



Explanation of Experiences of Iranian Women on the Verge of Divorce Regarding Rationality

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Abstract

Background: Rationality is a complex concept that plays a vital role in human choices and decisions. However, this issue has been less addressed in studies on marital life.

Objectives: This study was performed to explain the experiences of Iranian women on the verge of divorce regarding rationality.

Methods: According to the five-stage Granheim and Landman's approach, an inductive conventional qualitative content analysis was used to collect and analyze women's experiences on the verge of divorce. Seventeen women selected through purposive sampling entered the study, and qualitative information was collected using unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Information collection and analysis proceeded simultaneously. The information was saturated with 17 participants, and no new information was extracted. In this study, Lincoln and Guba's criteria were used to ensure the robustness of the study.

Results: After information analysis, two main themes were derived. Limited rationality in marriage was the first one with three main categories: Lack of intellectual preparedness for marital life, irrational marriage decision-making, and unrealistic positive thinking. Lack of marital issues understanding was the second one, categorized into reality shock and negative cognitive-emotional experiences.

Conclusions: This qualitative study showed that limited rationality plays a vital role in the lives of women on the verge of divorce. However, learning skills, such as deep thinking and realistic thinking, can help women overcome limitations toward rationality and lack of marital issues understanding.

Keywords: Marital Life, Marital Issues, Qualitative Study, Rationality

1. Background

Marital life is a scene in which rationality and emotion come together. The human intellect is under the significant influence of emotions, and emotions themselves are formed based on reasoning. The interactive nature of the relationship between rationality and emotions and how they complement each other can cause rationality not to be just a conscious weighing of the pros and cons of a decision. Instead, it can be said that rationality is a cognitive effort that arises from emotional energy (1). Rationality is also described as the use of logical ways to achieve the right goals, and in this regard, reasonable beliefs, values, and behaviors are of particular importance (2).

Maintenance and stability of marital life are greatly interconnected with couples' cognitive function (3). Therefore, rationality which leads to the formation of reasonable beliefs in individuals (2), is one of the determinants of

marital life success (4). Spousal rational thinking prevents them from acting based on wrong feelings and beliefs (5). On the other hand, social, cultural, and economic misconceptions are among the most common factors disrupting marital life. Rationality also influences spouse choosing and the decision-making process (1). Therefore, considering the constant subjection of couples to choices and decisions, the importance of rationality in marital life cannot be overlooked. Despite the aforementioned leading role that rationality plays in successful marital life, far too little attention has been paid to this issue in the literature. Therefore, we decided to conduct a qualitative study to investigate women's experiences on the verge of divorce regarding rationality. The reason for this tendency was the dominance of patriarchal culture in Iranian society (6). In patriarchal cultures, rationality mainly applies to men, and thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving strategies are commonly attributed to them (7). As a result,

rationality has received less attention in women's lives.

2. Objectives

The qualitative research design was chosen to conduct the study because of the complexity and relativeness of rationality (8) that can be better and deeper explored with a qualitative study. In the present study, an attempt was made to explain the experiences of Iranian women on the verge of divorce regarding rationality.

3. Methods

3.1. Design and Sample

In this inductive conventional qualitative study, women's experiences on the verge of divorce were evaluated using the content analysis method. The target population was women who were referred to counseling centers under the supervision of the Welfare Organization of Southern Khorasan. The purposive sampling method was used with maximum variability (for age, occupation, education, income level, having or not having children, number of children, and marital life duration). Women included in the study met the criteria of being on the verge of divorce, providing written consent to participate, and having the ability to express their experiences. The information was saturated with 17 participants, and no new information was extracted. The demographic characteristics of participants are displayed in [Table 1](#).

3.2. Information Collection

Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were used for information collection. The duration of interviews varied from 45 to 90 minutes, and the time and place of the interviews were adjusted according to the participants. Fifteen interviews were held at the Divorce Injury Reduction Center of Southern Khorasan Welfare Organization, and two interviews were held at a private Social Welfare Clinic in Birjand, Southern Khorasan. The interviews were conducted in a quiet and private setting and fully recorded with the participants' permission. Each interview started with questions regarding demographic information, followed by an open-ended question. The interview guide is shown in [Box 1](#). Probing questions were asked based on the previous responses. At the end of each interview session, the interview was carefully reviewed several times and transcribed promptly.

3.3. Information Analysis

The information analysis process was performed in concomitance with information collection according to the five-stage Granheim and Landman's approach (9). Based on this method, transcribed interviews were read several times carefully to be assured of gaining a general perception of its content. The analysis started by identifying the units of meanings that could be extracted from the statements. Then, coding was carried out line by line. Codes with similar meanings were sorted into subcategories. Depending on the relationships among the subcategories, this large number of subcategories was combined into a smaller number of categories. In the final stage, the main themes were identified.

Regarding trustworthiness, the Lincoln and Guba (1985) criteria of validity, confirmability, dependability, and transferability were used ([Table 2](#)) (10).

3.4. Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Birjand University of Medical Sciences (IR.BUMS.REC.1399.160). The study protocol was confirmed by the General Department of Welfare of Southern Khorasan Province. The participants were fully informed of the study protocol and were assured that their names and identity would not be disclosed under any circumstance. The participants were informed that they could abandon the study at any stage they wanted.

4. Results

As previously mentioned, 17 women on the verge of divorce participated in this study. They were 19 to 51 years old with different education levels ranging from primary education to specialized doctorate. Their marital life duration ranged from six months to 24 years. Their status varied in terms of the number of children, from childless to a maximum of three. In total, 798 open-codes were obtained, which were classified into 74 primary categories. As the analysis progressed, 15 subcategories, five main categories, and two themes were revealed. The two main themes included limited rationality in marriage and a lack of understanding of marital issues. The themes and categories are briefly listed in [Table 3](#).

4.1. Limited Rationality in Marriage

The first theme indicated that most participants used their intellectual capacity to a limited extent. This was the case for the whole marriage process, from decision-making to the following years. This theme consisted of three categories and nine subcategories. As mentioned earlier, the

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 17)

ID	Age	Education	Occupation	Family Income Level	Marital Life Duration (y)	Number of Children
1	32	Specialist doctor	Physician	High	10	-
2	34	Bachelor's degree	Housewife	Moderate	11	1
3	22	Bachelor's degree	Teacher	Moderate	0.5	-
4	34	Elementary school	Housewife	Low	13	3
5	29	Elementary school	Housewife	Moderate	15	1
6	30	Associate degree	Employee	Moderate	3	-
7	22	Diploma	Employee	Moderate	2	-
8	19	Bachelor's degree	Housewife	Moderate	5	-
9	44	Diploma	Housewife	Moderate	24	2
10	45	Elementary school	Domestic jobs	Low	17	3
11	32	Diploma	Domestic jobs	Low	7	1
12	31	Elementary school	Housewife	Moderate	9	2
13	51	Elementary school	Housewife	Moderate	20	2
14	43	Middle school	Housewife	Low	17	3
15	37	Elementary school	Housewife	Low	14	1
16	33	Middle school	Housewife	Moderate	15	2
17	37	Diploma	Housewife	Low	4	-

Box 1. The Interview Guide**Questions**

1. What is your experience of being on the verge of divorce?
2. What problems do you think put you on the verge of divorce?
3. Now that you think about the past, how much were you ready for marriage?
4. Please describe how your marital life problems started?
5. Please describe how marital life problems affected your life?

main categories were lack of intellectual preparedness for marital life, irrational marriage decision-making, and unrealistic positive thinking, which are further discussed in the following section.

4.1.1. Lack of Intellectual Preparedness for Marital Life

Many participants declared that accepting family beliefs without thinking and lack of training in the family to play the spousal role limited their capacity to do rational behaviors.

4.1.1.1. Having Limiting Beliefs Regarding Women's Role in Marital Life

Participants stated that they had learned family beliefs such as staying silent in front of their spouses and obeying

them. Being under the great impact of those beliefs, they ignored some of their rights, including the right to work.

I had learned that it is not acceptable for a woman to present an independent personality...it does not make sense for a woman to expect to have equal right to work as a man does. I had been taught that women should not speak of their rights (a 34-year-old housewife).

Participants also said that they had accepted their family beliefs about the exclusive responsibility of women in keeping marital life peaceful. For example, their experiences showed that they gained the belief from their families that only a woman has to forgive, be patient, and keep marital life organized.

My father kept repeating that a good woman ensures the marital life continuity...he believed that the wife's forgiveness makes her husband fix his misbehaviors...he believed that it is an exclusive responsibility of a wife to behave patiently and make the marital life work well and peaceful and I had taken it for granted (a 32-year-old woman, specialist).

4.1.1.2. Inadequate Family Training for Marital Life Preparedness

The participants also mentioned that they had not been taught some valuable skills by their families, including negotiation skills or how to deal well with problems.

Table 2. Applied Trustworthiness Criteria

Criteria	Techniques Performed and Application Procedures
Credibility	Member check: giving a full transcript of coded interviews to participants for determining whether the codes matched their experiences; peer check was conducted by two expert researchers; maximum variability of participants in terms of age, occupation, education, income level, having or not having children, number of children, and marital life duration.
Transferability	In-depth descriptions of the study performed, providing details of the characteristics of participants, presenting the findings to eligible non-participants in the study, and examining the similarity of their experiences with the study findings.
Dependability	Audit by an external researcher: an external researcher assessed the research protocol, focusing on aspects concerning the methods applied and study design and checking the coding process.
Confirmability	Audit by an external researcher; accurate expression of participants' quotes.

Table 3. Experiences of Iranian Women on the Verge of Divorce Regarding Rationality

Theme	Categories	Subcategories
Limited rationality in marriage	Lack of intellectual preparedness for marital life	Having limiting beliefs regarding women's role in marital life
		Inadequate family training for marital life readiness
	Irrational marriage decision-making	Poor agency in marriage decision-making
		Lack of reasonable motivation for marriage
		Marriage without enough knowing the other party
		Marriage decision-making based on misconceptions
	Unrealistic positive thinking	The misconception of having control over life
		Simplest thinking about life's problems
		The misconception of being living on the path of progress
	Lack of understanding of marital issues	Reality shock
Occurrence of marital conflicts		
The emergence of realities inconsistent with perceptions		
Realizing the inadequacy of knowledge		
Negative cognitive-emotional experiences		Perception of lack of security
		Emotional imbalance

As a result, this lack of skills hindered their rational performance.

The main problem I had was the inability to express my needs correctly since the appropriate way of asking for needs had not been taught to me by my parents...I had not been told how to respond when I felt ignored by my husband's family, and consequently, I was unable to behave sensibly (a 34-year-old housewife).

4.1.2. Irrational Marriage Decision-Making

Most participants found that rationality played an insignificant role in their decision-making process for choosing the right partner for marriage. This category included the following four subcategories.

4.1.2.1. Poor Agency in Marriage Decision-Making

Some participants declared that they had a passive role in choosing their husbands. They explained it by reasons such as being stuck in an arranged marriage, the family tendency toward consanguineous marriages, and a fear of becoming late to get married. Some of them were forced into marriage by their families at an early age, while they had no clear idea of marriage.

I was very young when I got married. My parents forced me into marriage. I could not understand what was happening. I suddenly found myself sitting down at the wedding table. It seems my marital life should have been started much more wisely (a 29-year-old woman with 15 years of marital life).

4.1.2.2. Lack of Reasonable Motivation for Marriage

The experience of some participants showed that they got married to escape from their family problems, compensate for the failure to reach a loved one, and get rid of the monotony of life. They also pointed out emotional motives and being influenced by the deceptive words of the other party. They believed that emotions in their decision-making process had overshadowed rationality.

My life had become too repetitive, and I was bored. Therefore, I decided to accept the first marriage proposal... He complimented me as a perfect and modest lady in the first session. He said things that were pleasant for me. As a result, I accepted his marriage proposal. That decision didn't make sense (a 22-year-old female student, six months after marriage in the lockdown of the COVID-19 pandemic).

4.1.2.3. Marriage Without Enough Knowing the Other Party

Many participants got married without knowing their spouses properly, without premarital counseling, or having effective dialogues to help them know each other. Some of them even did not have any idea that the husband was addicted, or he was getting married for the second time, and also they were unaware of what his motivation was for marriage in first place.

When my father saw him, he said he was a really good person. My father felt no need for premarital investigation... We had not spoken to each other before getting married... Now, after nine years of living together, I just found out that he had had two other wives when we got married. That resulted from our behavioral mistakes, my family and I (a 31-year-old woman with elementary school education).

4.1.2.4. Marriage Decision-Making Based on Misconceptions

Some participants found that they misunderstood the meaning of rational choice at the time of marriage. They got married based on a misunderstanding about their spouse's characteristics and his family culture.

By looking at his appearance, I told myself that he seems a kind and loyal man who would keep his words... Furthermore, I thought my decision was logical because I entered a marital life without love. I had no idea how much I was wrong (a 22-year-old undergraduate woman).

4.1.3. Unrealistic Positive Thinking

One of the essential functions of rationality is the creation of an atmosphere in which a proper understanding of realities is possible. Many participants stated that they were too optimistic about marital life and related problems in their early years. This category consisted of the following three subcategories:

4.1.3.1. The misconception of Having Control Over Life

Some of these women assumed that they had control over their lives until they faced realities. Despite some uncertainties, they considered their marital life to be predictable.

Before this (husband moving out of the marital home), I always thought that our marital life was under control and this control would not be lost... I thought I could predict what the future of our life would look like. Sometime later, I realized I was wrong (a 32-year-old woman with no child).

4.1.3.2. Simplistic Thinking About Life's Problems

In line with blind optimism mentioned earlier, some tended to interpret husbands' misbehaviors, financial problems, and subsequent psychological stresses positively, focusing on the bright half of marital life. This situation continued till the emergence of more serious problems that threatened the stability of their marital lives.

He was always ready to leave home for any reason. I convinced myself, saying that it didn't matter, he would be exhausted by financial and other problems... All have ups and downs in their lives, and that was my biggest mistake (a 45-year-old woman with two children).

4.1.3.3. The Misconception of Being Living on the Path of Progress

Women focused on the successes gained in financial issues and what they called it building a family together. Therefore, they were oblivious to the warning signs and imagined that their marital life worked well and was progressing.

Before I found that our life got into trouble, I thought it was progressing... I thought that our children would grow better than everyone else and we would not have any shortage in the near future... We had made our house and bought a car earlier than our peers... furthermore, we had a respectful relationship after marriage. At the same time, I was unaware of some of my husband's behaviors that caused problems later in the course of marital life (a 34-year-old woman with three children).

4.2. Lack of Understanding of Marital Issues

The second theme derived in this study was the participants' experience of revealing the realities that disturbed their marital life. This theme consisted of two categories and six subcategories. The two main categories associated with this theme were reality shock and negative cognitive-emotional experiences.

4.2.1. Reality Shock

After the initial positivism, many participants were faced with a different reality of marital life. They experienced reality shock because of a mismatch of their conceptions and what was really going on. This category included the following four subcategories.

4.2.1.1. *Becoming Sensitive to Warning Signs*

The participants began to see signs that had already existed in their marital lives but were neglected due to their initial unrealistic idealism. They became sensitive to the husband's behaviors indicating his drug addiction, desire for separation, immoral relationships, and sexual problems.

I had become suspicious of his behavior; he stayed in the toilet for a long time. He went to the bathroom at night when I slept... I wondered why he didn't have any savings despite working for two years. I did not consider these things important up to that time (a 37-year-old woman).

4.2.1.2. *Occurrence of Marital Problems*

Most of the participants experienced various problems, including sexual problems, spouse's addiction, and husband's lack of commitment to marital life. They also repeatedly faced verbal and physical violence of their spouses.

Gradually, his aggressive behavior became intensified. He already had this temper, but I had not paid attention to it. Over time, he became more aggressive. Once, he hit me while I was praying. Sometime later, I was resting, he came and, while we had no fight before that, kicked me in the side (a 51-year-old woman with two children).

4.2.1.3. *The Emergence of Realities Inconsistent with Perceptions*

In many cases, the participants faced realities different from their previous perceptions, which shocked them. They found that they had had different points of view from their husbands' toward the realities of marital life. They found that they had been overestimating their ability to identify and treat the misbehaviors of the husbands. They were faced with realities that were beyond their expectations. Among those newly noticed realities were husband's addiction, having one or more other wives, forcing them to leave the house, husband's unwillingness to stay married, and wasting family earnings. The women also found that after marriage, husbands behaved differently to what they had promised in premarital days. They had not kept their words regarding issues such as having a child, religious beliefs, and relationships with couples' families. Some of them noticed their husbands' apparent abnormal behavior and illogical expectations.

4.2.1.4. *Realizing the Inadequacy of Knowledge*

As marital life problems became apparent, the participants gradually realized that they knew very little about their husbands and the troubles their lives were getting into.

Ever since he left me, I felt that I have not known him well enough. I later found out that there possibly was more crucial information and I needed to solve his personality puzzle (a 32-year-old female physician).

4.2.2. *Negative Cognitive-Emotional Experiences*

In the present study, the shock of reality was followed by negative cognitive-emotional experiences. This category consisted of two subcategories.

4.2.2.1. *Perception of Lack of Security*

Having the emotional support of people who are close to us is helpful while confronting problems. Some women complained of a lack of support from their husbands and even their own families.

I needed to rely on my husband when his family upset me, but he did not understand... You can rely on your parents to support you in times of trouble, but my father had no good temper, and my mother passed away. With whom could I talk? Even my sisters had their own problems. My brother's wife was even worse; she did not sympathize at all and was just making fun of me (a 22-year-old woman after two years of marriage).

Worry is a natural reaction when our mind attempts to fight the external threatening factors. In this study, some participants found themselves and their children threatened by the husband's addiction. They were also worried about their family reputation. Some were concerned about their husbands' extramarital relationships. The other worrisome issues were how their life would be after divorce, the children's custody and financial issues, and coping with harassment they would face as divorced women.

He brought his addicted friends home many times. I was always concerned about his addicted friends' comings and goings to our home in my absence. I was apprehensive about my children's security, especially my daughter. When I came back home, I thought that would I see my children again? (a 43-year-old woman with three children).

4.2.2.2. *Emotional Imbalance*

Emotions have a significant role in human relationships. The behaviors that emotionally hurt can disturb relationships. The emotional heartbreak happened to some of the participants when they got kicked out of the house, abandoned by the husband, humiliated, and violated by their spouses' behaviors.

I'm literally heartbroken. My husband left home 10 days ago. He hasn't taken our child and me into consideration. He has not called us... He has repeated this behavior several times so far, and when I think about his behavior, I get distraught (a 32-year-old woman with a child).

Feeling sorry is a particular feeling that arises from what a person should have been done but has not done, and vice versa. The participants reported some experiences of ways they should have been gone but have not. They had had a feeling of great sadness regarding the duties that should have been accomplished better or decisions that should have been made earlier, such as getting a divorce before having a child.

In the first months of marriage, I filed for divorce. At the first court hearing, they reconciled us, but I wish I had separated from him at that time. I am very sorry... If I had gotten divorced before having a child, I would have suffered less from a guilty conscience (a 34-year-old woman with three children).

Excessive emotional stress can adversely affect our health both physically and psychologically. The participants mentioned stress-induced physical diseases and recurrence of their previous disease due to long-lasting marital life problems.

Because of the stress, my previous illness had recurred. The physician had warned me to avoid stress; however, it was not possible (a 45-year-old woman after 17 years of marriage).

Having positive thoughts towards life causes good feelings. When life gets hard, we might lose the feelings of appreciation, kindness, and trust, which was the case for some of our participants.

Now I cannot consider myself a kind person anymore... If someone had loved me and behaved me kindly, I would have returned the favor to the best possible extent, but now I am not like that at all (a 22-year-old undergraduate woman).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explain the experiences of Iranian women on the verge of divorce regarding rationality. In the present study, two main themes were derived from the information analysis.

5.1. Limited Rationality in Marriage and Lack of Understanding of Marital Issues

Due to the scarcity of studies on rationality in women's lives, the study results were compared with the results of somewhat similar studies.

In this study, women on the verge of divorce described their experiences of limited rationality in marriage. One of

the sub-concepts of limited rationality was the lack of intellectual preparedness for marital life. These women saw family beliefs and inadequate family training as barriers that prevented them from thinking freely.

One of the family's beliefs was the inferior position of women compared to men, and the participants had been grown up with these beliefs. Sociologists believe that, in every culture, the family plays a fundamental role in the socialization of individuals. To comply with social norms, families may raise girls to play the role of a second-class gender (11). Some researchers believe that one of the components of women's rationality is their belief in having equal human rights with men in the family and society (12). Therefore, we can say that these women had not used their rational capacity in this regard.

Another family belief that deprived participants of independent thinking was the belief that women have an exclusive responsibility to maintain the peace of marital life. Some studies also show that the belief that women have more responsibility for marital life is seen in most cultures and even in countries with women's culture (13). Questions like how humans construct or regulate their beliefs and whether these two processes follow a certain logic are related to rationality (2). Some researchers believe that compliance with beliefs whose rationale is unknown with certainty can limit rationality (14).

In the present study, women considered a lack of essential training in the family as a barrier to their rationality. The family plays a vital role in preparing people for their future life (15). Lack of knowledge transfer can lead to limited rationality and reduce the possibility of rational decision-making (14). Thus, women who have not been prepared for their future roles face limited rationality in the decision-making process.

Another sub-concept of limited rationality in this study was irrational marriage decision-making. Poor agency in marriage decision-making is one of the examples of limited rationality that caused fading of the role of individual will of the studied women in marriage decision making. At the same time, some researchers believe that one of the signs of women's rationality is their belief in having the right to freely make essential decisions in their lives (12). Having such a belief can be a ground that leads women to step in the path of the rationality of choice.

Another problem raised in this study of irrational marriage decision-making was the lack of reasonable motives for marriage. Some participants experienced the dominance of emotional motives over rationality in choosing a spouse. Motivational limitations of individuals are essential issues in the path of rational choice (16). Therefore, a lack of appropriate motivations prevents rationality.

In the present study, in addition to the aforementioned

tioned realities, incomplete premarital knowledge about the husband and marriage decision-making based on misperceptions were other areas that formed the structure of women's experience. Some researchers consider the lack of knowledge as a factor of bounded rationality (14). They believe that for evaluating the rationality of individuals' choices, their cognitive limitations should be considered (16). In addition, it seems that the ability to overcome some cognitive limitations should also be addressed. Given that rationality requires careful processing of information (1), it can be said that lack of knowledge and misperceptions show inefficient use of rational capacity.

In the present study, one of the sub-concepts of limited rationality was unrealistic positive thinking. According to some researchers, idealistic thinking causes people to pay less attention to the negative characteristics of the other party and/or interpret them positively, which is more common in women than men (17). Some studies show extreme positivity at the early stages of marriage. It can be described as a positive attitude that cannot be explained with a realistic evaluation of the living conditions and characteristics of the other party (17). In the present study, women had an unrealistically optimistic perception of living conditions before serious marital life problems became apparent. They did not pay attention to some realities of marital life. It is said that rationality is a particular form of cognition that requires detailed information processing (1). Thus, ignoring part of the reality limited women's rationality for a realistic evaluation of marital life conditions. In general, limited rationality was reflected in a lack of intellectual preparedness, irrational decision-making, and an unrealistic view of marital life.

The women experienced a lack of understanding of marital issues. One of the sub-concepts of this theme was a real shock. According to some researchers, reality shock is a phenomenon experienced in unfamiliar situations (18). The first stage of reality shock is the honeymoon stage, characterized by an idealistic interpretation of the situation. The second is the shock stage, which is associated with anxiety, anger, and confusion (19) and results from inconsistencies between what was previously perceived and what is now being experienced (18, 19). Participants experienced a short honeymoon due to unrealistic positive thinking and then encountered reality shock in this study. In this way, they were faced with realities that did not match their perceptions and expectations. Some studies show that after marriage, couples gradually realize that it is difficult to adapt to the different goals and desires of the parties (20). Therefore, the unrealistic primary idealism changes when faced with fundamental aspects of marriage (21). After a period of unrealistic positive thinking, starting with a realistic view of marriage could lead to distress (17). In ad-

dition, facing cognitive inconsistency causes an effort for more coordination. Confusion is created if this effort cannot achieve the desired result (22). Another experience of women in the field of lack of marital issues understanding was that they realized their knowledge deficiency. Some researchers believe that when the person is in a situation where his/her perception could not explain that situation, a cognitive imbalance will occur (23).

One of the sub-concepts was negative cognitive-emotional experiences. The participants experienced a lack of emotional support, threatened security, emotional injury, feeling sorry, physical symptoms of stress, and loss of positive feelings. According to the US National Institutes of Mental Health, marital life conflicts are essential factors in many mental health problems (24). A marital problem is chronic interpersonal stress that could cause immune system disorders. In addition, distress increases the risk of health problems such as coronary heart diseases, metabolic syndrome, and premature mortality (25).

5.2. Conclusions

In this study, the experience of rationality in the life of women on the verge of divorce was addressed. In general, the results showed limited rationality in marriage. Limited rationality was explained by the lack of intellectual preparedness for marital life, irrational marriage decision-making, and unrealistic positive thinking. The study results can be used to expand rationality. Training deep and realistic thinking skills allows women to use their rationality properly. Developing rationality reduces the likelihood of a lack of marital issues understanding. It also helps women respond appropriately to cognitive imbalance and better maintain their emotional balance.

One of the challenges of this study was that the participants were in a critical moment of their lives. It was somewhat difficult to encourage women to participate in the study in these circumstances. Incredibly, sometimes the presence of the spouse made the situation more complicated.

Another challenge the researcher faced was the reluctance of women to talk about issues in their lives with an unrelated person. The researcher tried to gain the trust of these women and sometimes their husbands by treating them with respect. As a result, some women mentioned that they shared things with the researcher that they had never talked about with anyone else. Given that the researcher overcame these challenges, it was not considered a limitation in the study. However, other limitations of qualitative research related to its explanatory nature, the low number of participants, and the context-dependent findings, limited the application of the findings to others.

Footnotes

Authors' Contribution: All authors have contributed to study design, analysis, and interpretation of data, drafting of the manuscript, and critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content. The first author, SH. T, did data collection.

Conflict of Interests: We, the authors, declare that within the last five years, we have not had any funding or research support, employment, personal financial interests, stocks or shares in companies, consultation fees, patents, personal or professional relations with organizations and individuals (parents and children, wife and husband, family relationships, etc.), unpaid membership in a government or non-governmental organization, which could affect the research process related to this manuscript. We also would like to declare that none of the authors is an editorial board member or a journal reviewer.

Data Reproducibility: Since this manuscript is the output of a qualitative study based on several interviews, we have no quantitative data in the format of SPSS or excel files that could be uploaded in supplementary files.

Ethical Approval: This study was approved under the ethical approval code of IR.BUMS.REC.1399.160 (Link: ethics.research.ac.ir/EthicsProposalView.php?id=142606).

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Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from individuals who participated in this study.

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