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## Develop a thematic model related to marital quality of the married men's viewpoint: A qualitative research

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### Abstract

Considering the importance of family institution in Iran and the key role of couples in establishment and duration of stable and long-lasting families, it seems necessary to identify and reinforce the skills related to increasing 'marital quality' among couples. Therefore, this study aimed to develop a thematic model related to marital quality from viewpoint of married men. The study was performed with qualitative method and using thematic analysis approach. Twenty married men were selected by targeted sampling and based on entry criteria until theoretical saturation in Shahrekord city and were interviewed by semi-structured method. First, each sentence or paragraph extracted from the raw interviews were explained by a short sentence, then conceptual predicates were encoded in terms of Atrides & Sterling's (2001) thematic analysis approach in three main thematic categories of basic themes, organizing themes, and universal themes using the software (Nvivo 8). First, led to exploration of 20 basic themes. By combination and simplification of the basic themes, 6 organizing themes including satisfaction of emotions, understanding interests and needs, prioritization, appeasement and solace, mental guarantee, forgiveness, and self-critical, were found and finally the universal theme of "considering women important and taking them into account" was extracted. Based on the finding, it can be concluded that, husbands' experiences indicate that considering wives as important in marital life and inducing this feeling to them by their husbands through appropriate function and actions is the most important factor in increasing marital quality. This research can be useful for counselors and psychologists practicing with families to instruct and offer them appropriate interventions to increase their marital quality.

**Keywords:** Marital quality, married men, qualitative research, thematic analysis

### Extended Abstract

#### Introduction

Considering the importance of family institution in Iran and the key role of couples in establishment and duration of stable and long-lasting families, it seems necessary to identify and reinforce the skills related to increasing 'marital quality' among couples. High marital quality is related to individuals' satisfaction with their relationships, spouses' mainly positive attitudes toward each other,

and low levels of negative and hostile relationships, and on the other hand, there is a negative relationship between quality of life and divorce. That is why the marital quality is a concept which has particular importance and it is the most studied concept in the marital relationships area. Given that couples adopt distinctive strategies to increase their marital quality, the current research attempted to identify the strategies which married men use to increase their marital quality. Thus, the aim of the current research was to develop a marital quality-related thematic model from viewpoint of married men.

### **Method**

The current study was conducted qualitative of type thematic analysis approach which aimed to understand, analyze, and interpret 'marital quality' phenomenon from married men's point of view using thematic analysis approach and development of thematic networks model. The population of the current research consisted of all married men who have reported high levels of marital quality in ShahrehKord city. On the other hand, the sample of the current research consisted of 20 married men of ShahrehKord city who were recruited using voluntary-purposeful sampling method. The data were collected by semi-structured interviews. Administering interviews continued until reaching theoretical saturation. The participants were interviewed during October 2016 to June 2017 and they were assured of confidentiality of the interviews and the ethical principles. Each interview session lasted 45-60 minutes. Despite the theoretical saturation was imminent after 15, 16 interviews, the researchers kept doing interviews to 20 cases for more accuracy. Each interview was scripted after recording.

### **Findings**

Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the data of the research. Thematic analysis encodes and analyzes the data in order to make sense of them. Accordingly, while the researchers focused deeply on the extracted data from the interviews, they extracted sentences, paragraphs, or phrases which contain adequate qualitative concepts, then each one of these sentences or paragraphs were extracted. Encoding was performed in a way that along with going from basic encoding toward universal encoding, the data categorize into wider classes based on qualitative similarities and differences. The obtained themes of each level of encoding were more abstractive than the last ones. In the other words, volume of the data was reduced while content of the data was added-up in each level of encoding. Accordingly, analysis of the participants' experiences led to explore of 20 basic themes. By combination and simplification of the basic themes, 6 organizing themes including: affectional attention, need satisfaction, prioritization, appeasement and solace, mental guarantee, forgiveness, and self-critical, were found and finally the universal theme of 'considering wives as important' was extracted.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Feeling of being important, being seen and counted-on are important mental factors in developing motivation and attachment in people. Often, this feeling is

reinforced by spouses' actions toward each other in marital life. According to the results of the research, husbands as the closest and most influential individuals toward their wives, play an important role in inducing them the feelings of being important. The findings from husbands' experiences indicate that considering wives as important in marital life and inducing this feeling to them by their husbands through appropriate function and actions is the most important factor in increasing marital quality. This research can be useful for counselors and psychologists practicing with families to instruct and offer them appropriate interventions to increase their marital quality.

The current research has some limitations. One is caution in generalizing the results of any qualitative research. Another limitation is the participants' age which was in 25-45 range and older ages were not included. Further, the research was performed in one city, i.e. Shahrekord, of Iran; also, in the current research, only identification of married men's strategies for increasing marital quality were addressed, though it is suggested that future research should address married women's strategies for increasing their marital quality. It is recommended to perform such studies in different generations separately and across states and cities so that marital quality of different cultures, customs and people of different areas, as well as a common typology of marital quality can be found.

#### **Ethical Consideration**

At first, the general purposes of the research were explained to the participants; The participants' consent were acquired to record the interviews; The participants were assured that they will be given numerical codes in report of results so that their names would remain anonymous; and They were given the right to give up the interview at any time.

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