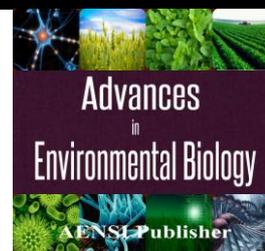




AENSI Journals

## Advances in Environmental Biology

ISSN-1995-0756 EISSN-1998-1066

Journal home page: <http://www.aensiweb.com/AEB/>

## “A Survey on Challenges, Changes and Marital Satisfaction of women during the Transition to Parenthood”

<sup>1</sup>Zahra Jahan Bakhshi, <sup>2</sup>Dr. M. Esmaeili, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Naser Yousefi and <sup>4</sup>Dr.Hossein Keshavarz Afshar

<sup>1</sup>P.h.d student in counseling University of Allameh Tabatabaei.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, University of Allameh Tabatabaei.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, University of Kurdistan.

<sup>4</sup>Behavioral Sciences Research Center, baghiyatallah University of medical science, Tehran, Iran.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 15 June 2014

Received in revised form

8 July 2014

Accepted 4 September 2014

Available online 20 September 2014

#### Keywords:

Marriage, Transition to Parenthood Stage, Challenges and Changes.

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The birth of a child creates a significant change in the family system, and will reset the family system. Couples become parents. Parents experience new roles. The birth of the child affects both parents individually and separately; meanwhile their marital relationship has also been influenced. Many parents find joy and happiness in their baby. But at the same time they face meaningful and significant challenges associated with caring for a baby. **The research purpose:** What challenges and changes do women experience during the transition to parenthood stage, and how is the marital satisfaction in this transition to parenthood?. **Methods:** In this study, the semi-structured in-depth method of interviews has been used with 30 women. The sample of the study was Primiparous women from Tehran. The purposive sampling criterion was used selecting among primiparous women whose infants' age range was up to 36 months. They came to Zainab Bakhtiari Clinic in 15th region in Tehran. The research theory was founded on the basis of input criterion. **Conclusion:** This study showed that women had positive and negative experiences in the transition to parenthood stage and all of them described the challenges and problems associated with pregnancy and newborn care. Identity and role overload, the high role conflict, getting too much involved in the role and the role conflict were among the main challenges and changes in women's roles in the transition to a parent. These inevitably affected their marital satisfaction. 17 participants expressed stories of getting closer to their spouses and that of reaching a new level of sophistication in their marital relationship and 3% of women reported no change in their marital satisfaction. And 3 cases of severe crisis and 7 cases of medium crisis, and short term decline in marital satisfaction were reported; while the transition to parenthood challenged the couple, but eventually it did not seek to hurt the marital satisfaction among all women.

© 2014 AENSI Publisher All rights reserved.

**To Cite This Article:** Zahra Jahan Bakhshi, Dr. M. Esmaeili, Dr. Naser Yousefi and Dr.Hossein Keshavarz Afshar., “A Survey on Challenges, Changes and Marital Satisfaction of women during the Transition to Parenthood”. *Adv. Environ. Biol.*, 8(12), 810-816, 2014

### Introduction and statement of the problem:

Becoming a parent is one of life's important events since that would require a change and reconstruction of the couple relationships. Birth of the first child is considered as a time of joy and excitement. But this can be a complex blessing because the transition to parenthood demands a heavy work, fatigue and confusion about the roles of parents and relations [13]. Many parents find fun and joy in their baby [16] but still face significant challenges as demands for baby care. In addition, the birth of their first child requires a lot of adaptation in couple's life that would include changes in lifestyle, preferences, and relationships [28].

These major life changes can be stressful. Parents are facing increasing new demands in their lives, along with the loss of surrounding support from friends and colleagues, Among the aspects that many couples mention, which brings in an overall lifestyle change, includes the overwhelming focus on the child, increasing the need for organizing, not having enough time to be together, and former inactivity and lifestyle changes, lack of sleep during the first months and financial problems describes the challenges that a number of couples face [3]. Also, couples may face changes in their attitudes about themselves. During the transition to parenthood, loss of self-esteem for young mothers during pregnancy and six months after birth, and for fathers six months to eighteen months after birth occurs, before returning to baseline [3] the change in self-esteem and identity may result in the sense of depression that sometimes parents may experience.

**Corresponding Author:** Zahra Jahan Bakhshi, P.h.d student in counseling University of Allameh Tabatabaei.

Several studies also show a decrease in marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood [16]. These studies show that the transition to parenthood often causes a decrease in marital satisfaction [21,25]. This results in different ethnic groups and cultures is repeated [24] found that 45% of men and 58% of women experience decrease in marital satisfaction in between and postpartum eight months pregnancy.

Gottman and Notarius found that approximately 67% of couples in their sample experienced a decline in satisfaction in transitional period. However, this decline was experienced primarily by mothers [16].

Also imbalance divided share of the work tasks between parents after childbirth may have had an impact on their performance [3]. More specifically, the mothers' expectations met or not met about the father's involvement in child care was associated with satisfaction with the relationship between the two couples [3].

Doss, Rhoades, Stanley, and Markman [11] showed in their research that mothers experience the weakening of satisfaction in the relationship, the intensified problem, the weakening conflict management, negative communication, the loss of intimacy in your relationship after childbirth. However, the important finding of the study is that a significant number of parents do not experience changes in satisfaction during the transition period. Some couples even experience the increase in satisfaction [1]. They concluded that 10 percent of parents experience quick decline in marital satisfaction, 34% consistent reduction, 35% no change and 21% increase in marital satisfaction experience. Many women did not report a decrease in marital satisfaction.

Meta-analytic study of Twenge, Campbell, and Foster [30] showed that women more than men experience the decline in marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood.

The majority of longitudinal studies on the transition to parenthood reported slight amount of decline in marital satisfaction (Kluwer, 2010) The studies were conducted in countries such as Germany [14], Holland [20], and England [27].

Huston and Vangelisti [18] showed that there is no difference between childless couples and those who have children in marital satisfaction.

Dew and Wilcox [9] reported that the decline in marital satisfaction does not happen for all new mothers and for some of them their marital satisfaction have remained constant or even increased.

Looking at the available related literature we would witness a kind of confusion and inconsistency in the findings of studies which would be due to the complication of the transitional period to parenthood stage for the couple. All of these studies have been conducted in relation to western culture and American couples and women and generalization of the results to Iranian couples and women is not being void of difficulties. Thus, the impetus was created for the researcher to find out how the real transitional path to the stage of parenthood for women in Iran is, considering the Iranian culture and the importance and emphasized role of motherhood in raising children and the strength of the family. Also according to the teachings of Islam children can have a positive impact in the lives of their parents. According to Islam, the children are the pillars of the family. In the words of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) who had a positive attitude towards the children. In the Islamic sayings, bringing and raising children has seriously been recommended. In some interpretations it has been said that having children is a family blessing. And the happiness of the people is to have a child or children that are similar in behavior and appearance to their parents.

Therefore, the research conclusions done in other countries and cultures can not be extended to Iranian women. In addition, many of the existing researches on the transition to parenthood phase used quantitative methods and statistics. But the conducted researches in this field have not led to deep, rich descriptions. Thus, for learning more about women's experiences and completing the previous quantitative research, qualitative research methods were used to identify the perception of women through their new roles and challenges of parenthood and marital satisfaction in their new season of life.

Also, so far, no study that examines the challenges and changes in marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood stage has been conducted based on Iranian and Islamic culture. This study sought to examine the fact that what challenges and changes are there at this stage? And how marital satisfaction is like in the course from the Iranian mothers' perspective?

#### *Participants:*

30 women who came to Zeinab Bakhtiari health center in 15<sup>th</sup> district in Tehran were selected by purposeful sampling and interviewed. Purposive sampling led to selecting respondents points out that the maximum possible information about the study was provided as the answers for the research questions [8].

The criteria for the selection of mothers in this study included:

- 1- The mothers were primiparous women.
- 2- It didn't pass more than three years since the birth of their first child.
- 3- Their husbands had not addictions or physical-mental health problems.

The age range of the women was from 18 years to 38 years. Their average age was 25 and the average length of their marriage four years and the minimum duration of their marriage was one year and over 7 years. The majority of mothers' newborn baby was a boy.

#### *Data Collection Methods:*

The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with mothers at the health center Zainab Bakhtiari. The first step in data collection was to build in confidence. This means that they were told that the interview was only for research to help mothers and future mothers to deal with the challenges and changes they will be facing. Each participant was comfortable with the goal of establishing a dialogue. Using qualitative methods, a set of questions was used. These were some of the questions presented to the participants giving them freedom to talk about her interests and important matters.

During the data collection process, the researcher tried to be faithful to the attributed leadership and her openness of the women who took part in the interview. This means that the interviewer got involved in the stories and experiences of mothers and giving birth to their children.

#### *Thematic Analysis and Interpretation:*

In the process of in-depth interviews the focus was on building relationships and conducting the interviews. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and stresses, excitements, emotions and other non-verbal elements of the interview were recorded. With the transference of the data on paper, the research got involved listening to the interviewees. And so it went by means of the analysis and interpretation.

After that the important matters were highlighted. Stories describing patterns or important concepts were identified from the obtained data. When the concepts were made, the researcher was looking to find cases and negative stories that did not fit the pre-determined old patterns. Texts were read over and over again until different concepts were discovered. The aim was to become familiar with the cases and different ways of thinking about data using different methods. The underlying method used was field-theory approach (Glaser). This means that the researcher's observations transcribed are always directly shaped. During the process of transcribing the text on paper, the data were corrected continuously and encoded and was used again. The interview transcripts were read line by line seeking new meaning and issues without fixed classification. To ensure internal consistency of the internal parts of the text, which was classified as a special code it was compared with the new sections of the text to make sure that both show the same concepts.

#### *Results:*

This study showed that the transition to parenthood affects couples in different ways, and a decrease in marital satisfaction was not a common phenomenon among women participating in the study. 30 mothers participating in this research examined their communication with their wives during pregnancy and after the transition to parenthood. Participants were asked about marital satisfaction after child birth. 17 people among them were very satisfied. they reported improvement in their relationships. Three of women reported no change in their marital satisfaction. And 3 cases of severe crisis and 7 cases of No change in Marital Satisfaction were reported.

All participants considered the transition to parenthood as important changes in personal and interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, the collective opinion was that the parenthood is considered as tough work but the effort is worthwhile.

#### *Happy Women:*

17 women among the interviewees in regard to marital satisfaction questions answered as very satisfactory. And they were supported practically and emotionally during the transition to parenthood by their spouses. For example, one of the women, who had four years of marriage, described this joint marital life stage as an effort toward a goal. She knew her husband as someone responsive and helpful, who tried to assess and satisfy her needs in the course of her life. And her husband had supported her during pregnancy. She mentioned this stage as a collaborative team working in the field of child care and household chores. All of these women considered their husbands' participation in housework, child care, and emotional and practical support as an important factor and their belief was that their husbands cared a lot about them and the newborn children. Among participants who had claimed that their marital satisfaction is high, some of the participants were surprised at their spouses' paying attention to their roles as concerned parents and their emotional support from their spouses was more than what they expected. For example, one of them was saying the last two years of their marriage her husband tried hard to communicate with others while it was difficult for him to do so easily: "He really expressed deeply his positive feelings to me during pregnancy and loved me."

Participants also spoke of marital commitment in this course, And counted the new-born baby as a common bond.

In general, women described practical support as food preparation, washing dishes and clothes, and Emotional support of their husbands is expressed as their waking up at night ,soothing and care for their baby. Meanwhile, The husbands of these women were in positive relationships constant interaction with their babies and with them and instilled in them hopes for the future. The spouses of the group participants re-ensured their

marital obligation to them. These women had positive relationship with their spouses and there were increased feelings of belonging and shared tasks.

#### *The Increase in Marital Satisfaction:*

17 participants of the interviews were having marital satisfaction entering the transitional phase of parenthood. Although the women had numerous physical and emotional problems, such as fatigue, loss of physical intimacy, lack of togetherness time, they said that entering into parenthood phase has increased their marital satisfaction and these 17 mothers considered the motherhood experience as constructive helped them improve their relationships. For example, a 19-year-old mother with 22-month-old infant's mother said: "I usually do the majority of housework but if I wanted my husband to help me, a helping hand was offered to me. Even though I knew that my primary job is to perform such tasks. The interviewee thought that the main task of a wife is to take care of her house her husband as marriage commitment.

One of the participants stated: "Everything was easier than what I previously thought." She believed that their relations were improving and were going to get better. Women in this group of parents considered the parenthood stage as the opportunity to learn and know and also do more important things in life. For example, a 28-year-old woman who had a three months child suggests to new mothers to abstain from fighting for the trivial matters because they have more important jobs to perform. Assuming the new responsibilities would cause the couples forget their helplessness and step forward to perform their new tasks. Although the participants' sexual intimacy, times shared with their spouse were lost, However, they enjoyed doing new things and new duties as a family and thankful to the support, care and positive strengthening and supporting feelings towards one another, especially the husbands.

The women in these groups stated having a baby as an encouragement for women to express their needs and feelings to their husbands.

#### *No change in Marital Satisfaction:*

Seven of the interviewee participants did not report any changes in marital satisfaction. Although these women as all participants have had positive experiences, they expressed challenges related stories of parenthood stage. For example, a woman of thirty Years enjoys being practically supported by the family, especially when her mother came to their house and undertook the responsibility of taking care of the baby when both spouses went to work. This mentioned participant was satisfied before pregnancy. After her parenthood phase the same situation was to continue for her. Although this group of participants faced with the challenges and changes in their lives, these challenges were adjusted with the hope to become the parents. So they could remain satisfied same as before.

#### *Decline in Marital Satisfaction:*

Three of the participants reported a decrease in marital satisfaction. However, only three of the 3 interviewees showed critical dissatisfaction in the transition to parenthood. Change in identity and discrepancy of roles became the causes of challenge in the couples' relationships and three others expressed a modest decline in their marital satisfaction. Most of the decline in marital satisfaction occurred prior to birth of the new-born baby. These participants, in the first year of their marriage, were suddenly faced with an unexpected pregnancy. And the decline in marital satisfaction had begun from their honeymoon and they were unhappy about the priority of housework and overall sexual satisfaction of these 3 women was affected by the transferring to the parenthood stag.

One of the reasons that these women listed was that trivial things have become very crucial and delicate to them. For example, one of them mentioned that she became extremely angry when her husband did not clean the utensils at dining table after eating or did not clean the bathroom. They expected more attention from their husbands after the long care and attention of baby that was due and they complained that their husbands did not participate in the household responsibilities and they were always tired. Among the causes of the decline in marital satisfaction were unwanted pregnancy, inability to resolve the challenges and concerns about the health of infants. Women felt loneliness, despair, augmented conflict. Several of them expressed the changing of the identity and uncertainty in their husbands' respective roles and responsibilities of being a father. These women also were the heavy burden of traditional gender expectations in the family.

#### *First few Months of Exhaustion:*

Mothers used many different words to describe the first few months of pregnancy. Some of them are pretty bad, so unexpected, stressful and unrealistic and for five of these interviewees were facing a major challenge when feeding the baby. One of these concerns was defined as when doctors at the hospital said your baby is less than normal, and encouraged me to take more care of my baby's diet. Many of them spoke of the heavy amount of the tasks of housekeeping burden. For example, a woman of 26 years was speaking of the amount of clothes that should be washed every day. Others were involved were in physical signs of postpartum which interfered

with their roles of parenthood. The others were suffering from postpartum depression. In fact, half of the participants had some emotional problems. For example, one of them said: "I wanted to sit and cry for no reason, and trivial matters bothered me, I was tired, I felt as if I'm losing my sanity."

#### *Common Challenges:*

In general, challenges expressed by the women in this study were as follows:

Almost all women described fatigue, lack of leisure time and decline in the time spent with her husband and his company was one of the major challenges. Also some of them mentioned the changes in lifestyle such as sleeping time, sexual activity, financial issues, social activities and relationships with family and friends and less time to deal with the as the challenges of their lives. Division of household labor and other issues concerning children care was also one of their major challenges.

#### *Discussion:*

Transition to parenthood has been studied extensively in psychology and sociology [29]. The majority of these studies is quantitative and concluded that the transition to parenthood and marital satisfaction decreases [21]. This study took a different approach using the method of deep interview transcription and sought to discover how the women in the transition to parenthood experience their lives. The result of this study emphasizes the ways that the transition to parenthood affects on marital satisfaction, and rich descriptions of changes and challenges faced by these mothers are provided.

This study showed that the transition to parenthood is a time of challenge and change for couples. In the light of family systems theory [6], the transition to parenthood highlights the complexity of family relationships. For example, almost all women reported that extraordinarily their husbands during pregnancy and after that have been were careful observers and supportive to them and some of them reported even signs of improving relations. However, the coordination in regard to relationships in the transition to parenthood phase, do not prevent the tensions and conflicts like spending time together and doing the Household tasks. In addition, the women who spoke of their husbands as being supportively active during pregnancy, Later were annoyed because their husbands did not wake up when the baby was crying at night and their husbands spend a long time away from them because they were busy working outside. The marital relationship during the transition to parenthood stage, despite the enjoyment, it is highly complex and dynamic. According to Cox, Paley, Burchinal, and Payne [7], the birth of the first child will cause the family system to be re-organized. The participants in the study were involved in the new roles of parents and gaining a new identity. Therefore, they faced challenges in the process of reorganization. For example, many of them believed that their role is to provide care for the child and the family. When you talk about household chores, two of them spoke of taking on more responsibilities because of the expectation that was expected from them. Even one of the participants when dividing the caring task responsibilities of the baby among themselves felt guilty. She said: "I can not say for a long time while my husband is taking care of my baby." One of them also stated that she is the only one who can provide the best care for their baby. This finding is consistent and co-coordinated with previous results of the studies conducted by Cowan and Cowan [4] with a strong emphasis on the role of women is motherhood.

The family system has been re-organized and has reflected complexity of new roles and new identities in the marital relationship. In addition, the transition to parenthood phase makes both family parties involved. For example, one of the participants felt more accepted by her husband's family and the other women expressed the actual care provided by parents. After the transition to parenthood phase, they had an increased contact with large families (Markman, Duncan, & Storaasli). So getting along with family networks help new parents in adaptation to the new conditions.

When the pregnancy was unwanted some mothers talked about the lack of readiness to accept the responsibilities of parenthood. Their view point holds that parenthood restricts their freedom and autonomy [30]. Perhaps pointing out the perspectives about the job of the mothers and the ideals in cultural attitudes about mothers may show us a great change in the ideas about being a great mom [10]. Many of the women under study were ready to return to work after childbirth. For example, one of the women participating in the interview said that she needed to stay hours away from home at work to feel alive and useful.

The family systems show equifinality. It means the ability to get to the goal through various methods. In this study many of them discussed on the breast feeding of the baby and its challenges which faced them with choosing different methods in creating successful caring relationships. All women tended to take care of their babies in the best manner but they managed achieving it in different ways.

After more than 50 years, researches have examined the transition to parenthood and reported a constant decline in marital satisfaction [5,9]. These early studies [12,22]. Reported crisis in the marital relationship during the transition to parenthood phase, However, later studies warned about a significant decrease in marital satisfaction does not happen for the majority of couples [1].

Today investigators believe that the transition to parenthood stage represents a chapter of married life that the couples experience important changes but temporary in the quality of their relationships [21]. In line with

contemporary research, this study also showed that marital satisfaction is influenced by the transition to parenthood, and also there are positive attitudes toward marital satisfaction. And parents engaging in household chores and child care expressed reduced tensions between couples which is consistent with research findings of Levy-Shiff [23]. The women in this study who reported marital dissatisfaction that their pregnancy was unintended; therefore, the importance of planning for pregnancy is emphasized to have marital satisfaction. These findings are consistent with a study by Lawrence [21]. And also women who were pregnant early or not long after their marriage were unhappy with their parenthood because at that time didn't have the opportunity to catch up with her husband and new life and the addition of a third person made their problems more severe.

Another challenge for women was the lack of time together with their husbands and in this way the opportunity for their communication and emotional intimacy in their lives was limited. It was the dissatisfaction in marital relations. Almost all the women in this study reported a lack of leisure time together with their husbands. And seven of them were referred to this as a problematic factor.

Dew & Wilcox [9] concluded that religion can prevent the decline in marital satisfaction during the transition to parenthood. Specifically, religious teachings give additional meaning to being a mother and religious attendance and social support provides social networks and maternal support. The women described expressed how their faith has helped them in taking challenges. The women considered praying to the superior power of the human as a factor to keep children safe. The role of religion in the transition to parenthood seems to make a positive difference in the lives of women. One of the findings was that all women during pregnancy and after that appeal more to religious matters, and understand the majesty of God's creation and the Lord's love to her. They declared that they were trying to make sure to read the Quran daily and do their religious practice and prayer in their daily schedule and to keep away from some of the resentful and wrong doings as much as possible, and even some of them highlighted their participation in religious ceremonies.

Sexual intimacy decreased in effect by the transition to parenthood. This decrease is due to physical weakness, fatigue, or doubts about the onset of sexual activity after a long absence sexual intercourse and pain associated with it and less companionship and physical contact with her husband because of the fear of re-pregnancy. This reduction is a major change in their relationship with their husbands, leading to the loss of their emotional and sexual intimacy. Women under study reported less on the content of how they managed the sexual challenges they faced and it because It was not easy for them to tell the sex talk with others and talk about their sexuality. Unfortunately, the husbands also were damaging solving their shared problem and prevented emotional and sexual intimacy. In general, the women who honestly recited their needs and problems to their husbands, instead of pretending that everything is fine had more marital satisfaction and were better able to cope with the challenges and changes in the course of parenthood.

Among the limitations of this study was that the study was conducted in Tehran in Region 15. So we should be cautious in generalizing the findings of this study. This study was also conducted with mothers alone, and in this study fathers were not present. Their presence could change the course and lead to extensive and rich descriptions of this transitional phase. Furthermore, samples chosen were primiparous women with children up to 3 years.

This study suggests that this study should be re-conducted with samples including mothers with children of different ages, and also the fathers' challenges should be surveyed in the course of the investigation as well as in different cities and cultures of Iran.

At the end we should express our appreciation of all the mothers' honest and sincere cooperation who took part in this study and also the chief officials of Zainab Bakhtiari health care center for teachers.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Belsky, J., M. Rovine, 1990. Patterns of marital change across the transition to parenthood: Pregnancy to three years postpartum. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 5-19.
- [2] Belsky, J., L. Youngblade, M. Rovine, B. Volling, 1991. Patterns of marital change and parent-child interaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 487-498.
- [3] Cowan, C.P., P.A. Cowan, 2000. *When partners become parents: The big life change for couples*: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- [4] Cowan, C.P., P.A. Cowan, 1992. *When Partners Become Parents: The Big Life Changes for Couples*. New York: Basic Books. Re-published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [5] Cowan, C.P., P.A. Cowan, G. Heming, E. Garrett, W.S. Coysh, H. Curtis-Boles, A.J. Boles, 1985. Transitions to Parenthood His, Hers, and Theirs. *Journal of Family Issues*, 6(4): 451-481.
- [6] Cox, M.J., B. Paley, 1997. Families as systems. *Annual review of psychology*, 48(1): 243-267.
- [7] Cox, M.J., B. Paley, M. Burchinal, C.C. Payne, 1999. Marital perceptions and interactions across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 611-625.
- [8] Creswell, J.W., V.L.P. Clark, 2007. Designing and conducting mixed methods research.

- [9] Dew, J., W.B. Wilcox, 2011. If momma ain't happy: Explaining declines in marital satisfaction among new mothers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 73(1): 1-12.
- [10] Dillaway, H., E. Paré, 2008. Locating Mothers How Cultural Debates About Stay-at-Home Versus Working Mothers Define Women and Home. *Journal of Family Issues*, 29(4): 437-464.
- [11] Doss, B.D., G.K. Rhoades, S.M. Stanley, H.J. Markman, 2009. Marital Therapy, Retreats, and Books: The Who, What, When, and Why of Relationship Help-Seeking. *Journal of marital and family therapy*, 35(1): 18-29.
- [12] Dyer, E.D., 1963. Parenthood as crisis: A re-study. *Marriage and Family Living*, 196-201.
- [13] Gjerdingen, D.K., B.A. Center, 2005. First-time parents' postpartum changes in employment, childcare, and housework responsibilities. *Social Science Research*, 34(1): 103-116.
- [14] Engfer, M., 1988. The Interrelatedness of Marriage and the Mother-Child Relationship. In R. Hinde & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds.), *Relationship within Families: Mutual Influences* (pp. 104-118). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- [15] Glaser, B.G., A.L. Strauss, 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*.
- [16] Gottman, J.M., C.I. Notarius, 2002. Marital research in the 20th century and a research agenda for the 21st century. *Family process*, 41(2): 159-197.
- [17] Hesse-Biber, S., 2010. Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(6): 455-468.
- [18] Huston, T.L., A.L. Vangelisti, 1995. How parenthood affects marriage. *Explaining family interactions*, 147-176.
- [19] Kluwer, E.S., 2010. From partnership to parenthood: A review of marital change across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 2(2): 105-125.
- [20] Kluwer, E.S., M.D. Johnson, 2007. Conflict frequency and relationship quality across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 69(5): 1089-1106.
- [21] Lawrence, E., A.D. Rothman, R.J. Cobb, M.T. Rothman, T.N. Bradbury, 2008. Marital satisfaction across the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(1): 41.
- [22] LeMasters, E.E., 1957. Parenthood as crisis. *Marriage and Family Living*, 352-355.
- [23] Levy-Shiff, R., 1994. Individual and contextual correlates of marital change across the transition to parenthood. *Developmental psychology*, 30(4): 591.
- [24] Lu, L., 2006. The transition to parenthood: Stress, resources, and gender differences in a Chinese society. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 34(4): 471-488.
- [25] MacDermid, S.M., T.L. Huston, S.M. McHale, 1990. Changes in marriage associated with the transition to parenthood: Individual differences as a function of sex-role attitudes and changes in the division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 475-486.
- [26] Markman, H., S. Duncan, R. Storaasli, P.W. Howes, 1987. The prediction and prevention of marital distress: a longitudinal investigation. *Understanding major mental disorder. The contribution of family interaction research*, 266-289.
- [27] Moss, P., G. Bolland, R. Foxman, C. Owen, 1986. Marital relations during the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 4(1-2): 57-67.
- [28] Pacey, S., 2004. Couples and the first baby: responding to new parents' sexual and relationship problems. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 19(3): 223-246.
- [29] Twenge, J.M., W.K. Campbell, 2003. "Isn't it fun to get the respect that we're going to deserve?" Narcissism, social rejection, and aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 29(2): 261-272.
- [30] Twenge, J.M., W.K. Campbell, C.A. Foster, 2003. Parenthood and marital satisfaction: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of marriage and family*, 65(3): 574-583.