

## The Comparison of women's Life Story with High and Low Marital Satisfaction

Tajizadegan, Mohammad<sup>1</sup>, Naderi Nobandegani, Zahra<sup>2\*</sup>, Zareei Mahmoodabadi, Hassan<sup>3</sup>

1. M. A. Student of Psychology, Psychology Department, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran.
2. Assistant Professor of Counseling, Psychology Department, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran. (zahra.naderi@yazd.ac.ir) (Corresponding Author).
3. Associate professor of Counseling, Psychology Department, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran.

### Abstract

Marital satisfaction is one of the most important variables on which a lot of research have been performed in the field of family studies. The aim of this study is to compare the themes of life stories in two groups of women with high and low marital satisfaction. Therefore, the present study is causal-comparative research using the method of narrative research which consists of the research community of all married women in Isfahan in 2021, who were selected by coastal sampling method of 20 women (10 of whom get the highest score and 10 of whom get the lowest score of marital satisfaction) and they have received a semi-structured interview of McAdams' Life Story (2001); the interviews are then coded and the Mann–Whitney U test is used to compare the narratives. The obtained results show that there is a difference between satisfied and dissatisfied women in terms of the number of themes of communion, redemption and contamination; so that the two themes of communion and redemption in the narratives of satisfied women are significantly higher and the number of themes of contamination in these individuals is significantly lower than the group of dissatisfied women. Also, there is no significant difference in the number of agency themes among the narratives of the two groups of women. According to the obtained results, it can be said that the satisfied and dissatisfied people have different experiences of marital life, which can be observed from the stories of these people about their lives.

**Keywords:** Marital Satisfaction, Communion, Agency, Redemption, Contamination.

## Introduction

Marital satisfaction is one of the indicators of determining and strengthening the family performance, during which a couple feels happy and satisfied with their marriage and being together (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). Research in Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States also confirms that marital satisfaction is associated with lasting marriage and has several positive consequences (Sommer & Justino, 2015). Until the early twentieth century, marriage was thought to have a positive effect on personal health and well-being. Subsequent research has shown that marriage does not cause a sense of life satisfaction but a satisfying marital relationship that plays a vital role in life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Therefore, it can be said that one of the important aspects of the marital system is the satisfaction that spouses experience in marriage (kalantari, Bagheri & Sadeghi, 2018).

Despite the importance of the family system in personal and social growth and health, unfortunately in recent years we have witnessed a growing trend of family breakdown in Iran (Tariveh, Karimi, Akbari & Moradi, 2021). Among family members, low marital satisfaction and its consequences cause more harm to women (Nema, 2013), which indicates the importance of research on women. Due to the increasing rate of failure in married life, psychologists in recent decades have become interested in studying the effective mechanisms in creating marital satisfaction and successful marriage (Tariveh et al, 2021).

One way to examine the marital satisfaction and marriage stability among individuals in the stories and memories that people narrate from their lives (Gildersleeve, Singer, Skerrett, & Wein, 2017).

In the last three decades, the theory of narrative has influenced the field of psychology due to the idea that man tells the story in order to manage and give meaning to his life. Narrative psychology deals with how people construct and portray their lives through storytelling. Humans create stories about themselves that contain details about specific parts and periods of their lives as well as the meaning that these experiences have for them (McAdams & McLean, 2013). The narrative approach is based on these hypotheses: 1- People make and internalize stories to give meaning to their lives; 2. these stories themselves have psychological meaning and sufficient survival power to be told to others. 3. Narratives can be analyzed by researchers in areas such as content themes, structural features, functional traits, and other psychological, social, and cultural categories (McAdams, 2012).

In recent decades, researchers such as McAdams (2001) have been able to achieve specific themes in these narratives by analyzing the content and coding of people's life stories. Among the themes used in this study are "communion", "agency", "redemption" and "contamination". Communion includes psychological and motivational ideas about love, friendship, intimacy, sharing, a sense of belonging, dependence, oneness with one another, unity, and caring, and in fact it reflects one's relationship with others with warmth, intimacy and compassion. This concept can be related to concepts such as "being loved" of Maslow's, "me-you relationship" of Buber's and "need for interpersonal intimacy" of Sullivan's (McAdams, 2001). Most studies suggest that there

is a relationship between we-ness, union, and oneness (e.g., Alea, Singer, & Labunko, 2015; Pagani, Parise, Donato, Gable, & Schoebi, 2020;) and marital satisfaction. Chrysikou & Thompson (2016) found in a study that in interpersonal relationships between spouses, emotional rejection of couples by the spouse (lack of expression of feelings and empathy) and negative emotional confrontation are effective factors in marital dissatisfaction.

Agency is another theme that expresses human individuality and includes psychological beliefs such as power, strength, dominance, and autonomy (McAdams, 2001). By coding the theme of agency in couples' narratives, Hagemeyer & Neyer (2012) have found that the high level of agency of couples has a negative effect on the feeling of marital satisfaction on both sides of the relationship. Also, agency has a more negative effect on the relationship satisfaction of couples who live together than couples who live separately (Hagemeyer, Schönbrodt, Neyer, Neberich, & Asendorpf, 2015). The theme of contamination refers to an event in which a positive event has a negative consequence (McAdams, 2001). In other words, the positive aspect of the event is contaminated with a negative consequence. Redemption is another theme that McAdams (2001) refers to as one of the health indicators and defines it as a good perception of a bad event, meaning that the bad event or situation (emotionally negative) is converted to a good consequence (emotionally positive); For example, the death of a spouse leads to a strong insight into life. Research findings show that, the heroes of the stories narrated by highly generative adults, in addition to the characteristic of redemption, feel better about their married life (McAdams, 2006). In general, researches have shown that even the affective tone of individuals in narrating their life can indicate their satisfaction with the relationship (Dunlop, Harake, Gray, Hanley, & McCoy, 2018; Dunlop, Bühler, Maghsoodi, Harake, Wilkinson, and McAdams, 2020).

Most couples face many high and low points and challenges during their marital life. For better understanding of the factors affecting marital satisfaction, it is important to understand the difference between how satisfied and dissatisfied couples deal with these challenges, and the difference in the impact that these important events have on them and their lives. Due to the lack of studies in the field of narrative in Iran, particularly in the field of marital satisfaction, the need for research using narrative theory becomes important.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to answer the question of whether there is a significant difference in the content of the life narrative of two groups of women with high and low marital satisfaction in terms of "redemption", "agency", "contamination" and "communion" themes by comparing the life story of people in two groups with high and low marital satisfaction.

## Methods

This research has a causal-comparative methodology, but due to the fact that the analysis of people's narratives is used to collect data, the narrative research method is also used. Narrative research examines the particular aspects of the narrated life

experience of people and seeks a deeper understanding of how individuals give meaning to their experiences. Open-ended interview is used to collect data and for data analysis, inferential analysis of themes and then quantitative comparison of themes are performed in two groups. In this study, first the interviews are coded and then data analysis is performed using Mann–Whitney U test via SPSS23 software.

The statistical population of the study is all married women living in Isfahan in 2021 who participated in the study based on inclusion criteria: having at least 5 years of marital life, not undergoing couple therapy interventions and not taking medication, and exclusion criteria: unwillingness to participate in interviews.

The preliminary sampling is performed done in two ways, the former is the distribution of Enrich's Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire by Fowers and Olson (1989) in paper form and the latter is the distribution of the electronic questionnaire. Paper questionnaires are distributed among the women referred to two clinics in Isfahan; Participants are asked to enter their contact information to participate in the second phase of the research without entering their first and last name in the questionnaire, and they are assured that all information, including contact information, would be maintained confidential. Among the 124 distributed questionnaires, 24 were distorted. In total, 100 questionnaires (70 paper questionnaires and 30 electronic questionnaires) were used to select the final samples; among these 100 people, 10 people who had high scores, i.e. 175 to 212, and 10 people who had low scores, i.e. 119 to 85, have been selected for the interview. Therefore, sampling has been done in a bound manner. Table 1 shows the demographic information of the research sample groups.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of research participants

Groups	High marital satisfaction		Low marital satisfaction		
	Frequency	percentage	frequency	percentage	
Occupation	Employed	4	40	5	50
	Housewife	6	60	5	50
Education	High school	4	40	3	30
	University degree	6	60	7	70
Marriage length	5 to 10 years	3	30	3	30
	11 to 15 years	3	30	3	30
	More than 15 years	4	40	4	40
Number of children	1 child	3	30	2	20
	2 children	7	70	8	80
Age	31 to 40	3	30	4	40
	41 to 50	5	50	4	40
	50 to 60	2	20	2	2

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (Fowers and Olson, 1989) is used to measure marital satisfaction. This

questionnaire has 47 questions in the form of five items and a Likert attitude test, which includes answers of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, and a number of questions are scored in reverse. Favens and Olson (1993) showed that using this questionnaire, 85-95% accuracy can be distinguished between satisfied and dissatisfied couples. Validity (Soleimanian, 1995) and reliability (Favens and Olson, 1993; Soleimanian, 1995; Larsen and Olson, 1989) of this questionnaire has been reviewed and confirmed in various researches.

McAdams Life Story Interview Form: Excerpts from McAdams' (2008) Revised Life story Interview Form are used to compile narratives of participants. This interview has a number of open-ended questions that are summarized as follows: A. life chapters, B. Key scenes in the life story including (1. High point which is the happiest moment of one's life; 2. Low point which is the most unpleasant moment of one's life; 3. Turning point which is the important change in the path of life; 4. Positive childhood memory; 5. Negative childhood memory; 6. Vivid adult memory; 7. Wisdom event, an event in the life in which the individual displayed wisdom; 8. Religious, spiritual, or mystical experience), C. Future Script, D. Challenges, E. Personal ideology, F. The major theme of the life story and G. Reflection. Due to the length of the life story interview and depending on the purpose of the research, most studies such as Panatoni and Thomson (2018), and Dunlop et al. (2018) have used limited sections of this interview. In this research, the first two sections have been used and the interview questions have been asked in relation to the marital life of participants. For example, instead of asking, what is the high point of your life? The question was, what is the high point of your marital life? Or instead of what is the most important challenge in your life? The question was, what is the most important challenge in your marital life?

Research Implementation Method: Once the sample group has been selected from the upper and lower extremities, these individuals have been contacted for interview. The interviews have been conducted by telephone so that the identities of the participants and the interviewer remained unknown to each other. Each interview lasted an average of 40-60 minutes. The interviews included 6 scenes or episodes from the individual's life: 1. the high point of marital life, 2. the low point of marital life, 3. the turning point of marital life, 4. the most important challenge of marital life, 5. A positive memory of marital life and 6. A negative memory of marital life. Participants have been asked to describe each of the scenes in detail and to explain how this scene or event affected them and their marital life; The McAdams (1998, 1999, 2001) coding instruction was then used for coding; In this way, each episode or scene was scored in terms of the four themes of "communion", "agency", "redemption" and "contamination". Communion has four components, each of which received 1 point if it was present in an episode, and only one point is received if a component was repeated more than once in an episode. Therefore, the theme of communion in each episode gets a minimum of zero points and a maximum of 4 points, and considering that each interview consists of 6 episodes, the whole narrative in this theme gets a minimum of zero and a maximum of 24 points. The themes of agency and redemption, each of which has 4 components, also get a minimum

of zero and a maximum of 4 points per episode. However, the last theme, contamination, has no components and gets 1 point if it exists in an episode and otherwise, it gets zero point, so the theme of contamination in an interview consisting of 6 episodes has minimum zero and maximum 6 points. In this study, a total of 120 episodes from people's life story were coded. To avoid bias towards the desired results, when coding the interviews, the coder was unaware of which interview belonged to the high-satisfaction group and which to the low-satisfaction group.

## Findings

Based on the coding of the research interviews, each of McAdams' interview themes has been examined. These main themes as well as sub-themes are presented in the table below and then discussed in detail.

**Table 2.** Themes and components of McAdams life story interview

Theme	Components
<b>Communion</b>	Love/Friendship
	Informal dialogue
	Caring/Help
	Unity/Togetherness
<b>Agency</b>	Self-mastery
	Status/Victory
	Achievement/Responsibility
	Empowerment
<b>Redemption</b>	Redemption imagery
	Enhanced communion
	Enhanced agency
	Ultimate concern
<b>Contamination</b>	Contamination

**Communion Theme:** Communion as the first theme consists of the four components of love/friendship, informal dialogue, caring/help and unity/togetherness.

The first component, love/friendship, was clearly visible in some of the defined memories of the participants' marital life stories. As a 39-year-old participant from the Satisfied Group stated: "... We lived together with my mother-in-law, once I was pregnant we got into a fight, I started crying, and when my husband came home I explained to him. Kelly expressed her love for me, started crying with me and said I wish we didn't have to live here". Participants also point out the important role of the spouse in times of crisis and how much support or lack of support the spouse has had in this regard. In this case, a 46-year-old participant from the group with low satisfaction said: "... I came to the conclusion from somewhere that in the problems I cannot count on my husband, because he is not supportive when I need... I realized I have to take the

management of my life on my own ..." But another participant (53 years old from Satisfied Group) mentions: "... Well, it was a very bad crisis for me and my wife, and I got a lot of support from my wife, really she endured all sorts of my bad mood and was always by my side..."

The feeling of unity/togetherness was another mentioned issue. Women with high satisfaction in their narratives referred to the formation of a new identity after marriage. A 51-year-old participant from the Satisfied Group describes the impact of marriage on her personality as follows: "From my point of view, when a man and a woman are together, the first child of this family is the unification of this couple ... because this couple themselves become one ... My wife and I had exactly this happen to us".

In contrast, in the narratives of low-satisfaction women, not only was there no sense of oneness with her husband, but there was an emotional rupture, as the 29-year-old participant put it, "My whole life has been a challenge. There was always swearing in my family... it was a beating, I was very hopeful that this misery would end by marriage and my husband would be my companion ... but from the very beginning we did not agree on the smallest things ... from somewhere else I was disappointed and realized that we were two wrong people to live together ... now I have almost nothing to do with it, come late, come early, don't come home at night at all ...".

The informal dialogue was an important issue that emerged in many episodes of Satisfied Women. The 41-year-old participant from this group describes the high point of her marital life as follows: "The high point of our life together ... I can say it was our honeymoon. We talked a lot ... about "Our future, our having children ... we got to know each other well ... I felt that the right person had come into my life ..." In contrast, in the low-satisfaction group, most of the episodes in which the conversation took place were formal or threatening. The 38-year-old participant said: "I have been telling my wife for a long time that I cannot live in the same house with your mother, but she makes excuses. I once told her that I had made a decision and I want to share it with you. Either we leave your family or I'm leaving ... he was shocked, he could not believe I told him so frankly ..."

**Agency Theme:** This theme consists of 4 components: status/victory, achievement/responsibility, self-mastery and empowerment. Status/victory and achievement /responsibility were among the components mentioned by the participants in both groups. A 38-year-old participant from the group with low satisfaction narrates: "I could not get pregnant for a few years. It happened after 4 years of trying ... and it was very happy event because we were disappointed ... "I was very happy, I felt I had great success and my efforts paid off. I felt victorious over my sister in law" The issue of self-mastery after marriage was also seen in the narratives. As one 40-year-old participant in the high-satisfaction group points out, the high point of their marital life is their first two-person trip with her spouse, and goes on to explain: "... After this trip, I started planning for my life, to have children, I decided to register and get my driver's license ..." Targeting and planning are among the indicators of the self-mastery component observed in this episode. The last component of the agency theme was a sense of empowerment, a 51-year-old participant from the Satisfied Group stated: "... When my husband went to prison, on the one hand, I was sad about being away from

my husband, and on the other hand, I was stressed about whether I could manage to save my life or not ... At first I was very disappointed, but then I told myself to get up, now is not the time to grieve. I felt God helped me to be able to handle life while my husband was in prison ..."

**Redemption Theme:** Redemption is another theme explored through interview questions in women. The theme consists of four components: redemption imagery, enhanced communion, enhanced agency, and ultimate concern.

In people who have more themes of redemption in their life narrative, there is this important ability to be able to create positive meaning and emotions from tragic events. The existence of differences and conflicts in the relationship of these people can lead to the growth and even increase of intimacy in relation to their partner.

For example, a 31-year-old participant from the High Satisfaction Group answers the question of the low point of marital life in this way. "... We had a very intense verbal fight (with my husband), we were both not in a good mood and it led to a week of anger. This was a very bad period in my life. I was wondering how we got here. We were both very disappointed with each other ... but the impact that had on us made us take extra care so that this does not happen again... It also made us take more care of the love between us." Intense verbal altercation as a negative event seems to have given the person some insight into how to control reactions (enhanced agency) and more care of love in their life (enhanced communion).

**Contamination Theme:** Most scenes with the theme of contamination in the people's marital life story have one environment in common, and that is the narrator in that scene has a predetermined positive prediction of the moment and that prediction did not come true. A 35-year-old participant from a low-satisfaction group describes the low point of her marital life as follows: "I was very excited to celebrate my wedding but there were some problems during our wedding ceremony and something happened that was bitter, a feeling of humiliation and intense despair, everyone says that the wedding period is the sweetest period of life and I was expecting the same, but it was the bitterest for me ...". In this episode, the wedding celebration ends as a positive event with negative emotions.

Then, after coding the interviews, descriptive indicators were used for each of the narrative themes in the group of women with high satisfaction and women with low satisfaction. The results of coding the narratives and the frequency of each of the main themes are presented in the following table.

**Table 3.** The frequency of life story's themes in 2 groups of the women with high and low marital satisfaction

	Communion		Agency		Redemption		Contamination				
	High satisfact ion	Low satisfact ion									
Score range	frequency	frequency	Score range	frequency	frequency	Score range	frequency	frequency	Score range	frequency	frequency
0-2	0	1	0-2	0	1	0-2	1	6	0	2	1

3-5	0	6	3-5	1	1	3-5	3	3	1	7	1
6-8	3	3	6-8	3	5	6-8	5	1	2	2	1
9-11	5	0	9-11	5	3	9-11	1	0	3	0	4
12-14	2	0	12-14	1	0	Total	10	10	4	0	3
Total	10	10	Total	10	10				Total	10	10

According to Table 3, in the group of women with high satisfaction, the highest frequency of communion scores was in the range of 9-11, in the group of women with low satisfaction, the highest frequency was in the range of 3-5, and in the redemption scores, the highest frequency was 6-8 in the group of women with high satisfaction. And the highest frequency in the group of women with low satisfaction is related to the range of 0-2.

The highest frequency in agency scores in both groups is related to 6-11 range of scores. In terms of contamination, in the group of women with high satisfaction, most participants scored 1, while in the group of women with low satisfaction, most participants scored 3 and 4. This frequency indicates that the participants of the group with low satisfaction have obtained higher scores in this theme. The descriptive indicators of themes are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** The descriptive indicators of women's life story themes in 2 groups of high and low marital satisfaction.

Theme	Group	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Variance	Maximum	Minimum
Communion	High satisfaction	10	9.80	2.25	5.06	6	13
	Low satisfaction	10	4.50	2.12	4.50	0	7
Agency	High satisfaction	10	8.60	2.41	5.82	4	12
	Low satisfaction	10	6.70	2.90	8.45	1	10
Redemption	High satisfaction	10	5.20	2.78	7.73	0	10
	Low satisfaction	10	2.20	2.09	4.40	0	6
Contamination	High satisfaction	10	0.90	0.57	0.32	0	2
	Low satisfaction	10	2.70	1.34	1.79	0	4

As it can be seen in Table 4, women with high satisfaction have a higher mean in the themes of communion, redemption and agency, and the women with low satisfaction have a higher mean in the theme of redemption. Then, to test the research hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test is used and the results are presented in the below table.

**Table 5.** The Mann-Whitney U test results for the themes of life story in 2 groups of the women with high and low marital satisfaction.

Theme	Group	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mid	Mann-Whitney U	Z	P
Communion	High satisfaction	10	15.10	151.50	10.50	3.50	-3.5	0.000
	Low satisfaction	10	5.80	58.50	5			
Agency	High satisfaction	10	12.40	124.50	9	30.50	-1.5	0.137
	Low satisfaction	10	8.50	85.50	7			
Redemption	High satisfaction	10	6.90	69	1	14	-2.8	0.005
	Low satisfaction	10	14.10	141	3			
Contamination	High satisfaction	10	13.70	137	6	18	-2.4	0.014
	Low satisfaction	10	7.50	73	2			

According to the above table, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the scores of the group with high satisfaction and the group with low satisfaction in the themes of communion, contamination and redemption, so that in the narratives of the group with high satisfaction the themes of communion participation and redemption were higher and in the low satisfaction group the contamination content was higher. There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of agency.

## Discussion

The research question was whether there is a significant difference in the content of life narratives of two groups of women with high and low marital satisfaction in terms of, "communion", "agency", "redemption", and "contamination"? And the obtained results have shown that there is a significant difference in the theme of communion between the narratives of the two groups of women. Regarding the component of love/friendship, the findings of this research are consistent with the research of Daghighaleh, Asgari and Heidari (2012). In relationships where there is love and friendship, men and women try to strengthen mutual commitment and trust in their relationship; this increases the respect and intimacy between the couple, which in turn increases the satisfaction. Regarding the component of informal dialogue, the findings of this research are consistent with the Refahi and Moghtaderi Research (2013), who showed in their research that as the empathy increases the intimacy between couples also increases. To explain this finding, it can be said that women who have the skill of informal dialogue can easily express their feelings under the psychological security; this leads to conflict resolution and increased intimacy and marital satisfaction. But, if there is no psychological security or the necessary skills to talk between couples either the conversation does not resume or the conversation is accompanied by a hostile

atmosphere and misunderstanding. Also in relation to the component of caring/help, it can be said that people who appear this component more in their narratives, support their children and spouse with more empathy in times of problems; this sense of support in cohabitation can increase satisfaction and quality of marital life; On the other hand, in the absence of a sense of support and care in married life, it leads to low marital satisfaction.

Findings on unity togetherness component are consistent with the findings of Vedes, Bodenman, Nussbeck, Randall & Lind (2015), who showed in their study that feeling as we-ness (Couple identity) is the prerequisite to marital satisfaction and Gildersleeve et al (2017) who showed that the formation of marital identity can increase marital satisfaction. After marriage, couples gradually acquire a new identity, in which the new identity will create a feeling of unity with the spouse, such a feeling causes couples to consider other success and progress as their own progress in order to grow and this situation leads to a feeling of greater satisfaction from living together. But if this feeling of unity is not created, the feeling of duality and emotional separation will lead to a competitive atmosphere in life.

For analyzing the data on the theme of agency in the marital life story of the two groups of women, there was no significant difference. This finding was inconsistent with the findings of Hagimir and Neier (2012) who found in their study that the high level of agency of couples has a negative effect on the marital satisfaction of both parties in the relationship. One of the reasons that can explain the inconsistency with this research is the difference in the thematic components of agency in these two studies, as in the research of Hagimir and Nier (2012) agency from the subscales of independence, power and avoidance is formed. Another factor that explains this inconsistency is that in the research of Hagimir and Nier (2012) only the sentences that showed agency in relation to the spouse or emotional partner received the agency rating, however, in this study, according to the coding instructions, regardless of whether the theme of the agency has appeared in relation to the spouse, other people or even individual issues, has received the agency privilege. Regarding the component of "I-position" that overlaps with agency, Ariamanesh, Fallah Chai & Zaree (2013) in their research have not found a significant difference between satisfied couples with marital conflict. Pelg (2008) also found that there is no relationship between the component of I-position and marital satisfaction in the women's group, while Barzager Kahnarmoie, Mohammadi & Zaferanchi, Fooladi (2014) and Bayrami, Fahimi, Akbari & Amiri Pichakolaei (2012) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between I-position and marital satisfaction.

The results showed that there was a difference between the redemption theme in the two groups of satisfied and dissatisfied women. In general, people whose redemption theme is more common in their narratives are able to extract good meaning from bad life events, whether these events are less important, such as verbal arguments with the spouse, or deep traumas such as the death of a child. If we consider redemption as a personality trait, people with such a personality trait give themselves and the relationship another chance to be recovered after bad things happen in the marital relationship. This is less likely to happen if people have less redemption personality

traits. In general, the people with higher redemption, the more resistant they are to the deep traumas that occur in life, and as a result, they experience less bad feelings in marital life. Studies such as Dunlop et al (2020) and McAdams (2006) have found that people who report more redemption rates are more optimistic that these traits can indirectly have a significant impact on marital satisfaction. McAdams (2011), in one of his studies found that people with high are able to balance intimacy and power. According to this finding, it can be said that the ability to balance intimacy and power can be another factor for high marital satisfaction in people with high redemption.

Also, the number of contamination themes in the narratives of the two groups of women was statistically significant. To explain these differences, we can first refer to two perspectives: The first view is that the reason for this difference is the high or low level of marital satisfaction of individuals, that is people, due to less marital satisfaction, more often narrate scenes of contamination in their narratives; Another view is that marital satisfaction is itself a consequence of the high or low content of redemption in the narrative of individuals, which means that redemption as a personality trait has affected the feeling of marital satisfaction. The reason why the theme of contamination in the marital life story of women with high marital satisfaction is seen less than women with low marital satisfaction can be related to the less negative emotional atmosphere that is perceived in the cohabitation of these people. The less contamination in the marital life story, the less negative emotions people experience in their cohabitation or the less negative memories are fixed in their minds; As the findings of Dunlop et al. (2020) confirm, less negative emotions in couples' narratives are associated with greater marital satisfaction.

**Research Limitations:** Due to the long duration of the interview, participants were tired of the final questions, and this may affect the accuracy of the answers. Also, for various reasons, some participants are better narrators than others and are interested in retelling their life scenes in more detail, while others were not interested in telling their story in detail. And for this reason, they told their story in less detail and more concisely; the existence of these differences can affect the outcome of research.

**Suggestions for Further Studies:** Future works can examine the importance of whether by understanding the life story of people before marriage, it is possible to predict their marital satisfaction, divorce or non-divorce in the coming years of their marital life. It is also suggested that if this method is used in future research, fewer questions with more samples be used and a test of marital satisfaction correlation be taken with each of themes and their components. The present study has been conducted only on women, so future studies can examine the narrative of men or the narrative of both couples and its relationship with marital satisfaction.

The findings of this study can also be used by couple therapists, in a way that when couples are narrating the conflicts and problems in their life in the treatment session, the therapist identifies the main themes of the narration of the people and tries to change the narrations by focusing on them and have a decrease or increase in specific themes in their life narrative. Given that in the common life of all people, there will be challenges, peaks, landings and turning points, it is better to consider this issue in premarital training programs to prepare people in order to deal with these events in life.

## Conclusion

Overall, women's life stories indicate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with marriage. As the results showed, in this study, satisfied and dissatisfied women had different stories of their married life; The more communion in the group with high marital satisfaction caused individuals to feel more intimacy, empathy and support in relation to their spouse and as a result experience more satisfaction in marriage; also, the redemption has acted as a factor to neutralize the impact of negative events and in many cases has helped people to create meaning and positive effects from the bad events of their married life. Contamination has also led people to interpret positive life events as transient and exceptional, resulting in less satisfaction. Thus, it can be said that the narrative method is effective in achieving important factors affecting marital satisfaction.

## Disclosure Statements

The authors declare no conflict of interest during this study period.

## ORCID

**Zahra, Naderi:** 0000-0003-1646-6086

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