



Phenomenology of Positive Experiences of Married People on Marital Satisfaction during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Aim: This study was done to analyze the positive experiences of married people on marital satisfaction during the Covid-19 pandemic in Ahvaz. **Method:** The research methodology was qualitative and phenomenological. A total of 20 Participants (saturated number) from married people were selected by purposeful sampling method. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. For the validity of the findings from the point of view of the experts, and for the reliability, the coding agreement coefficient was used, and its value was 0.92. **Results:** According to the results of thematic analysis, these themes were obtained: emotional intimacy and closeness between spouses, spouses' pastime and joint activities, the ability of spouses to adapt and cope with new experiences positively and positive encounters with new experiences, and opportunities for skills training. **Conclusion:** According to the study results, it can be seen that the Covid-19 pandemic in addition to negative aspects, has positive impacts and wide-ranging effects and consequences on marital relationships in various fields.

Keywords: Covid-19, Pandemic, Marital satisfaction, Phenomenology

Introduction

It can be said that the pandemic and quarantine have caused changes in marital and family relationships and can either worsen or improve these relationships. Improvements in family relationships during quarantine can occur due to the expression of emotions, better communication among family members, increased team spirit, and balance between individual and collective needs of family members (Günterberg, Villarreal, Karatag, Garat, & Testor, 2020). While it is clear that married life has been widely affected by the coronavirus (Wisniewski, Effland, & Adyatni, 2021), qualitative (phenomenological) research on the effects of COVID-19 on married and family life, particularly the positive experiences of couples, remains limited. Despite conflicting research on this topic, further investigation into the factors that influence marital satisfaction seems necessary, as marital satisfaction contributes to strengthening families and ultimately the health and growth of society. Therefore, given the importance of marital satisfaction in strengthening families and society on the one hand, and the shortage and inconsistencies of studies on this topic, particularly in Iran, the present study aims to explore the experiences of married individuals regarding marital satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ahvaz city.

Method

The research methodology was qualitative and phenomenological. A total of 20 Participants (saturated number) from married people were selected by purposeful sampling method. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. For the validity of the findings from the point of view of the experts, and for the reliability, the coding agreement coefficient was used, and its value was 0.92.

Results

According to the results of thematic analysis, these themes were obtained: emotional intimacy and closeness between spouses, spouses' pastime and joint activities, the ability of spouses to adapt and cope with new experiences positively and positive encounters with new experiences, and opportunities for skills training.

Conclusion

According to the study results, it can be seen that the Covid-19 pandemic in addition to negative aspects, has positive impacts and wide-ranging effects and consequences on marital relationships in various fields.

Quarantine and increased time spent at home can lead to other positive effects such as a positive confrontation with an experience and an opportunity for skills learning. The COVID-19 pandemic has limited many individual and social activities such as recreation, in-person shopping, family gatherings and work meetings, all of which now require a new experience of employing innovative methods using facilities or modern technology. Therefore, since life without flexibility in a COVID-19 situation can be very stressful, the need for creativity and innovation, appropriate communication skills given the conditions (such as changing the style of face-to-face communication to video calls), and the ability to solve problems resulting from the crisis, leads to the ability to create alternative activities and use creativity and new experiences for family members and couples. In fact, it can be said that the COVID-19 pandemic and its related consequences

create new environmental demands for individuals and families, and individuals must necessarily change their thoughts and feelings about it. If these changes are positive and adaptable to the circumstances, adaptation is achieved.

Given the above, it appears that the COVID-19 pandemic may also have positive effects, which can be valuable for researchers, but it should be noted that this issue may be influenced by some individual factors such as communication skills, personality traits, and the adaptability of couples or interpersonal factors such as social support. Therefore, researchers are advised to investigate the role of these factors in the effects of COVID-19 and similar crises on marital satisfaction in future studies. The limitations of this study, given its qualitative nature, include a lack of use of other objective tools, and therefore, the possibility of misunderstanding in the results. Therefore, researchers are advised to use quantitative methods along with qualitative methods in future studies. In addition, this study was conducted during the pandemic and the implementation of laws such as social distancing and school closures, and due to the timing of the spread of the coronavirus along with the research stages, all interviews were conducted by telephone and therefore, it was not possible to observe and record many important visual information for the researcher. Finally, researchers are suggested to repeat this study in the current society during the vaccination period.

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