



The Iranian Mothers' lived Cooperation Experience During Covid-19 Pandemic

Neda Roshani ¹, Maryam Gholamzadeh Jofreh ^{2*}
Rezgar Mohammadi ³

1. PhD candidate, Department of Counseling, Faculty of Humanities, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran.

2*. Associate Professor, Department of Counseling, Faculty of Humanities, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran.

3. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Faculty of Humanities, Sahryar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sahryar, Iran.

Citation: Roshani, N., Gholamzadeh Jofreh, M., & Mohammadi, R. (2023). The Iranian mothers' lived experience of cooperation during covid-19 pandemic. *Journal of Woman Cultural Psychology*, 15(57), 31-44.
 DOR: [20.1001.1.29811287.1402.15.57.3.0](https://doi.org/20.1001.1.29811287.1402.15.57.3.0)

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 18.07.2023

Accepted: 03.09.2023

Corresponding Author:

Maryam Gholamzadeh Jofreh

Email:

maryam-jofreh@iauahvaz.ac.ir

Keywords:

Mothers' lived experience
Cooperation
Covid-19

Abstract

The present study aimed to explain mothers' cooperation experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research population included all Iranian mothers. The participants included 16 Iranian mothers living in Ahvaz whom were selected by purposive sampling as sample. The study was a qualitative phenomenology. The data were collected by in-depth interviews with open-ended questions and analyzed by Colaizzi's seven-step method. Finally, three main themes and nine sub-themes were obtained. The first main theme of marital harmony included (facilitation in household affairs, emotional support for each other, care during illness, financial and job support), the second main theme of kinship companionship included (mutual support with the family of origin, strengthening family relationships), the third main theme social empathy included (meeting material needs, meeting emotional and care needs, experiencing the joy of cooperation) were extracted. The results showed that there was the cooperation experience among women in the pandemic situation, both in the family center and on wider level of the society. Furthermore, the coincidence between the pandemic as a tension-causing event and a positive phenomenon such as cooperation could depict scenes of exchanging pure humanitarian experiences. In fact, cooperation was one of pure human experiences, whose place in the history of Iranian people has been known since the distant past, and now it is considered a part of the social and cultural heritage of this land.



Extended abstract

Introduction: In religious texts and ethical sources, cooperation means helping, supporting, and doing good deeds with each other's help. In fact, an individual sees another as themselves for a while during cooperation, effectively increasing solidarity and altruism. Furthermore, cooperation provides a moral logic that diminishes the suffering of vulnerable individuals from a disaster and supports them. With the outbreak of COVID-19 and the resulting emergencies, the term "cooperation" became more tangible, and the need to support and be supported was more emphasized than in normal conditions. Therefore, it is required to provide a comprehensive description of the support experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, considering the collectivist culture and values originated from the religious tendencies of Iranian society. In addition, supporting and helping each other in stressful and critical situations can build experiences with different semantic and emotional loads. Accordingly, the integration of the two words mother and cooperation was used in the present study as a close semantic intersection because the mother is associated with protection in Iranian culture. Therefore, the present study aimed to describe mothers' cooperation experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method: The research population included all Iranian mothers. The participants included 16 Iranian mothers living in Ahvaz whom were selected by purposive sampling as sample. The inclusion criteria were being a mother, having experience of cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic, consent to participate in research, and having the required cognitive literacy to share their experiences with researchers. The study was a qualitative phenomenology. The data were collected by in-depth interviews with open-ended questions and analyzed by Colaizzi's seven-step method. In order to ensure data credibility, Lincoln & Guba's trustworthiness criteria was used. Besides, the written text of the interviews was sent to a number of research participants to ensure that interview text matches with their expressed experience, which was also approved by the participants and considered one of the indices of the data credibility.

Results: The results indicated that three main themes and nine sub-themes were obtained. The first main theme of marital harmony included (facilitation in household affairs, emotional support for each other, care during illness, financial and job support), the second main theme of kinship companionship included (mutual support with the family of origin, strengthening family relationships), the third main theme social empathy included (meeting material needs, meeting emotional and care needs, experiencing the joy of cooperation) were extracted. The results finally showed that there was the cooperation experience among women in the pandemic situation, both in the family center and on wider level of the society. Furthermore, the coincidence between the pandemic as a tension-causing event and a positive phenomenon such as cooperation could depict scenes of exchanging pure humanitarian experiences.

Conclusions: The themes extracted from the present research showed that cooperation is a mutual exchange of material and emotional possessions at the family, kinship, and social levels. The manifested by cooperation and emotional support of spouses in household affairs, caring for each other in times of disease, and supporting each other in occupational and financial troubles, and further strengthened couple's relationship.



Furthermore, cooperation with the family of origin indicated the reliance of parents and children on strong kinship support. On the other hand, according to the long-standing tradition, helping those in need took on new dimensions, and meeting the material and non-material needs of the compatriots brought the joy of cooperation to participating mothers. This study showed that cultural teachings played a significant role in creating cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic. What made this situation more special and unique than other times was the difficult choice between cooperation in a critical situation and saving a life. The mothers' lived experience showed a selfless spirit for the benefit of social empathy, which is part of Iranians' religious and cultural learning. In fact, cooperation was one of pure human experiences, whose place in the history of Iranian people has been known since the distant past, and now it is considered a part of the social and cultural heritage of this land.

Author Contributions: Neda Roshani: Brainstorming about the topic, guidance for collecting data, content analysis, submitting and editing the article; Dr. Maryam Gholamzadeh Jofreh: Overall framework design, cooperating in content analysis and corresponding author; Dr. Rezgar Mohammadi: collecting data and compiling primary content.

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank all the people who guided and helped us along this path.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declared there is not any conflict of interests in the research.

Funding: A specific financial source such as a specific organization did not financially support this research.