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EXPLANATION OF VALUE OF THE FAMILY FROM THE MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN PERSPECTIVES AMONG WOMEN IN SISTAN AND BALUCHESTAN PROVINCE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Family is an institution build up upon tradition, belief and morality and its value load position is a moral beliefs. Women as the pillar of the family play an integral role in transmission of the beliefs to the family and then the community. Moral beliefs talks of what is right and wrong, therefore, from the women perspective, the value load position of family should be identified. The aim of this study was to explain the value loaded position of the family from the perspective of middle-aged women. **Material and Methods:** This is a qualitative study and the method of content analysis was carried out. In this study 20 middle-aged women were recruited; by purposive sampling and semi-structured interviews, face to face interviews were conducted. Accordingly, after data collection, all the records were written down reviewed, and then categories were extracted. First, the semantic similarities were revised and the sub-category were identified and then in final review the related sub-category were placed under the respective categories. **Finding:** Categories which were extracted from women's perceptions were respect to family and her sacred duty in the home. The category, respect to family includes not being indifferent toward the family, prioritize family members over herself and self-neglect. The category of sacred duty of women in the family includes the sub-category of the position of women in the family. **Conclusion:** From the perspective of middle-aged women, the family occupies very special position which affected various aspects of their personal, family and social life. In this study, it was indicated that family has value-loaded position in which woman had a value-loaded place as well, thus, it should be attempted to preserve its cultural values. Preserving these conditions will be rendered the motto "a healthy world, healthy woman".

KEYWORDS: Family value, middle-aged women, qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION

Family is the first social institution that can affect all member of the family because this institution rooted in tradition, belief and morality.[1] In fact, personal beliefs on family are formed in family itself and consequently the transmission of these beliefs to the community is viable through family.[2,3] As the results of a study on African-American women showed that physical and mental health of women in the family is threatened by those close to them.[4] In other words, living in such families would be threatening for women. In this regard, the results of the study with Saudi Arabian women participants revealed the fact that women, according to the beliefs and values of the family system, such as the emphasis on the reproductive role of women in the family, had complained their place in that cultural context.[5] On the other hand, the findings of the study showed the value-loaded position of the family made women in specific circumstances, such as the husbands disability, to take on household responsibility to save family,[6] although the multiple role of women in the family can affect their health condition,[7] participants of the study on family status stated that the supportive position of the family plays an important role on their prevention programs.[8]

The literature review also reveals aspects of physical and mental health of women; in various fields have been studied so far.[9-11] But issues regarding the status of the family from the perspective of women as individuals who can affect family, community and their own health have been less investigated, yet. The studies related to

value-loaded position of family showed that these studies presupposition studies are defined women's role based on her role as a mother and wife. Thus, in such a scale, findings of the study also showed that a woman's health is seen only from motherhood angle and other family roles that could have been considered were neglected. [5.12]

On the other hand, middle-age is a bridge between young age and senility and it is the most golden stage and the most fertile period of women's.[13] Middle-aged women's traits such as dedication and give priority to family needs can affect various aspects of their health. One of the serious consequences of this period is self- neglect which leads to serious challenges of women's health in various aspects of health.[9, 14]

Regarding inevitable impact of value-loaded issues on individual, family and society, it seems that one of the best ways to obtain information on the status of the family is taking into consideration views and experiences of middle-aged women about the status of the family. Women in this period of life not only care about value-loaded beliefs of their own family but, regarding their fundamental role in the family are able to grow and extend values in society. In fact, due to the women maturation in middle age and their influence on the moral and ethical issues and reflection of moral issues on health of individuals, families and society, this study carried out to establish the status of value of family from the perspective of middle-aged women. In doing so, since we realized scarcity of information in literature, specially, qualitative studies in the area of value-loaded position of family and its effect on women's health, we intended to conduct the study by applying qualitative methodology to explain the views of women's on value-loaded position of the family according to their own statements in a natural and real atmosphere. In other words, in the present study, adopting qualitative research methods assist researchers to enter into mental worlds of middle-aged women to identify their vision on value-loaded position of the family. The aim of this study was to establish the value-loaded position of family from the perspective of middle-aged women.

The research field of study, the city of Zahedan, is the capital of the Sistan-Baluchistan province in Iran. Zahedan's population includes Sistani, Balochi and Persian, which has various customs and culture. Results of studies on health issues demonstrate that the health condition is not in a good quality. In this regards, the results of a study shows age of menopause in this province is lower than other parts of Iran and related to their economic and social status. It would be a function of nutritional status, cultural factors and a series of other social and economic and other unknown factors.[15] At the same time, middle-aged women in the city are responsible for Children, the elderly and other family members health, hence, they are not paying enough attention to their own health, in other words until they are able to take over responsibilities assigned to them, they would consider themselves a healthy woman; they are facing a set of non-debilitating physical and psychological problems such as premature menopause, premature aging, anemia, musculoskeletal pain and depression, but, due to family responsibilities, these problems are not taken seriously. It seems necessary to investigate on explanation of the value-loaded position of family, according to the related social and cultural context of the city is carried out.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative study adopting content analysis method. The method is one of the approaches to qualitative researches and a method of qualitative data analysis as well. Content analysis is method of analyzing written, oral and visual messages. Raw data on the bases of interviews deduction summarized and placed into categories. Arbitrary Content analysis, categories and their names flow from the texts of interviews.[16, 17]

In this study, the participants were chosen by purposive sampling. Sampling of middle-aged women from diverse education level, marital status and occupation until data saturation was undertaken. This study was conducted with 20 middle-aged women. The criterion for selection was being a middle-aged woman (ages 60-40 years). Location of interview according to qualitative research method was the natural environment that made middle-age women accessible for researchers. To this end, interviews were conducted in places such as home or workplace. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. First, a general question in the interview was asked: "What is your attitude towards the position of value-loaded position of family?" for more information, the participants were asked follow-up questions like "What do you mean in this regard," or continued by "in this respect explain more?" The duration of each interview was between 30 to 45 minutes. With informed consent of participants, interviews were recorded digitally. Each participant was interviewed once, accordingly, 20 interviews were recorded.

Data analysis was at the time of data collection. Transcripts of interviews after several overviews were broken into smallest semantic units. Then, codes were read up to place, on the basis of semantic similarity, in the following categories and sub-categories. To ensure the accuracy of the data variety of methods were adopted during the study. Participants were review and codes which were not representing their views were edited. Also, interviews' scripts, codes and categories were revised by two members of the scientific board that were familiar to the qualitative research and were experts in the field of family health. Selecting Participants from highly diverse groups increased data reliability.

Ethical aspects of the study have been addressed. Informed consents of participants have been obtained

before involving them in the study. The researchers express purpose of study, the participants' right to withdraw from continuing to cooperate at any time, maintaining the anonymity and privacy and presenting the results to participants on their request.

FINDINGS

From Participants description two categories has been extracted: respect to the family and women sacred duty in the family (Table 1).

Table 1: The extracted categories and sub-categories.

Categories	Sub- categories
Respect to family	Not Being Indifference to family
	Giving priority to family
	Self-neglect for the sake of family
women sacred duty in the family	Position of women in the family

Emergence of the category of respect to the family stated that family is of a great importance for middle-aged women. Results showed that the family occupies a value-loaded position for middle-aged women and women occupy a value-loaded position in family as well. Being not indifferent to family members, prioritize family over herself and self-neglect for the sake of family is among features of respect to family that represents the value-loaded position of family. Multiple roles that women played in the house highlighted her position in the family and her sacred duties she undertake in her family.

1. Respect to family

Features such as not being indifferent to the relatives, giving priority to them and self-neglect for the sake of family were formed sub-categories of respect to family. A participant in the case of respect to family and not being indifference of her mother toward family members said.

"If someone in my family get into trouble she take on her duty to help him/her. My mother toward those somehow related to her, including immediate relatives and siblings, uncles and aunts do this way. She believes that she should not be indifferent to the problems of our relatives "(p18)

Self-neglect for the sake of family is another feature of respect to family. Participants stated variety of self-neglect in their remarks. One of the participants in this regard, said.

"I always preferred family health to mine, first my children then my husband next my parents, and then sisters and brothers, maybe what I've done for the sake of their health, either physical or mental was harmful to me. Whatever mental or physical health, I always given priority to those around over mine" (p 11).

A participant who prioritizes her parents' heath over her own health, said.

"My parents health are important to me I always get supplement tablets for them while might I don't buy for myself or mostly I prefer to pay for their health rather than mine,. (p5).

Statements of a participant about prioritizing family members come as follows.

"I myself prefer the rest of the family over mine. For example, if I want to travel with my friend, I should cancel the trip to accompany my parents to another trip while I do not like to go, but I canceled my trip to make them happy. For the sake of their happiness I'd cancel my plane. "(p 12).

2. Women sacred duties in family

The role of a woman at home represents her position in the family and that position represents her sacred duties that she undertakes in her family.

"I am the eldest daughter of the family, I morally support my family members (my parents), i consult them, I will support them financially." (p13).

Another participant talked about her position in her family.

"In fact, I am the daughter of family they trusted me, they believe me, I try to make them relax, I am trying to moderate circumstances, I try to intervene, even my wife's brothers agrees with my words talked about her problems with me. "(p 9).

One of the participants about sacred duties of women in the family, said.

"...All women are the pillars of their family, for example, after twenty years of my father's death, my mother's life and ours who live with her has gone well. But if it was reverse, at least we need a mother to take care of my father ... "(p 17).

DISCUSSION

Features such as not being indifferent to the family, giving priority to family members and self-neglect for the sake of family, while showing the importance of family leading to emergence of the sub-category of respect to family. Participants in the study with expressions like being indifferent toward family members, feeling severe discomfort of husbands sadness, preoccupation with the problems of others, a sense of responsibility to family members, assist to family

members, the family first priorities of every women, the importance of family health, being silent to keep family dignity and scarify herself specified position of family in value system. The literature review in this context indicated that family for the women is of a special value,[18] so that the needs of children take priority.[19] But, in this study, what was being discussed about importance of family was respect to family. Respect to family in the eyes of women, while giving importance to family justified many women's behavior. Behaviors such as self-contained to save family privacy carry out relatives' tasks at any cost and giving priority to health of family members over her own and self-devotion show dimensions of respect to family. In addition, issues such as lack of attention to her own health because of being busy, self-devotion to preserve peace in family, lack of attention to her health due to giving priority to family members' activities, disregard for her health for the sake of maternal duties, shows self-devotion to keep peace in family. In this regard, the review showed that the family, itself, is the main reason of women's self-devotion,[7] which caused women to reduce daily exercise.[20] However, it can be said that women self-devotions are due to their essential roles such as motherhood, in the other words, their maternal feeling would lead to health care goes unconsidered. However, in the present study middle-aged women took on multiple roles and bear sacred duties in family.

It should be noted that value-loaded position of family, may not be a new concept in family studies but what went evident in this study was that this position of family lead women to show behaviors that makes them sensitive toward all family members, it was evident in words of all women, so that they were prioritize all members of the family over herself.

Woman's sacred duties in family was another category of the present study; the characteristics of such a position focus on the roles played by women in the home e.g. trusted advisor, care taker of family health and being her family pillar. Therefore, we can interpret this position is a value-loaded one. The findings of a recent study showed, both family and woman occupy a value loaded position. Although the existed literature in Iran also, described the position of women in family as the pillar of the family and the family burden bearer,[18] while in some studies, women participants see their divers role as an obstacle to their physical and mental health [6,7] that a reason of that was women 's intention to undertake multiple responsibilities in best way.[19]

However, women sacred duty in the family becomes highlighted in the present Study. All participants, regardless of their value-loaded vision to family, stated that they had a strong presence in their own families. This could indicate that despite the fact that the studied area seems to be a patriarchal society, but women had a special position there, so that on the contrary, women were not be seen weak and incapable. Therefore it can be concluded that regarding the lifetime value-loaded vision of women to family, in this period, this vision become the general principle for them, therefore, their position in the family, in this period become more prominent. Thus, it is concluded that the value-loaded vision is dominating in family structure and middle-aged women in the field, has several positions that just a single one is related to natural role of motherhood and other roles show that the women in this context bear heavy responsibilities of their own families.

CONCLUSION

However, the categories of respect to family and sacred duty of women in the family pave a ground for the emergence of value-loaded position of family and what which could be understood through value-loaded position of family is family is of high value for women. That is to say, perhaps the value-oriented beliefs about family and women's natural roles would be shaped such behaviors. The results showed that middle-aged women could not be indifferent to their family, to preserve health and peace in the family show devotion. On the other hand, the family was not an obstacle to value-loaded position of women, according to findings show that women in the family had a position that indicates the value of their role in the family.

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