

Conceptualizing emotion regulation in Iranian women: A qualitative research based on grounded theory approach

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Introduction

Emotions have a critical role in social relationships. For successful relationship with the social world we need to manage our emotions. Emotion regulation has been referred to the processes by which individuals modify their emotions, behaviors, and thoughts in a culturally appropriate context. Through emotion regulation process people try to effectively manage and respond to their emotional experience.

Method

According to the critical role of cultural components in emotional situations and emotion regulation, exploring the emotion regulation in cultural context seems essential. For this purpose, the present study was performed as a qualitative assessment based on Strauss and Corbin grounded theory approach. There were two informant sources participated in this study, data was collected from 31 Iranian women, and 9 psychologists, by the in-depth interviews. The in-depth interviews helped interviewees to speak comfortably in an intimate environment. At first, the researcher informed the participants about the general aim of the study. They were also assured that the interviews would not be shared with anyone but researchers, and the results would be reported anonymously. While participants talked about their emotional experiences broadly, the researcher focused on it and made the experience. Then, each response was led to the next question. For gaining the more complete understanding of emotion regulation process among Iranian women, 9 psychologists were interviewed by semi-structured

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method. The semi-structured interviews with professionals were performed in 4 main domains: his/her idea about the topic of research, components of emotion regulation, cultural components and personal differences in emotion regulation. Interviews with participants continued until saturation had been reached and adequate data were collected. All the interviews were recorded with audio recorders, and one of the researchers turn the voices to the text. The transcripts were reviewed several times for better understanding. At the same time, data were analyzed through the coding process. Researchers tagged the meaning units with initial codes. Gradually, in the process of axial and selective coding, codes grouped into categories.

Results

After considering the trustworthiness of study, results showed five main themes and 18 sub-themes: A) Social Characteristics; B) Personal Characteristics; C) Emotional Passivity; D) Active Responsiveness; F) Emotional Effect. According to qualitative paradigm Social Characteristics and Personal Characteristics were considered as causal conditions of emotion regulation, Emotional Passivity and Active Responsiveness were considered as two categories of emotion regulations which included 10 different emotion regulation strategies, and Emotional Effect were considered as consequences of using different types of emotion regulation strategies. As the results of the present study, the emotion regulation strategies in Iranian women were summarized into 2 main categories: *emotional passivity* and *active responsiveness*. The first emotion regulation category among Iranian women is Active Responsiveness, in which individuals actively attempt to mediate in emotional situation through behavioral or cognitive work. In this way, they can, in addition to environmental demands, manage their emotions too. This main theme consisted of five sub-themes, including sacrifice, cognitive reconstruction, redress, challenge and support seeking. The second emotion regulation category among Iranian women is Emotional Passivity, which consisted of five sub-themes, including surrendering, flight, passive aggression, impulsive reaction and projection. According to the results of the present study emotion regulation is accompanied by positive or negative emotional effects.

Discussion

Outcomes revealed that emotion regulation among Iranian women is based on biological, mental and socio-cultural circumstances which is affected by different factors rooted in values, religion and social norms, and using different types of emotion regulation strategies causes different consequences.

Keywords: emotion regulation, grounded theory, Iranian women