



The Process of Construction and Formation of Maternal Identity in Early Marriage: A Grounded Theory Study

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Abstract

The present study was purposed to study the construction and formation process of maternal identity in early marriage based on the grounded theory. The statistical population included the female who married under the age of 15. The sample embraced 23 female based on the participants' saturation principle whom were selected via purposive sampling procedure. This study was with qualitative approach and grounded theory oriented. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview with open end questions and analyzed and categorized based on the grounded theory of Strauss and Corbin approach. After examining and categorizing the findings in three stages of open, central and selective coding, 350 open codes, 48 sub-categories and 11 main categories were obtained. Results of the research showed that maternal identity construction and formation process was conceptualized based on life without childhood identity and individual and cultural factors of marriage as causal conditions, social pressure leading to unavoidable life choices and basic challenges and problems as background conditions, mother learning patterns and acute crises in joint life as intervention conditions, changing the life path, incompatible problem solving and adaptive problem solving were as strategies and motherhood style and their life satisfaction and future outlook as a consequence.



Extended abstract

Introduction: Many girls and boys marry without the chance to exercise their right to choose their life partner. They are obligated to marriage at a young age. Alongside broader improvements in the overall economic situation, access to educational and employment opportunities, and urbanization, efforts have been made to reduce the prevalence of the early marriage. When people get married, they usually choose two roles in life: spouse and parent. The designated parent role is formed after the birth of children. A large part of women's feminine identity is tied to their fertility, as women rely on their maternal role in the family to define themselves and construct their identity fundamentally. In many cultures, motherhood is a key aspect of a woman's role, and not having children is personally, socially, and economically devastating. In the context of the role of a parent, a person must take on the responsibility of caring for and raising her children. However, a childless person, due to their lack of development, usually cannot perform this task properly. In this context, a childless person is a child who wants to support and care for another child. The role of a parent is a heavy-duty that requires experience, psychological preparation, and resources in various fields, and people in their youth and middle age are prepared to take on this role. Considering the mentioned situation, the present study was purposed to study the construction and formation process of maternal identity in early marriage based on the grounded theory.

Method: The statistical population included the female who married under the age of 15. The sample embraced 23 female based on the participants' saturation principle whom were selected via purposive sampling procedure. This study was with qualitative approach and grounded theory oriented. The data were collected through a semi- structured interview with open end questions and analyzed and categorized based on the grounded theory of Strauss and Corbin approach.

Results: After examining and categorizing the findings in three stages of open, central and selective coding, 350 open codes, 48 sub-categories and 11 main categories were obtained. Results of the research showed that maternal identity construction and formation process was conceptualized based on life without childhood identity and individual and cultural factors of marriage as causal conditions, social pressure leading to unavoidable life choices and basic challenges and problems as background conditions, mother learning patterns and acute crises in joint life as intervention conditions, changing the life path, incompatible problem solving and adaptive problem solving were as strategies and motherhood style and their life satisfaction and future outlook as a consequence.

Conclusions: The natural relationship that forms between mother and child as a result of pregnancy, childbirth, and breastfeeding is consistent with the empirical nature of women. In addition, to conflicts, the internal mental image of the family and society is also changing from the concept of motherhood. In examining the participants' responses and attitudes towards the first experience of motherhood, it was found that they expressed a mixed feeling of happiness and love along with fear. As if at the beginning of the path of fundamental questions about themselves, the correctness of their decisions, and their ability to face the issues ahead, they face a dual and ambiguous sense of fear and hope.

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