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An Investigation into the Factors Affecting Violence against Married Women in Ahvaz: A Qualitative Research

Mansour Sodani^{1*}, Ali Gholami², Hamid Farhadirad³ and Reza Khojastehmehr¹¹Department of Counseling and Guidance, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran²PhD Student of Counseling, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran³Department of Educational Sciences, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran**Abstract**

Introduction: The strength of any structure depends on the proper foundation and the strong columns. Similar to a huge building, the stability of a society is dependent on the firmness of the family and any weakness or deformation would collapse the pillars of that society. Family is important not only because it provides a good environment for spouses, but it is also tasked with educating future generations. However, families are already suffering from several detriments, one of the most important of which is domestic violence.

Methods: This qualitative research was carried out using a targeted sampling method. Sampling continued until reaching the theoretical saturation of data. Finally, 17 women with experiences of domestic violence were interviewed, once the Haj Yahya Violence Questionnaire was completed.

Results: Using axial and open coding, 21 major categories were obtained. "Violence, a hidden and apparent tool" was introduced as the main category. It can be concluded that domestic violence is affected by many factors, including personality traits, family education and social culture. According to the results, the causal, underlying and intervening conditions, phenomenon, strategies of action/interaction and the consequences were extracted and a conceptual model was explained.

Conclusion: Violence against women is universal and inclusive. This silence cannot be kept hidden and silent, and it requires a global attention. Thus, it seems necessary to design and implement educational workshops in order to recognize differences between men and women, child upbringing, marriage enrichment, promotion of adolescent skills, effective and appropriate communication practices and life skills.

Keywords: Violence; Domestic violence; Married women; Qualitative research; Grounded theory

***Correspondence to:** Sodani M, Department of Counseling and Guidance, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Ahvaz, Iran, E-mail: sodani_m@scu.ac.ir

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Introduction

The strength of any structure depends on the proper foundation and the strong columns. Similar to a huge building, the stability of a society is dependent on the firmness of the family and any weakness or deformation would collapse the pillars of that society (1). Family is important not only because it provides a good environment for spouses, but it is also tasked with educating future generations. However, families are already suffering from several detriments, one of the most important of which is domestic violence (2). Domestic violence refers to the kind of aggression that occurs in couples and is sometimes described as marital violence, partner abuse and the like (3). Meanwhile, domestic abuse often escalates from threats and verbal assault to violence. And while physical injury may pose the most obvious danger, the emotional and psychological consequences of domestic abuse are also severe. Emotionally abusive relationships can destroy your self-worth, lead to anxiety and depression, and make you feel helpless and alone. No one should have to endure this kind of pain and your first step to breaking free is recognizing that your relationship is abusive.

A large number of women across the world suffer from domestic violence (4). Domestic violence is an important social issue in many Asian countries. The survey results in Japan show that 67% of Japanese women experience at least one type of violence. In the Islamic nations, violence against women is still a major social issue. Violence against women is more frequent within the area of influence of family relationships, thus identified differently as family violence, when it involves relatives in a location other than where they live. When violence occurs in the space known as "home" it is described as domestic violence, and it involves the people that live in this environment, who do not need to be relatives, such as maids and other domestic workers. In the case of women, marital violence, a type of violence provoked by their spouses, can be described by both domestic violence and family violence. Likewise, 48% of Bangladeshi women experience physical violence, 12% experienced physical violence during pregnancy, and more than a third of women experienced sexual violence during pregnancy. Studies conducted in Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Tunisia showed that at least one in three women was beaten by his husband (5). According to the results, 67% of Japanese women experience at least



one type of violence; Ficker and Bobby reported that 34% of women in Pakistan are victims of physical violence. In addition, according to the National Coalition against Domestic Violence (2015), about 58% of nurses are physically abused or raped by patients, colleagues, male physicians and relatives. Meanwhile, 93% of women working in public and private places are physically abused or raped (6). And about 35% of women in Nepal experience domestic violence. Psychological violence was also common, similar to physical, financial, and sexual violence. More than two-thirds of women who suffered from domestic violence experienced at least two types of violence (7).

The issue of domestic violence has also been investigated in Iran. Different rates of violence against women has been reported for Iran in terms of physical and sexual harassment, all the researches confirm that more than 60% of women suffer from domestic violence. The results show that 66% of Iranian women have suffered from violence at least once from the beginning of their marriage. Likewise, psychological and verbal violence were the most common types of violence (52.7) (8). Overall, it can be argued that violence against women is the most common crime with the least punishment all over the world. Although there is no exact information about this phenomenon for many reasons, it has adverse consequences which cause psychological disorders such as anxiety and fear. This phenomenon is one of the most important issues in the society.

According to the research, various factors contributing to violence against women are age differences of couples, the interference by relatives, experience of parental violence by couples in the family, education of the spouse (9), type of job, premarital dating, men's social class, type of marriage (imposed or optional), male authority, conflict and difference between male and female interests, interference of others (10). Some of the other factors contributing to the domestic violence include poverty (11), psychiatric disorders (12), gender (13), alcohol and drug addiction (14), low education, living with an unemployed and alcoholic spouse (15) and infertility (16).

The increasing level of violence is alarming for the society. An abnormal family may result in an unconventional society full of tension. Family is a sacred sanctuary for the individuals which provides comfort and security. Likewise, domestic violence does not agree with the family because violence besmirches the image of the family, affecting all aspects of the lives of its victims (17).

What makes this research important is the fact that it aims to investigate the component that plays an important role in the everyday lives of families. It is important to address the issue of violence and the underlying causes of it and its psychological basis because we all have experienced it to some extent. Given the fact that the relationship between the health of individuals, families and society has drawn the attention of researchers, the Ministry of Health, the judiciary, psychiatric and counseling clinics are always trying to maintain and improve the psychological health of individuals and families. Therefore, identifying the variables that are associated with domestic violence can help individuals and families to avoid these behaviors. It may also improve the individual health and the performance of families and society. If violence in the family is prevalent, in addition to undesirable social effects, it would have adverse effects on the cognitive, emotional, psychological and social development of individuals. Therefore, the underlying causes of violence should be identified as soon as possible in order to prevent it. Otherwise, it can turn into an epidemic phenomenon, leading to irreparable consequences.

Given the high prevalence of domestic violence in Iranian women

(18), it seems that further research is needed in order to investigate the factors affecting this phenomenon. By developing policies to promote the level of social protection of women and informing the public, it may be possible to prevent violence to a great extent. Accordingly, the present study aimed to investigate the factors affecting the violence against married women in Ahvaz. This study aimed to identify, analyze and explain the factors contributing to the violence.

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Research Questions

1. How do women describe the causes of domestic violence?
2. What factors affect domestic violence?
3. What are the factors that facilitate domestic violence against women?
4. What strategies should be adopted for domestic violence against women?
5. What are the consequences of domestic violence against women?

Methods

This qualitative research aimed to examine the behaviors, beliefs and thoughts of individuals and groups regarding the issue of domestic violence. The grounded theory uses a series of systematic procedures to develop a theory about a phenomenon and provide a theoretical setting of the underlying reality. The phrase "grounded theory" refers to theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. If done well, this means that the resulting theory at least fits one dataset perfectly. This contrasts with theory derived deductively from grand theory, without the help of data, and which could therefore turn out to fit no data at all. Grounded theory takes a case rather than variable perspective, although the distinction is nearly impossible to draw. This means in part that the researcher takes different cases to be wholes, in which the variables interact as a unit to produce certain outcomes. A case-oriented perspective tends to assume that variables interact in complex ways, and is suspicious of simple additive models, such as ANOVA with main effects only. Therefore, not only the concepts and the relationship between them are created, but also temporarily examined (19). The Iranians living in Ahvaz (2017-18) constituted the participants of the present study. Purposeful-sampling and sampling favorites were used in this study. These two methods are sub-categories of the non-random sampling used in qualitative research to select the interviewed individuals. The criteria considered in the sample selection were as follows: 1) Marriage 2) Willingness to interview and collaborate on the research 3) Complaint and dissatisfaction with the relation 4) Obtaining the minimum score in the violence against Women Questionnaire 5) Suffering from at least one type of violence. In this study, data saturation was used to determine the sample size. Interview with 17 participants saturated data. The violence against women questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. In this interview, general questions were raised based on research objectives. The interview lasted about 30-50 minutes. The interview duration was determined by the participants themselves. The ethical issues in this research include informed consent of the participants and recording the content of the interview, ensuring the confidentiality of the information. The participants were given nicknames and were also allowed to withdraw from the research whenever they desired. Coding refers to the process of analyzing data which develops concepts, categories, features and characteristics of the categories. According to



the Grounded Theory, coding takes place in three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open coding is part of the analysis that specifically identifies and delineates phenomena by scrutinizing data (19). On the other hand, axial coding refers to a series of procedures in which, the information is linked to each other after open coding and identifying the categories. This coding process is based on a paradigm (a structural pattern) which aims to investigate the direct (causal) and indirect (mediator) relationships. Finally, selective coding refers to the process of selecting the main categories systematically and linking them to other categories, validating relationships, and filling empty spaces with categories that need to be further developed. Three common methods were used to examine the trustworthiness of the findings: 1) Validation by the participants: Participants were asked to evaluate the findings and to comment on its accuracy. 2) Analytical comparisons: The raw data was used to evaluate the construction of the theory. 3) The textual content of the interview was coded to researchers and the agreement coefficient was over 85%.

Results

Summarizes the descriptive characteristics of female interviewees:

As shown in Table 1, the female interviewees were 20-62 years old. The couples spent less than 1 year to 30 years together. Accordingly, 7 people were divorced. The number of Persian and Arab interviewees was 6 and 10, respectively. Meanwhile, open coding, axial coding and selective coding were used to analyze the data.

Once the open and axial coding processes were finished, concepts and categories were extracted. Using open and axial coding, 21 major categories were obtained. According to the Grounded Theory, the causes and interventions that lead to a successful marriage were investigated (Table 2).

Axial coding

As stated above, it is necessary to examine the conditions and factors causing and facilitating the violence. Moreover, the strategies and consequences of violence need to be examined. The paradigm model for the concepts acquired from open coding is presented below. For the axial coding to take place properly, the interviews and coding process should be considered.

The most important part of this coding is to identify the axial category. This category is an incident or a major occurrence in which a series of actions aim to manage the situation. The central issue in this paradigm is "violence, a hidden and apparent tool". This is the main phenomenon that has been repeated in most interviews, and other categories can be linked to it. It is necessary to examine the conditions and factors causing and facilitating the violence. Moreover, the strategies and consequences of violence need to be examined. The interventions may influence the strategies directly.

Causal factors and circumstances

Causal factors and circumstances refer to a series of events that affect the phenomenon and lead to an axial phenomenon. Violence can have many different causes. By analyzing the results of the interviews, it was found that the causal factors included psychological insecurity, ignoring of primary signs, gender beliefs and the like.

Ignoring primary sign

Sometimes there are no good relations between boys and girls in our community. Most of the time, relations begin with fleeting excitement, without the girl and the boy reaching maturity. The choices are superficial and simple. They easily choose someone as their girl/boyfriend without scrutinizing the details. They stick to this completely flawed relationship until it becomes difficult to separate. These two people can be regarded as blind lovers. One of the women said: "These days you cannot interrogate someone and order him not to hang out with particular friends. I remember I used to go out with my nephews. We used to sit and talk about things. Have we done something wrong?"

Psychological insecurity

One of the basic human needs which is long drawn the attention of the psychologists is the need for security. Health or unhealthy family environment is associated with having or not having a psychological security. Relationships between family environment and violence exposure varied, depending on type of violence reported, most notably between intra-familial versus extra-familial violence. After controlling for family environment, exposure to one violence type significantly increased the likelihood of other violence exposures. Family substance use and not always living with a natural parent were significantly

Table 1. The descriptive characteristics of interviewers.

No.	Age	Education	Years Living Together	Children	Job	Divorce	Ethnicity	Age difference	The Score of Violence Questionnaire
1	29	Diploma	7 Years	1	Housekeeper	Once	Persian	1	1-5
2	31	BA	5 Years	1	Instructor	No	Persian	8	1-9
3	27	Diploma	2 Years	-	Freelancer	Once	Persian	3	1-6
4	29	Student	10 Years	-	Student	No	Persian	2	92
5	38	MA	16 Years	2	Housekeeper	No	Persian	9	67
6	22	Diploma	4 Years	1	Housekeeper	No	Arab	7	51
7	34	Elementary	7 Months	1	Paramedic	No	Persian	16	77
8	35	Elementary	18 Years	5	Housekeeper	No	Arab	2	75
9	30	Elementary	16 Years	2	Housekeeper	No	Arab	2	97
10	37	Elementary	13 Years	2	Salesman	Once	Arab	20	83
11	30	Elementary	13 Years	1	Housekeeper	Once	Arab	13	87
12	52	Illiterate	30 Years	6	Housekeeper	No	Arab	10	6
13	20	Diploma	2 Years	-	Cleaner	Once	Persian	7	1-2
14	24	Diploma	3 Years	-	Housekeeper	Once	Persian	3	80
15	26	Diploma	8 Years	1	Housekeeper	No	Persian	10	79
16	42	Diploma	22 Years	2	Housekeeper	No	Persian	7	85
17	62	Diploma	10 Years	3	Paramedic	Once	Lori	3	90



Table 2. Factors affecting the domestic violence against women.

Concepts	Open coding	Axial coding
Dating in the park	Inappropriate place for dating	Role-base factors
Accepting sth under pressure	Being under pressure by others	
Lack of shelter; financial needs	Financial problems	
Blaming another; ignoring the past and present life of the person	Lacking sense of realism	Ignoring the primary signs
Temporary happiness; verbal praise	Self-aggrandizement	
Sexual problems during engagement	Problem having erections	
Disobedience to the spouse; silence	Not being supported	Lack of psychological security
Family pressure; aging	Anxiety	
Addiction	Parent's addiction	
Having a bad sense of your own; accepting the views of others	Low self-esteem	Psychological problems
Fear of being killed; feeling insecure	Stress and anxiety	
Nightmares	Sleep disorders	
Inappropriate reactions; verbal aggression	Anger and impatience	Psychological aggression
Blaming the wife for mistreatment of children	Blaming the wife for children's inappropriate behavior	
Moving the furniture	Hiding the furniture	
Questioning wife's abilities; humiliating activities	Making the wife dependent	Sexual aggression
Avoiding the problem	Leaving	
Watching porn movies; keeping on the phone	Watching pornographic content	
Abandoning the relationship; verbal charge	Unwilling to have sex	Emotional divorce
Multiple sexes	Getting laid with different women	
Spending time with kids; engaging in children's activities	Spending excessive time with children	
Spending time with friends; going to the gym	Having fun with people other than spouse	Women's sexual dysfunction
Stepping away from others; avoiding others' questions	Isolation	
Talking with others about problems	Talking about problems with others	
Restricting the use of personal belongings and gadgets like cellphone	Specifying red lines	Social aggression
Having bad feeling about your body; fear of relationship	Having insignificant thoughts	
Avoiding relationship; feeling bad about sex	Decreased libido	
Avoiding sexual relations	Sexual dissatisfaction	Economic aggression
Quitting the gym and entertainment	Not having the right to have fun	
Avoiding any sort of communication with others	Controlling social relations	
Refraining from contacting family, relatives and friends	Limiting the circle of family interactions	Verbal aggression
Quitting education	Quitting the education	
Not purchasing essential items	Not giving allowances	
Being under pressure to quit the job; crushing the furniture	Putting the wife under pressure to quit her job	Physical aggression
Questioning the spouse's character	Insulting	
Disrespecting the colleagues	Using insulting words	
Using insulting words	Disrespectful manners	Retaliatory intentions
Using strict rules in the family	Coming up with excuses	
Physical punishment	Beating the wife	
Putting hands around one's neck	Killing the spouse	Spouses having different views and attitudes
Twisting the hand	Twisting the hand	
Fight	Fight	
Cold relationship	Not loving the spouse	Marital fantasies
Communicating via cyberspace and cellphone	Having affairs with other people	
Refusing the invitation; silence	Talking less than usual	
Avoiding crowds	Introverted and extroverted spouses	Sexual desires and beliefs
Watching different movies	Different entertainments	
Inappropriate demand; unreasonable demand; not understanding of the spouse	Different sexual needs	
Irrational expectation of marriage; disrespectful manner	Goals and expectations	Inappropriate family environment
Man's aging	Age difference	
Differences in the level of education	Education	
Believing the spouse's words	Man's dominating beliefs	Sexual desires and beliefs
Being concerned about people's words and divorce	Reading the mind	
Witnessing domestic violence and believing it to be natural	Believing the nature of violence	
Not seeing family behavior	Being different from family members	Inappropriate family environment
Not ignoring the wife's mistakes; ignoring the guests	Ignoring the wife	
Male superiority	Male's dominating power	
Not belonging to the family	Not being supported by the family	Inappropriate family environment
Imprisonment of family members	Strict rules in the family	



Prioritizing the family	Prioritizing the family	No differentiation
Concealment; substance abuse; having conflicts with the spouse's family	Conflicts	
Avoid working	Unemployment	Economic problems
Using loans; rental house	Loan	
Not having a permanent job	Not having a permanent job	
Being away from home for a long time	Long work hours	Career problems
Dependency on the boss; having affairs with colleagues	Communicating with the subordinates	
No pre-marital counseling	No having premarital trainings	Cultural problems
Lack of awareness about the needs of the opposite sex	Lack of knowledge about the opposite sex	

associated with all three types of violence exposure. Findings indicate that clinical assessments should include a thorough evaluation of family environment and violence exposure and also highlight the need for treatment to focus on the adolescent and broader family unit. The lack of emotional and psychological security between family members, especially between parents and children, is a big problem for families. One of the interviewees said: "When my father married my mother, shewas a divorced woman. My father thought that he had made a mistake by marrying her and that's why he met another woman. Once my mother found out that he was meeting another woman, the conflicts began to rise until my mother died. It was really difficult to live in such conditions."

Gender beliefs

Gender bias has been long used to undermine women and girls. Gender bias can result in sexual harassment, rape or other types of sexual violence. The preeminence of male gender is greatly reflected in some nations. One of the interviewees said that her husbandwas an admirably a good man. He knew many women, but he chose me.

Independence plays an important rolein a successful marriage.It is alsocharacterized by social growth. The lack of independence may result in numerous conflicts in a marriage. One of the interviewees said: "Most of the time, he preferred his family over me, especially his mom and sister, as if they were more important to him. For example, we needed his mother's permission to go on a trip."

Action and interaction strategies

Strategies are a set of purposeful and intentional actions which are used to solve a problem or achieve a goal. One of the interviewees said: If I want to live with my husband this way, it would be impossible to visit my family. He orders me to sit, eat, not to eat! It's all about him. He decides when to have sex with me; he spends money as much as he likes. I am not allowed to visit my children. So why do I need him? I do not want him to trouble me 24/7. You would not believe it if I said that when he was having a hard time in hisstore, I was afraid to open my mouth and talk with him because I knew that he would get angry. I am afraid of him beating me. Sometimes his eyes are so frightening that one cannot look at this face.I cannot stand this situation. By analyzing the interviews, it can be argued that women experience six types of violence: psychological, verbal, physical, social, sexual, and economic.

Psychologicalabuse

According to the interviews and the results of this study, psychological abuseis the most common type of violence among couples. Some of the main examples of psychological violence include: 1) blaming the wife for the children's inappropriate behavior; 2) hiding the furniture; 3) leaving home for a long time. One of the interviewees said: "Sometimes I'm afraid of my children's behavior. My husband always blames me for their actions, as if he has nothing to do with it."

Another interviewee said: "I did not know for a while where I was putting my stuff. My husband usually insisted that I was getting old. He even told me that I had Alzheimer's. I was troubled by his behavior. One day I heard from my daughter that he deliberately changed my belongings when I was not home. I did not know that."

Verbal abuse

Verbalabuse is more prevalent when one gets angry. An interview with women showed that bad-temperedness and insult may collapse the families, separating the husband and wife. At home, women are not only victims of violent partners, but can also be subjected to verbal abuse from other family and community members. Although both men and women can be victims of verbal abuse, women tend to be more vulnerable because of marriage. This practice is a norm in many countries, where women tend to marry at an earlier age and relocate to live with their new husband's family. They often have little access to support systems and find themselves in the lowest ranks of the household hierarchy, having to comply with their requests. Because newly married women are often those with the least power to defend themselves, they are more vulnerable to both physical and verbal abuse. One of the interviewees said: "He often insultsme and my family." He says that I was wandering in the streets until he came and saved me. I cannot come up with any solutions to his behavior. I feel very tired, disappointed, and regretful."

Another one said: "If dinner was late or food was burned, then he would complain about everything and blame me for his troubles. Sometimes he even beats me."

Physical abuse

As the name suggests, physical abuserefers to all types of physical harassment.All women can suffer from physical violence regardless of their education, race or family status. One of the women said: "Once I went to my friend's housefor a small celebration. My husband realized that I went there with my friend's car. Once I arrived at home, he began beating me, insisting that I should have taken a taxi."

Social abuse

Social abuseis another type of violence against women. Women who suffer from social abuseexperience a completely different life, compared to other couples. Some men ban any social movements for their wives and restrain their social interactions. An interviewee said: "During ceremonies, he always flirts with women and looks at their bodies meticulously. That's why I decided not to go on a ceremony with him."

Another one said: "I am not allowed to see any of my relatives. He does not even let me go to a wedding ceremony. A couple of month ago, my cousin died.He was young. He did not let me go to his funeral."



Sexual violence

Sexual violence occurs all over the world, although there is little research on this issue in many countries. Given the private nature of sexual violence, it is difficult to estimate the extent of this violence. Sexual violence is defined as a sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely given consent, or any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act by violence or coercion, acts to traffic a person or acts directed against a person's sexuality, regardless of the relationship to the victim. No man has the right to force his wife into having sex with him. One of the interviewees said: "My husband once said that having sex with a whore was better than having sex with me. I wanted to murder him but I was not able to."

Another interviewee said: "He used to watch porn videos. Well, I did not like it, but he said that his friends sent the videos. Most of the time, he wanted me to go outside so that he can watch these videos."

Economic abuse

In recent years, a new type of abuse has emerged in the country. By analyzing women's interviews in this study, we found that there is another type of violence against women called economic abuse. According to the results, employed women could potentially be subject to violence. Economic abuse against women and damaging their favorite items are some examples of economic abuse against women. An interviewee said: "I always had to report exactly how I was spending. He sometimes asked me where I bought things from."

Another one said: "My husband did not even buy stuff for his family. He always found it difficult to buy ingredients so that I could make something for lunch or dinner. My brother used to give us my money."

Underlying factors

These factors refer to a series of special characteristics or a series of specific conditions in which action/interaction strategies are used to control and respond to phenomena. In this research, these conditions include:

Contributing factors

Some of the primary factors contributing to the violence are those that have played a role. Factors such as inappropriate place for dating, pressure exerted by relatives and poverty were among these factors. The way couples meet is more important than the way couples get ready for marriage. An interviewee said:

"Well, my husband and I met when I was walking with my friend in the park. He was in the car with a friend. He saw me, got off the car and came to see me. We took his number so that we can get rid of him, but..."

Another interviewee said: "My family was always worried about my age. When my cousin proposed to me, everyone unanimously said that he was the one."

Differences between couples

Differences between couples can also be considered as a contributing factor in domestic violence. One cannot simply attribute all the violence to the differences between couples; there are many couples that differ in many areas, but they have good families and do not commit violence. On the contrary, there are some people who, despite their commonalities, show violent behaviors. I and my wife are

way too different characters. I'd love to have people beside me when I go out, especially my family. I would like to spend the weekends with my family. However, my husband refrains from crowd and prefers to hang out with few friends.

Bad family environment

When both husband and wife have been raised in a violent family, one can simply guess that they would be unable to provide a violence-free atmosphere for their children.

One of the interviewees said: "My father was suffering from a disease. My mother was always thinking of her own pleasure. My brother, as far as I remember, was always into books and reading. One he was admitted to the medical school, it was hard to see him again. I was all alone."

Another one said: "I was afraid of divorce. I still am. What would I do after I got divorced? Where shall I go? I could not get back to my father's house again. I belong to my own house."

Intervening conditions

Intervening conditions are triggered by unexpected circumstances that affect strategies and facilitate or restrict strategies. In this study, these factors are summarized as follows:

Financial problems: Today, one of the important factors which contributes to social damages is financial problems. Weak financial potential would damage the family members.

According to the interviews, it can be argued that numerous issues, directly and indirectly, contribute to the economic problems, some of which are outlined as follows: nagging, impatience, conflicts, isolation and avoiding social relations, psychological and emotional harm of children, loans, having affairs with other people, divorce and violence. In order to increase your dependence on them, an abusive partner will cut you off from the outside world. They may keep you from seeing family or friends, or even prevent you from going to work or school. You may have to ask permission to do anything, go anywhere, or see anyone. One of the interviewees said: "In order to find a permanent place to live in, we were loaned to buy a house. My husband could not afford to pay it back. Once we could not pay for the installments, the conflicts began to rise between us."

Career problems: Responsibilities and career problems affect our body or soul unwittingly and may result in fatigue, anger and isolation. Ultimately, family is negatively affected by these issues. Everyone faces obstacles and problems in his/her career. In addition to career responsibilities, women are responsible for the home and the children. While men prioritize their career and are breadwinners of the family. Thus, career problems can affect them in various ways.

Cultural problems: Cultural problems may also lead to violence in some ways. The lack of premarital training and unawareness about the opposite sex could be problematic. Getting married without introductory training is like starting a business without considering the profits or losses. Most couples do not realize that pre-marital training classes can greatly reduce the likelihood of divorce. These counseling classes can also reduce the anxieties of premature marriages.

An interviewee said: "No one told me about the needs of men and women. Some sessions were held to give us information about having babies or how to avoid pregnancy. It was almost about money. Everyone wanted those sessions to come to an end."



The Consequences of Violence: Actions in response to an issue can have consequences. Accordingly, consequences may be short-term or long-term, visible or hidden, immediate or gradual, reversible or irreversible and predictable or unpredictable (Strauss and Carbin, 2014; Translated by Mohammadi, 2014). According to the interviews, some of the consequences of violence against women are outlined as follows:

Female sexual dysfunction: Female sexual dysfunction seems to be one of the contributing factors in the increased rate of divorce in Iran. That what female sexual problems mean and how they are developed is the subject of this study. Because many women, according to their own words, had no sexual problems in the first days of marriage. Over time, male violence has somehow exacerbated the problem. Consulting about sexual problems especially in Asian societies such as Iran have not been discussed generally and widely due to cultural and religious issues. Consequently, this may hinder providing appropriate services for the target group. An interview said: "He always complained of my hips and breasts. He said that my breasts were disgusting. I had given birth to four children. I was afraid of getting naked."

Decreased psychological well-being: Psychological and behavioral abnormalities are triggered by insecurity. Insecurity may affect the relations in different ways. It can put people under great pressure and cause several problems. Accordingly, it may even threaten psychological well-being and social communication. Insecurity can be reflected in career, education, family and society. One of the women who complained heavily about loneliness and the lack of pleasure in life said: "For a while, I have started reading novels in order not to talk with my husband. Nothing makes me happy. I feel like most conversations are futile and serve no purpose. He is busy watching TV and I enjoy reading novels."

Emotional divorce: According to the results, emotional divorce is one of the consequences of domestic violence, in which couples have no choice but to continue to live for a variety of reasons. Thus, couples continue to live together, but they are pursuing their own demand. They do not get divorced officially because they are under pressure by close relatives and others. This can usually have adverse consequences. An interviewee said: "Once I realized that my husband avoids talking with me, I started surfing the web and reading stuff online. Once someone asked if he can text me and I said why. He replied that he likes me. I said no. But a few days later I texted him."

Retaliatory behaviors: Marital relationships are very exceptional in comparison to other human relationships. Other human relationships cover one dimension of life, while marital relationships encompass biological, economic, emotional and psychological dimensions. An interviewee said: "He was always watching news and we did not talk much. I wanted to spend more time talking with him about different stuff. I felt really bad. Everything was important for him except me. I was reading books instead (Figure 1)."

Selective coding: Selective coding is the third phase of data analysis. Once the causal factors, action/reaction strategies and intervening conditions are investigated, the relationships between the concepts are examined in the selective coding. The categories were related to each other and the data and interviews were scrutinized to ensure the accuracy of the categories.

A series of steps should be taken in order to obtain the objectives:

The first step involves explaining the main story. The second step is to associate supplementary categories, using a paradigm. The third step is to associate categories to each other at a dimensional level. In the fourth step, the relationships need to be confirmed. The final step

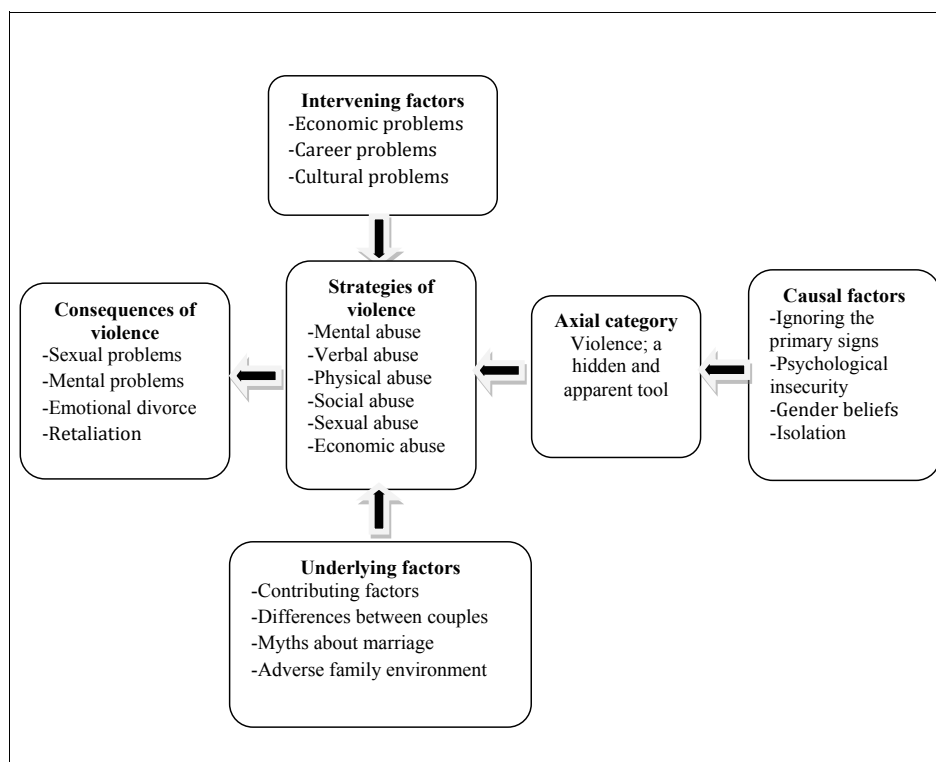


Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Factors Affecting Domestic Violence Against Women.



aims to complete the categories that need to be expanded. It should be pointed out that the researcher is allowed to go through the steps without any specific order (19).

As seen in the paradigmatic model, violence is defined as a hidden and apparent tool. Violence that has been addressed by various interviewees and there are several factors contributing to violence. Some of these factors include "ignoring the primary signs," "psychological insecurity" and "family issues".

The violent behaviors were divided into six categories as follows: psychological violence, verbal violence, physical violence, social violence, sexual violence and economic violence.

Unfortunately, violence is a major damage to the country, affecting the people negatively. If violence and aggression increase in the society, the conflicts will inevitably increase. Domestic violence is a particular type of violence that occurs in the family and results in physical, psychological and sexual harm. According to the results, violence against women is seen in all social, economic, racial and geographic dimensions. However, it is much more common in some groups. The conflicts often lead to physical violence and men beat up their wives. However, physical violence has decreased to a great extent over the past years. Fortunately, there are still cases of physical violence.

Watching porn movies, unwillingness to have sex and getting laid with different women are some examples of psychological violence. Controlling social relations, limiting the circle of family interactions and prohibiting women from education are some examples of social violence. In financial violence, women are not given pocket money and they are forced to quit their job. Meanwhile, using insulting words, shouting and bad-temperedness are examples of verbal violence. When women experience physical violence, they are usually beaten and threatened to be killed.

These violent behavior triggered many reactions in women. Some of the main consequences are sexual problems (decreased libido, sexual dissatisfaction), decreased psychological well-being (decreased self-esteem, anxiety, sleep disorder, low patience and anger), emotional divorce (spending excessive time with children, isolation, talking with others about marital problems, etc.) and retaliatory behaviors (not loving the spouse anymore, having affairs with other people).

An inappropriate marriage may have several consequences for both husband and wife. It may trigger violent behaviors and result in dissatisfaction. Different sexual needs, goals and expectations, age differences and educational level may damage the marital relationship. On the other hand, economic, social and cultural problems also affect the family and lead to false solutions (20-25).

Discussion

According to the results, violence against women depends on several factors, one of which is "ignoring the primary signs". This finding is in good agreement with that of numerous studies. It can be argued that real love is based on true and sensible emotions rather than adolescent illusions, imaginations and dreams. Ignoring the signs of possible problems is one of the most dangerous mistakes we make when marrying. We close our eyes to things that we do not want to see and so we end up dealing with several problems after marriage.

Women's psychological insecurity is another factor affecting the marital relationship. This finding is in good agreement with that of numerous studies. Many women suffer from physical and psychological disorders such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem

and self-confidence and negative thoughts. These disorders may contribute to violence. In fact, many women need to first put the blame on themselves because most of them face obvious signs in the first days of relationship. These signs may help them realize that they are not ready for marriage. Abusers are adept at making excuses for the inexcusable. They may blame their abusive and violent behavior on a bad childhood, a bad day, or even on you and the kids, the victims of their abuse. They may minimize the abuse or deny that it occurred. Often, they will shift the responsibility on to you: somehow, their violent and abusive behavior is your fault. Gender beliefs can also cause violence against women. This finding is in good agreement with that of numerous studies. It is also important to recognize that gender-based violence may be normalized and reproduced due to structural inequalities, such as societal norms, attitudes and stereotypes around gender generally and violence against women specifically. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge structural or institutional violence, which can be defined as the subordination of women in economic, social and political life, when attempting to explain the prevalence of violence against women within our societies. According to gender beliefs, men learn characteristics such as aggression, realism and independence. On the contrary, women are weak, passive and dependent. Meanwhile, it is commonly said that men's essential role is to work outside and make a living. Accordingly, women are tasked with taking care of the health of the family. These false beliefs affect the relationship between wife and husband throughout their lives (26-30).

An interviewee said: "My husband believed that men are responsible for the financial issues of the family. He always said that he does not understand what the problem is. He argued that he worked all day long to leads a happy life for his family." Another one said: "I bring money. I control everything. When I'm home, the whole home has to be calm." Moreover, one of the women said: "My mother believed that woman should take care of the family. Women need to be independent." Men and women internalize beliefs about femininity and masculinity according to gender roles. They need to recognize the standards, norms and expectations of the society.

If someone who is still dependent on his/her family gets married, violence is more likely to emerge. She/he cannot solve problems with the spouse and always tries to evade problems. This can be problematic for the couples. Inappropriate place for dating, being under pressure by others and poverty were factors that somehow caused violent behavior. This finding is in good agreement with that of numerous studies. In fact, the marriage in our culture is still based on traditional circumstances, making it last longer. Sometimes boys and girls see each other in the park, the street and even the university without their family knowing. Sometimes they get married soon after such meetings, but in most cases such marriages do not last long.

Interestingly, differences between the couples may either exacerbate or reduce the violence. This finding is in good agreement with that of several studies. The greater the differences between husbands and wives in terms of age, religion, interests, financial issues and education levels, the higher the risks. Ultimately, such difference may result in marital violence. There are no men or women who are completely similar to each other. In fact, the difference in taste between couples is normal.

Myths about marriage refer to firmly established beliefs about the role of women and men and family affairs, which greatly affect their relationships and help develop marital violence. This finding is in good agreement with that of several studies. The fanatical beliefs make



decision-making a difficult process for couples. In such cases, couples are more likely to face marital violence (31-33).

Moreover, family environment is an intervening factor that may affect violence. This finding is in good agreement with that of several studies. According to the interviews, most women were born to disadvantaged families. The results reveal that women involved in unsustainable marriages were brought up in abusive families. Otherwise, they would have not been involved in such relationships. When a baby is born, family members are the first people the baby interacts with. If family members show normal behavior, the baby will surely learn correctly.

However, the abnormal behaviors will have negative effects on the baby's subconscious. Accordingly, the culture effects should not be ignored. At an early age, mother is a role model for girls and even attempt to reflect mother's communicative features in their personal relationships. A subordinate mother has negative effects on her daughter. When she grows up, she finds it difficult to make big and risky decisions. One of the interviewees admitted that her mother did not teach her how to boost her self-confidence and she could not make rational decisions in challenging situations.

Female sexual dysfunction refers to persistent, recurrent problems with sexual response, desire, orgasm or pain which distresses the woman and strains the relationship with the spouse. Many women experience female sexual dysfunction (FSD) at some point and have some difficulties throughout their lives. Sexual satisfaction plays an important role in marital life. Multiple studies have proven that there is a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and satisfaction with marital interactions and relationships (34-36). Sexual problems lead to couples' dissatisfaction with the relationship. However, according to some counseling and psychotherapy sessions, it can be concluded that the main cause of abuses and marital dissatisfaction originate from sexual problems. One of the interviewees said: "When I needed to have sex, he refused to do so."

Emotional divorce is another consequence of violence against women. This finding is consistent with that of some studies. Problems occur between all the couples, but rational couples try to talk about those problems in order to find a solution. However, some couples cannot manage to have constructive talks, the consequences of which is various forms of violence. Accordingly, couples who meet in two separate cities will not naturally know the ins and outs of each other because such short meetings cannot ensure a stable relationship. Emotional divorce is a sort of a defense mechanism, or purely coping with a threat to one's emotional well-being. It can happen before or after the legal divorce, and psychologically, it might be more important than the actual signing of the divorce papers. For the spouse who divorces themselves emotionally prior to the legal divorce, it is a sort of an introduction to the inevitable end of the marriage. And for the spouse who divorces themselves emotionally after the divorce itself, it is a sort of a closure.

After the marriage, the couples spend less time for each other and avoid any intimate communications. Many of the couples who have been struggling with their relationship admitted that they were not spending time with each other just like they did in the past. That is why the tensions between couples rise and they find other things to entertain themselves with. It is also usually that spouse who will initiate the divorce. They will start to be distant, sometimes even cold. They resent the other spouse's continuous attempts to save the marriage, as they have given up on working on it. They just want the divorce to go

smoothly, and after years of trying to fix the marriage, they just want their own happiness now.

Men usually enjoy keeping everything under control physically, financially and socially. Such behaviors may result in emotional divorce and distrust (37).

Retaliatory behaviors can also contribute to domestic violence. Having affairs with people other than the spouse threatens the marital relationship and causes irreparable damages to the family.

There are also some other factors and concepts that affect marital relationship and contribute to domestic violence. The unstable economic conditions, career and organizational problems, unemployment or problems with the director and colleagues, abnormalities or increased violence as well as cultural problems can lead to domestic violence.

The economic problems and inflation can affect the family and complicate the decision-making process for the couples. In addition, unemployment, overdue payments, inability to meet the basic needs and difficult responsibilities make the couples lose patience and show aggressive behaviors. Many people attribute these issues to their spouse and children who have unreasonable expectations and do not understand the situation. They fail to cope with the crisis and leave it unresolved. One of the interviewees said: "My husband says he cannot fulfill my needs and expectations."

Career problems such as prolonged working hours, conflicts and organizational problems can affect the psychological well-being of the couples and pave the way for domestic violence. Moreover, improper education in terms of family and marriage can lead to inappropriate patterns and thoughts and increase the violence (38-44).

Conclusion

According to the results, the factors affecting violence against women need to be paid great attention. Most of the interviewees admitted that they had low self-esteem. In some cases, women complained that they were not supported by their own family and they had to face the most violent behaviors. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the role of parents in life. Personality is much easier developed in the childhood than in the adulthood. That is why children should be brought up in healthy environments. Given the fact that some families interfere in the lives of young couples, it is suggested that families be provided with adequate information. The family environment is another factor that should be taken into account. If the environment is prone to conflicts and cultural poverty, the child experiences the most harm. This environment can have irreparable consequences for the child in his/her later life.

Therefore, it is necessary to design and implement workshops in order to identify the differences between couples, the upbringing of children, marriage enrichment, promotion of adolescent skills and life skills. These measures may prevent domestic violence to a great extent. The couples need to participate in the counseling sessions before and after the marriage. It is necessary for families to receive information about the consequences of inappropriate marriages. Several economic, social, and cultural factors lead to violence against women. Sometimes women refuse to talk about their spouses' violent behaviors because they are supported by their families.

According to the results and interviews, violence against women is inclusive and it is irrational to ignore this issue. It requires a global attention. Therefore, legal remedies can be used to minimize the



domestic violence. The legal remedy cannot solely prevent this and this issue requires social reactions.

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