported that solution-focused brief therapy facilitated hope and subjective well-being among trauma survivors, emphasizing the role of future-oriented therapeutic conversations in enhancing psychological adjustment (Joubert & Guse, 2021). Similarly, Franklin et al. identified hope enhancement as one of the central mechanisms through which solution-focused interventions promote positive change by directing attention toward strengths and achievable goals (Franklin et al., 2025). The findings also align with the conceptual framework presented by Zídek, who emphasized that solution-focused therapeutic methods are designed to mobilize personal resources and create constructive expectations for future success (Zídek, 2023).

The observed improvement in hope may additionally be understood within the broader literature on positive psychology interventions. Positive psychological approaches emphasize strengths, agency, and adaptive future perspectives, all of which contribute to hope development. Duan et al. highlighted the effectiveness of positive interventions in enhancing psychological functioning across diverse populations and cultural contexts (Duan et al., 2022). Likewise, Wang et al. found that a solution-focused positive psychology intervention significantly improved resilience and post-traumatic growth among university students following the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang et al., 2024). These findings suggest that solution-focused techniques may operate through similar psychological pathways by increasing perceptions of personal control, strengthening goal-directed motivation, and reducing cognitive patterns associated with hopelessness.

Another important finding of the study was the significant enhancement of dyadic coping among couples receiving SFCT. Dyadic coping represents the capacity of partners to communicate stress effectively, support one another emotionally, and work collaboratively to address shared challenges. Economic stress places considerable demands on couples because financial concerns often require joint decision-making, resource management, and emotional regulation. The present findings suggest that SFCT facilitated more effective patterns of interaction and collaboration between partners, enabling them to respond to financial challenges as a team rather than as isolated individuals.

This result is highly consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of relational coping processes in maintaining relationship functioning under stress. Gu et al. demonstrated that effective dyadic coping contributes significantly to adaptation among couples facing medical and caregiving stressors, particularly when partners communicate openly and coordinate their responses to challenges (Gu et al., 2023). Similarly, Zhang et al. found that dyadic coping and psychological resilience were strongly interconnected among couples dealing with serious health-related stress, highlighting the reciprocal nature of coping and adaptive functioning within intimate relationships (Zhang et al., 2024). The current findings extend these observations by demonstrating that solution-focused therapeutic strategies can strengthen dyadic coping processes among couples experiencing financial adversity.

The mechanisms through which SFCT improves dyadic coping may be linked to its emphasis on collaborative problem-solving and strengths identification. Rather than focusing on blame or deficits, solution-focused conversations encourage partners to recognize successful interactions, identify previous instances of effective cooperation, and build upon existing relational strengths. These processes may improve communication quality and increase mutual support. Naseh et al.'s systematic review concluded that solution-focused brief therapy contributes positively to couple relationships by improving communication, satisfaction, and relational functioning across diverse populations (Naseh et al., 2024). Similarly, Parker and Mosley reported favorable therapy outcomes among neurodiverse couples who participated in solution-focused interventions,

emphasizing enhanced communication and relationship functioning (Parker & Mosley, 2021). The present study provides further evidence that these relational benefits extend specifically to dyadic coping capacities in economically stressed couples.

The findings also revealed significant improvements in relationship resilience following participation in SFCT. Relationship resilience refers to the ability of couples to maintain stability, adapt effectively, and recover from adversity while preserving relational well-being. Financial hardship can threaten relationship resilience by increasing conflict, emotional strain, and uncertainty regarding the future. The substantial increases observed in relationship resilience suggest that SFCT successfully strengthened couples' capacity to withstand and adapt to ongoing economic challenges.

This finding aligns with a growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of resilience as a protective factor in intimate relationships and family systems. Aydoğan et al. demonstrated that relational resilience played a critical role in helping married adults maintain relationship functioning during periods of quarantine and uncertainty (Aydoğan et al., 2021). Similarly, Hölte et al. found that family resilience facilitated positive adaptation among families living in economically unstable environments dependent on vulnerable industries (Hölte et al., 2021). The present findings suggest that solution-focused interventions can actively strengthen resilience by helping couples identify strengths, maintain optimism, and develop adaptive strategies for navigating adversity.

Research examining resilience-focused interventions provides additional support for this interpretation. Liu et al.'s meta-analysis concluded that resilience-focused interventions produce meaningful improvements in adaptive functioning and psychological well-being across diverse populations (Liu et al., 2025). Likewise, Ndze et al. reported significant resilience enhancement among adolescents receiving solution-focused brief therapy interventions (Ndze et al., 2023). Similar outcomes were observed by Kong et al., who found that solution-focused interventions reduced occupational stress while improving coping and resilience among healthcare professionals (Kong et al., 2024). The present study extends these findings to couple relationships and suggests that resilience can be strengthened not only at the individual level but also within relational systems.

The relationship between resilience and coping observed in this study is consistent with previous theoretical and empirical work. Research has repeatedly shown that resilience and coping function as interconnected processes that support adaptation under stress. Hasanzadeh et al. demonstrated that couple-focused coping enhancement interventions improved resilience and reduced marital conflict during the transition to parenthood (Hasanzadeh et al., 2024). Gagat-Matuła similarly reported positive associations among resilience, stress management, and marital satisfaction among parents facing significant caregiving demands (Gagat-Matuła, 2022). The present findings suggest that SFCT may enhance resilience partly by strengthening dyadic coping capacities, thereby enabling couples to confront economic challenges more effectively.

An important aspect of the results is the maintenance of treatment gains during the follow-up period. The absence of significant declines between posttest and follow-up assessments indicates that the benefits of SFCT persisted beyond the immediate intervention phase. This stability suggests that participants internalized the solution-focused skills and perspectives acquired during therapy and continued to apply them in their daily lives. The maintenance of therapeutic gains is particularly important in the context of economic stress because financial challenges often persist over extended periods and require sustained adaptation.

The durability of treatment effects observed in this study is consistent with prior investigations of solution-focused interventions. Cavour-Więclawek et al. demonstrated that solution-focused interventions produced lasting reductions in anxiety among university students (Cavour-Więclawek et al., 2025). Fu et al. similarly reported enduring psychological benefits following a solution-focused intervention combined with mindfulness-based stress reduction (Fu et al., 2025). These findings support the proposition that solution-focused approaches produce meaningful cognitive and behavioral changes that remain active after formal treatment concludes.

The present results may also be interpreted within the broader framework of strengths-based relationship interventions. Research involving military families, grandparents raising grandchildren, and families facing substantial stressors has emphasized the effectiveness of interventions that focus on strengths, competencies, and existing resources rather than pathology or dysfunction (Misca & Walker, 2025; Montoro-Rodríguez et al., 2021). Solution-focused therapy embodies this strengths-based philosophy and may be particularly effective for economically stressed couples because financial difficulties often generate feelings of inadequacy and failure. By helping partners identify existing strengths and previous successes, SFCT counters these negative perceptions and promotes a more empowering relational narrative.

The findings are also relevant in light of research demonstrating the harmful consequences of prolonged economic and relational stress. Studies have shown that financial strain can increase conflict, undermine relationship quality, and elevate risks for adverse family outcomes (Beni et al., 2023; Muhammad et al., 2021). Additionally, research involving families affected by major societal disruptions has highlighted the importance of relational resources such as hope, resilience, and adaptive coping in mitigating stress-related consequences (Allen & Goldberg, 2021; Arıcı-Şahin & Köse, 2025; Hassan-Abbas, 2022). The current findings indicate that SFCT represents a practical intervention for strengthening precisely these protective resources.

The results also support previous work emphasizing the role of positive mindsets, goal orientation, and constructive relationship beliefs in relationship functioning. Mohamad et al. argued that positive psychological states contribute substantially to healthy relationships and relational adjustment (Mohamad et al., 2022). Likewise, Tadros et al. highlighted the importance of self-efficacy and goal orientation in maintaining relationship functioning under challenging circumstances (Tadros et al., 2023). Because solution-focused interventions explicitly promote goal development, self-efficacy, and future-oriented thinking, the observed improvements in hope, coping, and resilience are theoretically coherent and empirically expected.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Solution-Focused Couple Therapy is an effective intervention for enhancing hope, dyadic coping, and relationship resilience among couples experiencing economic stress. The results contribute to the growing evidence supporting strengths-based and future-oriented therapeutic approaches and extend the literature by demonstrating their effectiveness within the specific context of financial adversity. By helping couples recognize strengths, develop collaborative coping strategies, and maintain hopeful perspectives regarding the future, SFCT appears to provide a valuable framework for promoting relational adaptation and well-being under conditions of economic strain.

One limitation of the present study was the use of a relatively small sample drawn from a single geographic region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations. The study also relied primarily on self-report measures, making the results potentially susceptible to social desirability and response biases. Furthermore, the follow-up period was limited to two months, preventing evaluation of the long-term sustainability of treatment effects. Additional contextual variables related to economic stress, such as severity of debt, employment status changes, and socioeconomic background, were not examined in detail.

Future research should replicate this study with larger and more diverse samples drawn from different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. Researchers may also investigate potential mediating and moderating variables that explain how solution-focused interventions influence relational outcomes. Longitudinal studies with extended follow-up periods would help determine the durability of treatment effects over time. Comparative studies examining SFCT alongside other evidence-based couple therapies could further clarify its relative effectiveness. Future investigations may additionally explore the impact of online and hybrid delivery formats to increase accessibility for financially stressed couples.

The findings have important practical implications for counselors, couple therapists, family practitioners, and community mental health providers. Solution-Focused Couple Therapy can be incorporated into counseling programs designed for couples experiencing financial strain, employment instability, or other economic challenges. Practitioners may use solution-focused

techniques to strengthen hope, facilitate collaborative coping, and enhance resilience within intimate relationships. Community agencies, family support centers, and financial counseling services may also integrate solution-focused principles into psychoeducational and preventive interventions. Such efforts may help couples manage stress more effectively, reduce relationship deterioration, and promote long-term relational well-being despite ongoing economic pressures.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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