

CONTENTMENT ELEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEPRESSION WOMEN

ELEMEN KEPUASAN DALAM KONTEKS WANITA YANG MENGALAMI KEMURUNGAN

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Abstract

Nowadays mental health is one of the main issues in women or careerwomen. There are many factors highlighted by researchers and plenty of safety measures were considered to overcome this issue. In this research, we listed out some of the factors of depression among married women. These include economic factors, lack of communication, jealousy, and even outlook on religion. We dive into Islamic perspective as guidance for every woman afflicted. The elements that we called attention to are life balance, patience, optimism, self-serenity, and composure upon facing depression crisis. Qualitative interviews were carried out on four participants aged 30 to 50 years-old and N-Vivo 12.0 software was used to achieve the most accurate analysis whilst finding out the effects of depression trauma. Various negative and positive effects encountered by participants are found in this research. Undeniably, all individuals are being tested on their struggles to learn and improve themselves to grasp happiness and self-possession to pull off their married lives.

Keywords

Depression, Happiness, Women, Marriage, Islam.

1. Introduction

Most women in this world have their self-instinct, humane traits, and wanted to be loved and pampered by their loved ones. These are the desires and needs longing of depressed women to grasp happiness. The utmost goal for every married woman is to build a happy family. Yet there are so many breaches of marriage vows causing depression crisis among women. Referring to Faezah et.al (2020), contentment and happiness in marriage will lead to spectacular generations spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. Even though misunderstandings or conflicts might occur, they can be solved with wisdom (Eva Meizara Puspita Dewi and Basti, 2008). However, neglected wives who had been abused mentally and physically would feel like they do not deserve any sort of pleasures when their rights and needs are ignored, which leads to depression (Raikhan & Bushrah, 2021). Nowadays, mental health issues are the main topics raised and highlighted by society which affected women with careers or vice versa. Depression is one of the main topics discussed. There are many origins of depressions that we identified that will give poor impacts on women daily lives. Nevertheless, as Muslims, there are a few elements and guidance for women to live their lives in an accustomed manner, even though some of the problems they faced have happened for ages. This research hopefully contains the enlightenment for depressed women to live life to the fullest and get one's hands to achieve happiness.

2. Methodology

Qualitative method implemented in this research helped to produce one theory and abstracted analytics scheme from one process that is actions or interactions (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The desolation experience from marriage crisis was described as very distressing, whereby we conclude the research summary to expound on the process and experience shared by the research participants. Besides that, we dig into the participants' objectives and dreams of achieving happiness (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

These four participants are married women with problematic marriage backgrounds. The participants labelled as Participant 1 (R1), Participant 2 (R2), Participant 3 (R3), and Participant 4 (R4). The interview methods used are half-by-structures and observation. The participants aged around 30 to 55 years old. All the participants are employed with average monthly remunerations of RM2,500. However, one of them does not have a fixed income.

Data were run by Nvivo 12.0 software for more accurate analysis in identifying depression trauma produced by marriage crises. Demography shown in this paper comprises age, time of the marriage, economic level whether they are working or not, and the types of job of the husbands and wives. Questions raised to the participants are related to financial status, the communications method practiced by the husbands and wives, and the feelings of both partners (according to the wives) in terms of jealousy, and religious practice in their daily lives.

3. Results and Discussions

The research findings attempt to answer “What are the depression factors experienced by women in their marriage crisis?” and “What are the elements of fulfillment that women can use as guidance to tame depression symptoms?”

3.1 Depression factors among women in marriage crisis

There are four factors of depression in women with marriage crises based on the research findings. The main factor tabulated from this research are failures of communication attempts, financial status, jealousy, or envy, and finally, religious factor. The factors in depression women with marriage crisis tabulated based on Table 1 as per below.

Table 1: Depression Factors

Depression Factors	Descriptions
Failures of communication attempts	Unstable emotions (E1) *
	Hatred towards partners (E2) *
	Outrage (E3) *
	Neglected (E4) *
	Strong-willed (E5) **
	Husbands unaware of mistakes committed (E6) *
	Feelings and sentiments disagreement (E7) *
	Distressing feelings (E8) *
	Hiding feelings (E9) *
	Always feels intimidated (E10) *
	Pressured and depressed (E11) *
	Unable to express her feelings (E12) *
	Miserable and upset (E13) *
	Fully acceptance of fate (E14) **

	Persuade themselves (E15) **
Financial status	<p>Unable to make ends meet (K1) *</p> <p>Deficit of alimony (K2) *</p> <p>No fixed income (K3) *</p> <p>Dependent on monthly remunerations (K4) **</p> <p>Personal loans payment (K5) *</p> <p>Supports husbands' expenditures (K6) *</p> <p>Income from another source (K7) **</p>
Jealousy or envy	<p>Having an affair (C1) *</p> <p>Forbid to mingle with other people (C2) *</p> <p>Differences in opinion (C3) *</p> <p>Finding faults in others (C4) *</p> <p>Accused of cheating by husband (C5) *</p> <p>Disagreements (C6) *</p> <p>Too controlling by husband (C7) *</p>
Religion	<p>Reliance to God (I1) **</p> <p>Devoted and pious to God (I2) **</p> <p>Lack of religious knowledge (I3) *</p> <p>No guidance or support on religion (I4) *</p> <p>Superstitious beliefs (I5) *</p> <p>Pray (I6) **</p>

*Negative points

**positive points

3.1.1 Failures of communication attempts

There are 15 descriptions of failures of communication attempts. These are the highest extent encountered by the participants compared to the other causes of marriage crisis. Sub-descriptions of Outrage (E3), Neglected (E4), Distressing feelings (E8), Hiding feelings (E9), and Miserable and upset (E13), are the towering descriptions by the participants. These four participants responded with the same issues and concerns. Next, sub-descriptions of Unstable emotions (E1), Hatred towards partners (E2), Strong-willed (E5), Feelings and sentiments disagreement (E7), and Pressure and depression (E11) were faced by three participants. On the other hand, sub descriptions Always feel intimidated (E10) and Unaware of mistakes committed (E6) were faced by two participants. Sub-descriptions Unable to express their feelings (E12), Fully acceptance of fate (E14), and persuade themselves (E15) were shown by two participants. The last sub-descriptions were encountered by one participant.

Table 2: Failures of communication attempts

Sub descriptions	Research participants				N1
	R1	R2	R3	R4	
Unstable emotions (E1) *	/	/		/	3
Hatred towards partners (E2) *	/	/		/	3
Outrage (E3) *	/	/	/	/	4
Neglected (E4) *	/	/	/	/	4
Strong-willed (E5) **	/		/	/	3
Husband unaware of mistakes committed (E6) *	/	/			2

Feelings and sentiments disagreement (E7) *	/	/		/	3
Distressing feelings (E8) *	/	/	/	/	4
Hiding feelings (E9) *	/	/	/	/	4
Always feeling intimidated (E10) *	/	/			2
Pressure and depression (E11) *	/	/		/	3
Unable to express her feelings (E12) *		/			1
Miserable and upset (E13) *	/	/	/	/	4
Fully acceptance of fate (E14) **			/		1
Persuade themselves (E15) **			/		1
N2	12	12	8	10	
Total (*)	11	12	5	9	
Total (**)	1	1	3	1	

3.1.2 Financial responsibilities

The second descriptions are the responsibility and financial status of depressed women. Four participants reported Unable to make ends meet (K1), Deficit of alimony (K2) from the husband in terms of apparent or hiding alimony. Sub descriptions No fixed income (K3) and Dependent on monthly remunerations (K4) were faced by three participants in their daily lives. The other two participants are tied to Personal loans payment (K5). Next, Income from another source (K7) was applied by one participant. The findings are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Financial status

Sub descriptions	Research participants				N1
	R1	R2	R3	R4	
Unable to make ends meet (K1) *	/	/	/	/	4
Deficit of alimony (K2) *	/	/	/	/	4
No fixed income (K3) *	/		/	/	3
Dependent on monthly remunerations (K4) **		/	/	/	3
Personal loans payment (K5) *	/	/			2
Supports husbands' expenditures (K6) *	/	/	/	/	4
Income from another source (K7) **	/				1
N2	6	5	5	5	
Total (*)	5	4	4	4	

Total (**)	1	1	1	1	
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3.1.3 Jealousy or envy factors

The third theme in this research is jealousy or envy. There are seven sub-descriptions as per Table 4 below. The highest numbers recorded in jealousy are Forbidding to mingle with other people (C2), Differences in opinion (C3), Finding faults in others (C4), and Disagreements (C6) were faced by all four participants. However, at the same time, three of them faced Too controlling issues (C7) by their husbands. Two of the participants were stressed by being Accused of cheating (C5) *. Meanwhile, one participant's husband is Having an affair (C1) * with another woman. No positive points are described, and all of the descriptions are categorized as negative points.

Table 4: Envy or jealousy factors

Sub descriptions	Research participants				N1
	R1	R2	R3	R4	
Having another affair by husband (C1) *	/				1
Forbidden by husband to mingle with other people (C2) *	/	/	/	/	4
Differences in opinion (C3) *	/	/	/	/	4
Finding faults of wife by husband (C4) *	/	/	/	/	4
Accused of cheating by husband (C5) *	/	/			2
Disagreements (C6) *	/	/	/	/	4
Too controlling by	/	/		/	3

husband (C7) *					
N2	7	6	4	5	
Total (*)	7	6	4	5	
Total (**)	0	0	0	0	

4. The evolution process of contentment elements from the perspectives of depressed women.

The research findings show the process found from depressed women as per interview sessions:

4.1 First: Life Balance

All of research participants always dreamed of obtaining a spectacular life balance. The definition of life balance is from emotional perspectives, physical, material, and spiritual. Even though overwhelmed by the uncertainty of attaining all the life balance elements, achieving some of them were felt satisfying enough to themselves. By far, they are jeopardized by suffering and drowned by the need for happiness in their family. Abdul Aziz El-Quussiy (1986) stated that our mental health and life balance are synchronized to the sole purpose of our souls, only if we are being positive to our surroundings, it can bring us happiness. Examples of life balance that they aimed for are:

“I wish I can be pampered by my husband. I have never felt that romantic feelings. To me, that is one big honor. But what to do... I have never felt that. Every day I am being criticized, insulted...” (Interview with R1).

The painful feelings of R1 alongside her unbearable tears during the interview process.

“I feel so sad when he yelled and screamed at me in front of my kids, insulted me, he abused our kids physically just to let out his anger. During the period of our marriage, I have never felt so calm. I wish I can be like everybody else; I do not ask for much, I just want to feel loved.” (Interview with R4).

R4 cried whilst wiping her tears when describing her aching experience that she was left unappreciated.

“...I wished I can get some pocket money from my husband. But instead, he asked for money from me...” (interview with R2).

“Hmm...I felt sad when I remember the frustration and sufferings in my life with my kids, no alimony given by him at all. He even is the slave of drugs and gets enraged when he comes home...hurmmm..” (Interview with R3).

R3 smiled, but she wiped away her tears throughout the observation.

“...I wanted to get some surprises from my husband. He never celebrated my birthday; he did not even wish me Happy Birthday... I often get scolded at, insulted, all the time...” (interview with R1).

R1 distinctly welled up her tears during the interview.

4.2 Second: Patience

The problems and crisis faced, clearly shows that they are victims of abuse in marriage that leads to depression. This theory can be seen when only one participant (R4) faithfully accepted the matters that she endured all this while. Most of them go through their lives still in depressed minds. However, they (R1, R2, and R3) continue to keep their body and soul together with their children by their side and always keep on learning to accept the reality they think destined for them.

"...I will always accept whatever situations he put me in... I hope one fine day, he'll change..." (interview with R4).

The ignorance of her own rights by R4's audibly shows her patience with what happened in her marriage. (Observation R4).

"...I can't forgive him that easily, but I tried to endure it for the sake of this marriage and relationship..." (Interview with R1).

R1 shows an irritated look with her welling up tears. (Observation of R1).

"...I have fully accepted the fate destined for me and the challenges with a selfish husband. I'll always try to improve my relationship with my husband, hoping that he'll change his way and treatment towards me..." (Interview with R2).

"...I am trying to fully accept the actions that he did, but the heartache grows whenever I remember about it. But no matter what, I will try to improve myself..." (Interview with R4).

She wiped away her tears and gets all welled up again during the conference. (Observation R4).

"...It's not easy to be patient when he gives me so much agony..." (Interview with R1).

R6 shows resentment on her face. (Observation of R1).

"...How can I be patient, my heart is throbbing in pain, no cure to it anymore. But please pray for me to keep on surviving strong to get to that level of patience..." (Interview with R3).

R3 is a depressed woman who has been physically abused by her husband. However, she still persuades herself to keep on being patient about what has happened.

4.3 Third: Serenity of the soul

Serenity or peacefulness is one of the elements craved by them. Mind development spiritually and physically have to be balanced out so they will help produce happiness in the women and their family (Shuhairimi and Huzili, 2012). All the participants wanted to see their families swerved into happiness. They also know happiness would not come unless there are peace in their souls. They are the sole dependents and the guardians of their children; they do not want their kids to be neglected and live in sorrow after the marriage crisis. Their focus is on raising their children, equipping them with knowledge in schools, and giving them full attention and affection like other children of their age. They worked hard to make ends meet for the family. For example:

"... My children are my strengths, nothing else. No matter how sick I was, I will still wake myself up and make sure their necessities are fulfilled. That is also one of the peaceful feelings I have enjoyed, but not for long..." (Interview with R1)

R1 is a depressed woman due to marital abuse. She rose from her bed even though she was still in trauma and under hospital observations (Observation R1)

"...Whenever he is at his first wife's house, I feel so calm and relaxed..." (Interview with R2).

R2 is a second wife who was being controlled and exploited by her husband who is not working.

"...I feel at peace when I'm working. I have friends to talk to. But when the working hours ended, I feel depressed, wondering how else will he torture me..." (Interview with R4).

R4 worked hard doing her own business and works as a gardener in a school as her second job. Her salary could not accommodate her family financially. Her husband did not handle financial matters, he even abused her physically, which resulted in scars and swelling on her hands and face. At her workplace, she could talk to her colleagues and express her feelings.

"...When I sit by myself, I feel like I wanted to scream at the top of my lungs. I crave for a peaceful mind. I thought when he gets older, he will change, but that seems far-fetched..." (Interview with R3).

R3 has no issues financially, because she works, and has side incomes from her online business. Everything she does is for the sake of raising her children.

"...I always wondered how would it feels when I'm at peace..." (Interview with R1).

R1 is also an anxiety patient, she kept crying her eyes out. (Observation R1).

4.4 Fourth: Being optimistic

Depressed women must always be optimistic about themselves; however, the participants did not see the strengths behind their pain. They are distressed by the situation. They wanted to build optimism in themselves. They wanted to ensure the sacrifices they made turned into gaiety, joy, and gratefulness. Healthy minds and optimism will be born in souls that are ready to sacrifice themselves for wellness, believe among spouses, being satisfied with their lives, happy (al-farh), joyful (al-saadah), and always be grateful for what they have. These are the optimistic behaviors that uplifted them to always be positive and strong in running their daily routines no matter what the circumstances are in their surroundings. For example:

"... I just keep silent when he yelled at me. Sometimes the issues were not even worth to be fighting about..." (interview with R4).

R4 is a passive wife and soft-spoken (Observation R4).

"...He always slapped me. But I keep being strong and did not cry in front of him, even though sometimes I just want to burst my tears out..." (Interview with R3).

R3 withheld her tears from falling out of her eyes (Observation R3).

"...He dared to call the other woman in front of me, being affectionate. He rolled his eyes in anger at me. I buried my sadness, and keep my heads up... I keep on praying to Allah to detach any undescribable upset feelings in my heart." (Interview with R1).

R1 is a victim of a cheating and hot-tempered husband (Observation R1).

"...He picked some stuff from my house that I bought by myself and brought it to his first wife's house. I am deeply offended; I feel like I wanted to burst out my anger there and then but I kept on being strong and restrain myself from being sad..." (Interview with R2).

R2 is a second wife that must make ends meet in the family because her husband has no fixed income. (Observation R2).

5. Discussion

The discussion on the research findings of the research inquiries (1) What are the depression factors experienced by women in their marriage crisis (2) What are the elements of fulfillment that women could use as guidance to tame depression symptoms? The research findings are supported by various theories of previous researchers.

5.1 Reinforcing the happiness element from the perspective of depressed women

5.1.1 Failures in communication factors are the utmost challenge found in this research. Nonetheless, they are still making efforts and never give up even though their lives are unbearable. The instinct to achieve happiness always exist in their cognitions. Failures in communication made them not being able to express their feelings whenever they feel very saddened by the situations and only able to control their emotions by getting closer to Allah SWT, at the same time forbids them from being

depressed for so long. Rahim et al. (2019) also claimed that Islam has its approach *al-tafakkur* or realistic contemplation before surrendering oneself to mental health symptoms. Essentially participants did not realize they had the strength that they built by themselves to build up the happiness elements that they dreamed of all this while. The complaints from women are one of the responses that will awaken the emotional integrations that are sometimes able to fabricate their minds, feelings, and ability to connect that caused women to react lively based on their emotional stand (Gunarsah and Gunarsah (1991). Furthermore, Bill and Farell (2002) in their research stated that women tend to solve their problems along with unrelated issues, as an act of denial. Eva Meizara Puspita Dewi and Basti (2008) in their research summarised that wives usually chose to struggle in silence and give in to their husbands' behaviors. They always wanted to avoid being the cause of bigger crises upon unresolved issues as their children are always with them. These researchers also validated that women are inclined to do things that would consume their attention to get a peace of mind. Spouses are supposed to have unique ways of communicating with their partners, at the right time and a refreshing place to sit down and discuss (Cherni Rachmadani, 2013). Based on this research, life balance is very crucial and needed to overcome negative reinforcements on emotions and to build optimism in wives.

5.1.2. Financial responsibility is one of the challenges of depressed women. Raikhan and Bushrah (2020) research stated that poverty contributes to persecution issues in marriage. Incompetency and inadequacy of spouses in fulfilling responsibilities are the main cause. Despite that, the women in this research have the courage and strong will in carrying out the money matters in the family. This finding is almost the same as Anura et.al (2019) about a widow that was able to lead her family to better living conditions. One of the reasons is because of her stable remunerations and making more efforts for the sake of her children. Wan Anor (2014) found deteriorating financial and economic management is one of the common culprits of disintegration in family institution. Even though marriage happiness not only depends on money, it completes the necessities that we need to take accountability. Based on the finding, being patient gives a big and deep impact on women to conquer financial crises in family.

5.1.3 The participants suffer from heartache, hatred, and distress over their situations. Prolonged traumas gave negative impacts on the participants. Excessive jealousy of husbands is also one of the ultimate pressures that caused depression among women (Wan Anor & Risalshah, 2014). Women instincts loved being pampered, being loved, and being paid attention to. Most of them are unable to accept that as a test for them. There are too many negative points and no positive points at all arose from the observations made. They always remember the fights and disagreements they faced and almost all participants are running away from the problems that they faced. Rama Dhini Permasari and Hamda (2020) disclosed that all conflicts in marriage have solutions. Positive traits must be fostered to create an optimistic relationship that can be endured together. The negative and bad treatments from their partners make some of the participants decided to ask for a divorce from their partners. Nevertheless, they are granted by Allah the highest level of patience, that they abide by to protect their marriage. In Al-Quran, surah at-Thalaq, sentence no. 6 states "*Place your wives with a place to live according to your ability and do not trouble them to narrow their hearts*". This sentence explains the importance of being respectful to wives and steering clear of the hardships and prolonged sadness in marriage.

5.1.4 Getting closer to the Creator will blossom peaceful feelings in the participants. Performing obligatory prayers to Allah, fasting, and praying to God to award them inner strength made them feel much closer to God. There are inner problems that they have in themselves that can be solved in a good manner if they are ready to face what might happen next in calmness. Dharatun Nissa (2017) shows that one strategy that can be done is a spiritual practice. This is supported by Nur Anifatul Aliyah (2014) that strategies based on religious conduct play an important role in fully believing and being dependent on God's plan. Spiritual approaches are the best way of handling pressures among women in marriage crisis. Our findings are adjacent to experiments by Fariza (2005): implementing spiritual methods to lessen the pressure in effective ways.

In our findings, every participant's challenge to live their lives varied from one to another. Life-sharing with their spouses had been a real challenge. Agitations and life turbulence that they are going through taught them to be strong-willed women. Positive outlooks in life and service advisors especially from relevant agencies could help them to make turns in their lives and families in working out best solutions. They were certainly easily exposed to negative thoughts, sadness, pressure, loneliness, and needed a place to express their feelings. Support and high empathy from family members will lessen their burdens. At the same time, expressing themselves can lift the unbearable emotions from their minds, so they would not produce negative effects on themselves, their children, family, and society because they also deserve the right to own happiness in their lives.

6. Conclusion

In *Wawasan Kemakmuran Bersama 2030*, the Social Capital Indicator targeted the People's Health Index where one of the strategic plans is to build a society with positive achievements in life. Women are one of the targeted polarity management. Therefore, the target of basic implementations are to make sure people can enjoy a standard of living accordingly. This includes mental health and the importance of living healthy daily lives. Furthermore, the *Keluarga Malaysia Well-Being Index 2019* reported the score for Johor is around 7.85, at a medium level. If this problem goes unresolved, it will badly affect the well-being index into low scores.

Not a single woman in this whole world is spared from having problems and difficulties in their life, whether because of marriage or career. However, the methods or ways of overcoming the problems must be taken into considerations so the problems can be handled in good manners. In closing, the research participants have been guided with pieces of advice based on Islamic perspectives on how to live to the fullest and are convinced that for every problem, there is a solution.

Finally, depressed women, are looking for solutions especially when they faced problems for far too late. Inner happiness is crucial because it is a human nature to grasp for serenity and happiness.

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