



Examining the causes of marital maladjustment in couple interactions (qualitative study)

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of maladjustment in couple interactions. **Method:** This study was conducted with a qualitative method and thematic analysis method. The sampling method was purposeful and up to the point of saturation, so that 20 maladjustment couples were selected based on the entry and exit criteria and were interviewed. The research tool was semi-structured in-depth interview. **Findings:** The collected data were analyzed with the help of thematic analysis and MAXQDA.2018 software. After analyzing the content of the data, seven central categories were obtained, which in order of importance were the lack of communication skills (inconsistency of verbal and non-verbal behavior, weak conversation skills, vague boundaries, weak listening skills), impenetrability (lack of flexibility, lack of agreement, arrogance) lack of demarcation in the main family (triangulation, condemning, intervention), economic factors (financial problems, heavy dowry, inflation), devaluation (undervaluing, non-acceptance, judging), intolerance of distress (lack of control) Anger, acting emotionally, having hatred) and forced marriage (adherence to tribal relations, adherence to customs). **Conclusion:** In couple interactions, the obtained categories are the causes of marital maladjustment.

Keywords: *couple interactions, marital maladjustment and qualitative study.*

Introduction

The study of the available sources shows that after more than half a century of research on marital discord, this variable is still an important part of the debate among thinkers in the field of couple relations, and scientific activity in this field is increasingly ongoing. Among the available qualitative researches, in the field of the quality of the marital relationship, despite the conceptual examination of marital conflicts, marital dissatisfaction, divorce, and other variables, it seems that the existing conceptualizations regarding the description of the variable of marital discord are insufficient in this context. In fact, no significant qualitative researches have been done regarding the causes and factors affecting them. Regarding the importance of research in the field of family, qualitative research is the best way to examine family dynamics and relationships, and it provides richer data than a quantitative approach. In terms of achieving some research goals, it goes beyond the quantitative approach, because in the qualitative approach, phenomena are not considered objective and fixed and they are different according to their context (Ganunek & Coleman, 2018). Based on the study of research literature, the results of some studies indicate that incompatibility is the main cause of interpersonal tensions in the family, and the results of several studies confirm that this category is one of the main causes of divorce in the family. According to statistics, divorce has grown by thirty-seven percent in the last ten years. Regardless of the marriages that lead to divorce, there are many unsuccessful marriages that the husband and wife do not want to separate for various reasons. It seems that this issue shows the low compatibility of some couples in their relationships and it is necessary to address the issues of marital discord as one of the factors involved in divorce and conflicts. In recent years, the provinces of Kohgiluyeh and Boyer Ahmad have won the first place in the country due to major problems such as: poverty, marginalization, divorce, and suicide (Mokhtari & Valinejad, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the variable of marital incompatibility in couple interactions with a qualitative approach to this phenomenon in order to identify the factors affecting it. Therefore, the main goal of this study is to answer the question, what are the causes of marital incompatibility in couple interactions?

Method

This study was conducted with a qualitative method and thematic analysis method. The sampling method was purposeful and up to the point of saturation, so that 20 maladjustment couples were selected based on the entry and exit criteria and were interviewed. The research tool was semi-structured in-depth interview. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis and MAXQDA.2018 software.

Results

In this research, 20 married couples were investigated. In terms of demographics, 20 married couples participated in this research, and in terms of education, 30% of the participants had postgraduate education, 60% had a bachelor's degree, and 10% had a diploma or lower. Regarding the duration of marriage, 70% of the participants were married between 7 and 15 years, 10% of them were between 15 and 20 years, and

20% of them were married for more than 20 years. In terms of age, 60% of the participants were over 40 years old, 35% of them were 37 years old, and 5% of them were at least 25 years old. Regarding the number of children, 65% of the participants had more than two children, 25% of them had 2 children, and 10% had at least 1 child.

94% of the participants mentioned the categories of lack of coordination of verbal and non-verbal behavior, weak conversation skills, vague boundaries, weak listening skills in marital relationships.

80% of the participants in the interviews pointed to the categories of inflexibility, lack of agreement, arrogance in marital relations and believe that impenetrability is one of the causes of marital incompatibility.

80% of the participants in their interviews pointed to the categories of triangulation, condemning, interfering in family affairs and believe that one of the causes of family disharmony is the interference of other family members.

80% of the participants in their interviews pointed to the categories of economic factors, financial problems, heavy dowry, inflation as factors affecting incompatibility.

In their interviews, 75% of the participants mentioned the devaluation category and the subcategories of undervaluing, non-acceptance, and judging as influencing factors on incompatibility.

65% of the participants in their interviews pointed to the categories of not controlling anger, acting emotionally, having hatred, that is, not tolerating distress, and they believe that one of the causes of marital incompatibility is the inability to tolerate distress and emotions of couples.

60% of the participants in their interviews pointed to the categories of forced marriage, adherence to tribal relations, and adherence to customs, and believe that forced marriage is one of the causes of marital incompatibility.

In the initial coding stage, 62 primary categories were obtained, and in the second stage, 22 subcategories and finally 7 main categories were obtained.

1-Lack of communication skills: One of the main categories of incompatibility in couples' interactions, which the majority of people (94%) mentioned is the lack of communication skills. This main category consists of 4 subcategories as follows:

1-1 Lack of coordination of verbal and non-verbal behavior: One of the subcategories in the lack of communication skills is discouragement from life, this has caused the relationship of couples to face problems.

2-1 Weak conversation skills: Another sub-category in the lack of communication skills in couple interactions is the weakness of conversation skills.

3-1 Ambiguous boundaries: Another sub-category in lack of communication skills is ambiguous boundaries, in such a way that the boundaries are either very hard and rigid or seem irregular.

1-4 Weakness of listening skills: The weaker the listening skills, the more problems there are in communication, which causes a disturbance in marital compatibility.

2- Impenetrability: Impenetrability is one of the important categories in marital incompatibility and couple interactions in such a way that 80% of the interviewees mentioned this category and consider it important in marital incompatibility. This main category includes the following 3 subcategories:

1-2 Inflexibility: The degree of inflexibility in relationships plays an important role in the level of incompatibility in couple interactions.

2-2 Disagreement: The greater the degree of disagreement, the greater the degree of incompatibility.

3-2 Arrogance: Arrogance in couple interactions increase the level of incompatibility.

3- Absence of demarcation with the main family: One of the most important categories affecting marital incompatibility is the lack of demarcation with the main family, as mentioned by 80% of the interviewees. This main category consists of three subcategories, which are as follows:

1-3 Triangulation: The more triangulation in a couple's interactions, the greater the degree of incompatibility.

2-3 Condemning: Condemning each other and fighting each other is another category that contributes to incompatibility.

3-3 Intervening: Interference of other people in family affairs is one of the important categories in couples' incompatibility. The more these interferences, the greater the degree of incompatibility.

4-Economic factors: one of the main categories in marital incompatibility is economic factors in such a way that 80% of the interviewees mentioned this important category. This main category consists of the following three subcategories:

1-4 Financial problems: Financial problems affect the degree of incompatibility in couple interactions.

2-4 heavy dowry: the amount of heavy dowry has an effect on marital incompatibility, if this dowry is implemented, the payment of the dowry will cause other problems for the family.

3-4 Inflation: Inflation is another category that affects the degree of incompatibility in couple interactions.

5- Devaluation: One of the main categories that affects the level of inconsistency is devaluation in a way that nearly 75% of the interviewees mentioned this category. This main category consists of three subcategories:

1-5 Underestimating: In couple interactions, underestimating the couple's activities affects the level of incompatibility.

2-5 Non-acceptance: Non-acceptance is another category that affects the level of incompatibility. The higher the level of this category, the greater the level of incompatibility.

3-5 Judging: Judging each other in life challenges is another category that affects the level of incompatibility.

6- Intolerance of distress: Intolerance of distress is one of the main categories in marital incompatibility.

1-6 Lack of anger control: Lack of anger management and control is one of the important categories affecting marital incompatibility.

2-6 Acting emotionally: Another category affecting the level of emotional inconsistency is acting. 6-3 Having hatred: Having hatred in couple interactions is effective on the level of incompatibility.

7- Forced marriage: Forced marriage is one of the main categories in marital incompatibility. Regarding this main category, about 60% of the interviewees mentioned this important category. This main category consists of the following two subcategories:

1-7 Adherence to ethnic and tribal relations: one of the important categories in marital incompatibility is adherence to ethnic relations and consideration of tribes.

2-7 Adherence to customs: Another important category affecting marital incompatibility was adherence to customs.

Conclusion

Family is the foundation of individual and social life. Marital incompatibilities cause problems in families and are the main causes of divorce. Therefore, studying the variable of incompatibility in couple interactions is of particular importance. If the main components of the incompatibility variable are identified, with a better understanding of these components, the ground can be provided to reduce divorce and prevent family problems. According to the findings of the research, incompatibility in couple interactions depends on the main and subcategories, and these categories act as a creating and sustaining factor. The incompatibility of couple interactions is mostly a function of lack of communication skills, impenetrability, lack of boundaries with the main family, economic factors, devaluation, intolerance of distress, forced marriage. Therefore, it seems that incompatibility is opposite to compatibility and is created during life. Marital incompatibility is more intense in some families at the beginning of life and in some families in the middle of life. Therefore, before getting married, couples should know the main components of marital incompatibility and learn the necessary communication skills. Use pre-marital counseling, maintain boundaries with the original family, and manage emotions. Also, couples should appreciate each other so that they can experience better marital compatibility throughout their lives.

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