Research Paper

Assessing the educational status of children of divorce in adulthood; a qualitative study

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Abstract

Aim: This research aimed to seek out the educational status of children of divorce in adulthood. This is a qualitative study based on grounded theory. The participants included 18 children of divorce in Tehran, 10 years after their parents' divorce, who were selected as key informants using purposive sampling method. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Data rigor was confirmed through member check and recoding by specialists. Open, axial, and selective coding were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that the educational status of children of divorce has both positive and negative outcomes in the two dimensions of driving force in study progress and motivation.

Keywords: Divorce, Educational status, Children of divorce, Adulthood.

Introduction

Happiness, health, level of intelligence, and high-risk behaviors can all be influenced by a child's early development (Morrison, et al., 2014). Parent-child relationships during the developmental years of children affects not

only their current relationships with peers, instructors, partners, and others, but also their future interpersonal relationships. Parents have a major contribution to children's mental health, social adjustment, academic performance, and even job choices and future success (Marz & Jack, 2013; Sharon quah, 2018). Better parent-child relationship is the most essential protective factor because it occurs in the earliest and longest stage of life (Thornton, et al., 1995). One of the leading causes of behavioral disorders in children and adolescents is inadequate parenting, which includes minimal involvement in the child's life, impatience, poor supervision, and inappropriate punishment (Racz & McMahon, 2011). Research on the impacts of parental divorce on children frequently focuses on whether divorce impacts children's post-divorce adjustment, and if so, why and how.

Despite tremendous progress made in this field, empirical evidence on the impact of divorce on children is conflicting, with a wide range of judgments about the intensity, chronicity, and consequences of parental divorce on child's adaptability (Lansford, 2009). On the one hand, evidence reveals that divorce has a permanent and destructive effect on children, and that children face years of severe, long-term stress, particularly in terms of psychological well-being and social interactions (Amato, 2010; Hetherington, 2006; Sun & Li, 2002; Wolfinger, 2005). On the other hand, research demonstrates that divorce has no quantifiable long-term impacts on children, and that most children adjust well to their parents' divorce after the early affects (Kelly, 2000; Kelly & Emery, 2003; Amato & Afifi, 2006; Smith-Greenway & Clark, 2017).

Method

The current study was qualitative and based on grounded theory.
 Semi-structured interview questions on the mental status of children of divorce were developed and discussed in meetings with researchers, professors, and experts in the first phase of the study, based on review of literature, to ensure the accuracy of their content and adequacy, as well as the content of the interview and its questions. Consensus was reached, allowing specialists to assess the mental health of children of divorce based on the content accuracy and adequacy of the questions. Semi-structured interviews were employed in this study to cover all the vulnerabilities of children of divorce and to obtain similar types of data.

Children of divorce in Tehran who had been separated from their parents for ten years took part in the study. The purposive sampling method was used to interview 18 persons. The sampling was carried out until data saturation, i.e., no new information was gathered during the interviews.

Systematic method was used to analyze the content of the interviews, conceptualize and extract the categories. In grounded theory, the systematic research design stresses the use of data analysis procedures such as open, axial, and selective coding.

Following the coding, it was necessary to determine whether the researchers' theoretical explanation is meaningful from the participants' perspective, as well as to ensure the accuracy of their events and sequence in the theory process. To this end, four participants were presented with the analysis results and the process of reaching the diagram.

Results

The goal of this study, as previously said, was to look at the educational status of children of divorce in adulthood.

Among the available methodologies, Strauss and Corbin (2011) employed the systematic approach, which is used to present a model with a systematic model as a paradigm model, and data are evaluated in three levels of open, axial, and selective coding.

Table 1. Axial coding to develop a model of educational status of children of divorce in adulthood

Main axis	Status	Pose	Final codes
	Progress engine	Positive	Having a specific purpose in life
			The power of individuality to choose the right path
			Positive attitude towards yourself and your abilities
			Progress in personal, social, professional areas
			Master the environment and change the status quo
			Being autonomous and self-reliant
		Negative	Anger, proving yourself to others
			Lacking navigators and guides
			Lacking proper social status
			Escape from a previous life situation
			Repeating negative experiences
			Worrying about the evaluations and expectations of others
			Relying on the judgment of others to

		make important life decisions
Educational status		Continuing education due to the support of the foster parent's family
		Encouraging and accompanying friends and relatives
		Having a sense of continuous growth for progress and development
		Studying for employment and material motivation
		Considering yourself as a growing creature
		Setting an example of a successful custodial parent in education
	Positive	Independence, having motivation for independence and continuing education
		Discovery and intuition in the shadow of studying and studying science to learn more
Study motivation		Feeling responsible for continuing your education
		Continuing education to achieve inner goal and motivation
		Fear of inappropriate social status
		Disappointment with the support of others and feeling alone in life
	Negative	Escaping from life-liberating situations and mental and intellectual preoccupation
		Having insignificant goals

Discussion and conclusion

Ample evidence from many parts of the world has revealed a fundamental change in the value and normative systems of societies towards family. Marriage has become an increasingly fragile institution in various forms and intensities and with different effects and consequences in different countries of the world.

The shifting pattern of divorce rates in different nations reflects the changing social structures on this global phenomenon. Not only is it required to determine the causes and elements influencing it, but the long-term impacts on children of divorce are always a concern. Furthermore, Iranian society has seen significant and quick changes in several elements of its social life in recent decades. Transformations in social habits and behaviors in the area of marriage and family are one of the most significant components of these

changes. Among the most important changes are a decrease in marriage rate, an increase in the age of marriage, a rapid increase in the divorce and divorce statistics, i.e. the factors that will weaken the foundations of this important social institution. Children of divorce experience a variety of issues, including low self-esteem, a greater risk of child abuse, higher divorce rates as adults, interpersonal interaction issues, and a higher frequency of mental disorders as adults. Although divorce is sometimes the greatest option for a broken marriage, and it is possible that children of divorce will follow in their parents' footsteps, the negative consequences of this phenomenon for their future are more obvious.

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