

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Exploring the challenges of men who married to adolescent girls in Western Iran: A qualitative study

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Abstract

Background and Aims: Men face many challenges in their lives with adolescent girls that need to be identified. No research has been conducted in this field in Iran. This research aimed to explore the challenges of men married to adolescent girls in western Iran using a qualitative approach.

Methods: This research was conducted using qualitative methods and a conventional content analysis approach. Participants were 28 men in western Iran who had the experience of marrying girls under 18 years of age. Semi-structured interviews were used both face-to-face and over the phone to collect data. Also, snowballing and purposeful sampling were used to select the participants. The data were also analysed using Granheim and Lundman's approach.

Results: From the data analysis, 1 category, 9 subcategories, and 103 primary codes were obtained. The main category was lack of empathy and consensus, which includes the subcategories of sexual dissatisfaction, girls' dependence on the family, inability to fulfill the roles of a wife, not being understood in life, remaining in the world of childhood, emotional divorce, limiting progress and preventing the achievement of goals, betrayal, and chaotic life.

Conclusion: Young couples problems can be solved by measures such as giving sex education and teaching skills necessary for married life, such as problem solving skills and anger control, to adolescent men and girls, as well as training families on how to properly support adolescent couples.

KEYWORDS

adolescents, challenges, child marriage, men, qualitative study, women

1 | INTRODUCTION

The concept of child marriage refers to marriages under the age of 18 and has a long history.¹ The first articles indexed in PubMed referring to the concept of child marriage are related to the years 1955 and 1957 in Israel

and England, but over time, the publication of articles on child marriage grew every year more than the previous year, so that in 2019, more than 40 articles were published on child marriage in PubMed.²

There are currently an estimated 580 million married adolescent girls, more than 80% of whom live in developing countries. Various

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reports consider sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia as the main centers of child marriage.³ Iran is also one of the developing countries where child marriage is prevalent.^{4,5} The minimum legal age of marriage for girls in Iran is 13 years old; however, by getting a judge's permit, one can marry a girl under 13.⁶ The prevalence of early marriage in urban areas of Iran is reported at 13.7% and in rural areas at 19.6%.⁷ In the first 9 months of 2016, in Iran, 13,820 marriages under the age of 18 were registered.⁸ While, due to the fact that many child marriages happen informally in families and are not officially registered, the statistics of child marriages seem to be higher than the official ones.⁹ Also, from 2012 to 2016, 4.9%–5.6% (about 40 thousand) of all marriages registered in the country were in the age group of 10–14. In general, it can be concluded that tens of thousands of girls and boys under the age of 15 get married in Iran every year.¹⁰

Child marriage is under the influence of culture, religion, gender beliefs, etc. in each country for different reasons, but in general, in most research studies, reasons such as resolving family disputes, financial poverty, prevention of social and sexual deviations, social beliefs and customs and religion, place of residence, war and natural and unnatural disasters, illiteracy or low education, parents' ignorance, and personality and appearance are mentioned as the main reasons for child marriage.^{11–17}

In Iran and around the world, various quantitative and qualitative research studies have been conducted in the field of the consequences of child marriage, but these studies are mostly conducted from the girls' perspective, and it is generally reported that child marriage has consequences such as low satisfaction with married life, reduced independence, various forms of domestic violence, low physical and mental health, jeopardizing the health of mother and child during pregnancy, and limited access to educational and health services for girls.^{18–29} Therefore, most countries have made efforts to reduce child marriage. In qualitative research conducted among Iranian girls, it was reported that girls who experience child marriage do not have a proper understanding of sexual relations, and this will cause sexual dissatisfaction in them and their husbands.^{30,31} They also feel less independent due to the interference of families and male dominance, and they do not have a correct understanding of the opportunities and challenges of life. Research results in Bangladesh showed that child marriage in Bangladesh is associated with consequences such as dropping out of school, losing health, and demographic problems such as increasing the population growth rate and preventing the country's growth and development.³²

Child marriage can bring many problems to the lives of men and adolescent girls. Most of the research that has been done about the consequences of child marriage is about girls and only from the point of view of adolescent girls, while men suffer as much as girls in these conditions. So far, in Iran and perhaps in the world, there has been no qualitative research that looks at this issue from men's points of view and reveals what problems men face in life with adolescent girls; hence, the need to do qualitative research in this field is more obvious because qualitative research can provide first-class information to policymakers and planners so that they can better intervene

to reduce the consequences of early marriage. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the challenges faced by men married to adolescent girls in western Iran with a qualitative approach.

2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 | Study design and participants

This research was conducted with a qualitative approach and using the conventional content analysis method.³³ Conventional content analysis is used because, so far, no research has been conducted on men's experiences in living with adolescent girls in Iran, and there is limited information in this field around the world, so there is no theory or questionnaire for the investigation of this phenomenon.

2.2 | Participants

Chosen province for the study, including Lorestan, Kermanshah, Kurdistan, and Ilam, which are similar in terms of economic, social, and cultural characteristics and have the same texture. The participants were married men who had experience living with girls under the age of 18. The inclusion criteria were at least 1 year of married life with a woman under the age of 18, the ability to speak, living in the chosen province for the study at the time of the research, and willingness to participate in the research.

Participants were reached through purposeful and random sampling. In purposeful sampling, a number of participants were identified by asking trusted local people who lived in those provinces, and then, at the end of the interview, other people who met the inclusion criteria were introduced by these participants. Locally trusted individuals are native community members who have a specific social prestige in the studied community, and people respect them. They are well acquainted with the local community and its people. Therefore, they were asked to facilitate the researcher's access to individuals who meet the criteria for participation in the study. In purposeful sampling, it was tried to include people with the maximum difference in the research, and for every new code that was formed, the selection of the next sample was done on the basis of having the most information in this field, so that it could help in the formation of categories and subcategories.

2.3 | Data collection

The main method of data collection was semi-in-depth face-to-face interviews (17 people), but due to the scattered nature of the study environment, telephone interviews were also used in most cases (11 people). In each interview, the researcher first presented a brief biography of his working conditions and the research process, and after the participant signed the written consent form, the interview began. At first, some demographic questions were asked, and then

the interview started by asking these three general questions: (1) How do you feel about marrying a woman under 18? (2) Are you satisfied that you married a woman under 18? Why? (3) What challenges did you face in your married life? And further, according to the participants' statements, more detailed questions were asked. The interviews were conducted by the first author, who had rich experience in interviewing and qualitative methods.

The time and place of the interviews were determined by the participants without the presence of anyone other than the researcher and the participant. The face-to-face interviews were mostly done in the workplace, park, etc., and mostly in the evening. The interviews were conducted in a secluded corner of the park or in cultural centers located within the parks, ensuring that only the researcher and the participant were present during the interviews. The interviews lasted an average of 67 min, with the longest lasting 98 min and the shortest lasting 30 min. The data analysis was done concurrently with the first interview, and the codes obtained from each interview were asked in the form of questions in the subsequent interviews, and the codes were constantly checked. Data collection continued until reaching theoretical saturation, which was finally achieved with 28 interviews. Of course, in the 21st interview, the codes were repeated, but the researchers took several other interviews to be more assured, and no new code was formed.

2.4 | Data analysis

The data were classified with MAXQDA-2018 and analysed based on Granheim Lundman's approach.³³ After the first interview, the researchers transcribed the recorded interview in written form, and the analysis process simultaneously began. The information obtained was used to prepare the next questions from the interviewees, and

this process continued until the end of the interviews. Then, in the second stage, the text of the transcribed interviews was reviewed by the research team several times to reach a general understanding of the text. In the third stage, the text of the interviews was carefully reviewed line by line, and the initial codes were formed. In the fourth step, the researchers placed the codes that were similar in terms of meaning and concept in the same category and determined how they were related. Then, in the last step, the categories formed in the previous step were placed in more comprehensive and abstract classes, and the themes were obtained. In the data analysis, three people from the research team (the first, second, and corresponding authors) cooperated, and after the final analysis, its complete steps were explained in a meeting for all the authors, and in some cases, the names of the categories and subcategories were slightly changed. In the final step, the researchers connected the various categories formed in the previous steps with a diagram (Figure 1).

2.5 | Trustworthiness

Guba and Lincoln's criteria were followed to ensure the validity and strength of the research.³⁴ To give the data credibility, the researcher had prolonged engagement with the research field and had contact with the participants, which helped to gain the participants' trust on the one hand and to understand their experiences on the other. Also, coding and data analysis were sent to four participants to confirm whether the research expressed their opinions and views or not, which was approved by them. On the other hand, it was tried to select participants of various types in terms of demographic characteristics so that more comprehensive information could be obtained. To increase dependability, all the contributors to the article were included in the process of analysis and coding and expressed

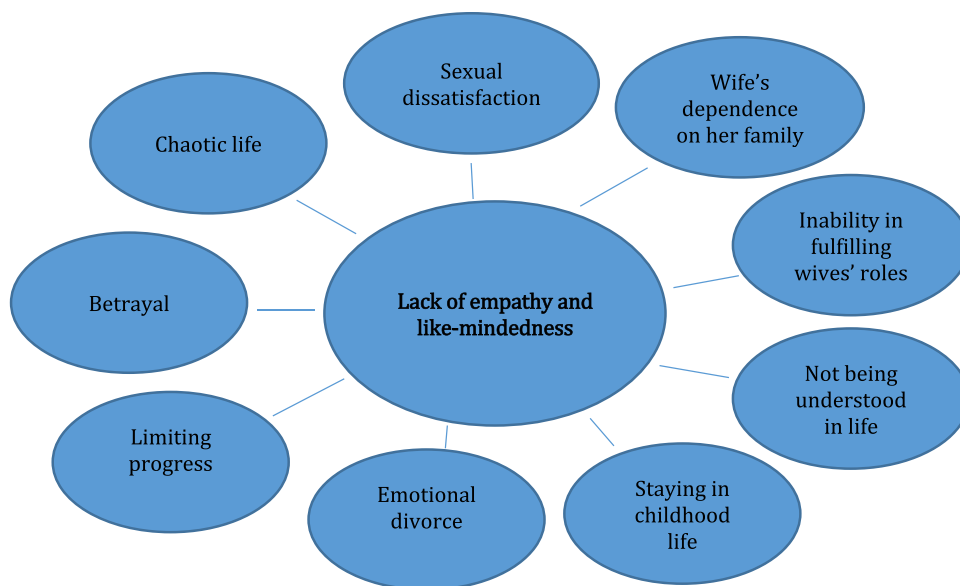


FIGURE 1 A conceptual model formed from the challenges of men married to adolescent girls.

their opinions in the meetings that were held, and finally the names of categories and subcategories were finalized with the approval of all authors.

To increase the transferability of the research, a complete description of the entire research process was presented. For each of the sub-categories and codes, a large number of direct quotations were made, and the research findings section with quotations was sent to three men who had the inclusion criteria but had not participated in the study to evaluate whether the findings were in accordance with their experiences and feelings or not, which was approved by all of them. Conformability was obtained by respecting the impartiality of the researcher, and agreement on the codes and categories was obtained with three experts who were familiar with the subject.

3 | RESULTS

A total of 28 men participated in this research (Table 1). Also, one main category, nine subcategories, and 103 primary codes were obtained from the data analysis (Table 2).

Lack of empathy and like-mindedness was the main category in this research, which consists of nine subcategories. Married men face countless problems and challenges in their lives with young girls, which can be classified as a lack of empathy and like-mindedness.

TABLE 1 Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Variable	Category	Frequency
Age	Under 20 years	3
	20–40	15
	Above 40	10
Education	Illiterate	3
	High school	10
	Diploma	7
	Higher than diploma	8
Job	Employee	4
	Self-employed	24
Age difference with spouse	Less than 5 years	5
	5–10	9
	More than 10	14
Residence	City	11
	Village	17
Marital status before their marriage to the adolescents	Single	18
	divorced or widowed	7
	Married	3

1. **Sexual dissatisfaction:** Most of the participants stated that they have little sexual satisfaction living with adolescent girls. A large part of this dissatisfaction is due to the low sexual knowledge of adolescent girls, who cannot satisfy men in sexual relations, and another part of this dissatisfaction is due to the culture and norms of the investigated areas, because in this culture, asking for intercourse by girls is considered a kind of arrogance and rudeness; therefore, girls usually do not make any request for sex and they act passively during sex, which causes sexual dissatisfaction in men. Of course, this problem may also exist in other girls, but the problem related to low sexual knowledge can be more severe in adolescent girls and make their married lives difficult.

“I am not very satisfied with my wife; she does not know anything about sex. (P 2)

“The problem I have with my wife is that she thinks that if she says that she wants to have sex, she has sinned or done something bad. (p 13)

“The first 5 months of our life were terrible; my wife didn't know anything about married life, and I couldn't have good sex at all, and this was very difficult for me.” (p 9)

2. **Girls' dependence on the family:** Most of the participants complained about the dependence of their wives on their families. Families that marry off their daughters at a young age interfere in their lives under the pretext of more support, and this is not very acceptable for their husbands. In contrast, it can be observed that adolescent girls, owing to their limited emotional and intellectual development following marriage, may struggle to fully disengage from their paternal household and reduce their reliance on their maternal figures. Consequently, this can lead to a recurring pattern of visiting their parents with notable frequency, thereby resulting in dissatisfaction among their spouses.

“Even though we have been married for several years, my wife still has the habit of going to her father's every week. Sometimes I have to leave work to be able to take her to her father's. (p 23).

“My wife's family often comes to our house and comments and intervenes in our lives.” They think that because their daughter is young, they should decide for her. (p 11).

“My wife's family interferes a lot in our lives, and my wife doesn't listen to me because whatever happens at home, she goes and tells her family. (p 1)

3. **Inability to fulfill the roles of spouses:** Some participants were not very satisfied with the tasks they expected from their wives and

TABLE 2 Codes, subcategories, and categories obtained from interviews.

Codes	Subcategories	Main category
Being passive in sex, not asking for sex, and having low sex knowledge	Sexual dissatisfaction	Lack of empathy and like-mindedness
The wife's frequent visits with her family and the involvement of his wife's parents in family life	A woman's dependence on the family	
Lack of self-efficacy in dealing with life issues, inability to respond appropriately to family problems and events, inability to manage the home, inability to raise children	Inability to play wifely roles	
lack of understanding of life priorities; lack of understanding of life needs; lack of common interests and hobbies; different views of life and the future	Not being understood in life	
Having childish behaviors, having childish desires, and looking at the spouse as a father	Staying in the world of childhood	
Lack of cohabitation with spouse, couple's disinterest in sex, neglecting spouse	Emotional Divorce	
Multiple pregnancies and problems related to pregnancy; problems related to abortion; girls not agreeing to live in another city	Limiting progress and preventing the achievement of goals	
having multiple sexual relationships, having multiple emotional relationships,	Betrayal	
Inappropriate behaviors, bad manners, blame, criticism, pessimism, lies, humiliation, profanation, comparison	Chaotic life	

reported that their wives do not have the necessary self-efficacy in dealing with life problems and cannot react properly in crises. Adolescent girls do not receive any training to take on the roles of wives and are suddenly thrown from the world of childhood to the world of adulthood, and many responsibilities are entrusted to them. That is why most of these girls cannot perform the tasks that are expected of them as wives. It causes dissatisfaction among their spouses.

"I can't count on my wife at all, because I know she will be disturbed with the slightest problem" (p. 20).

"The bad thing about a young woman is that you have to take care of her so that she doesn't do something that will dishonour you and endanger life, and you have to pray that there won't be a family problem because she can't handle it. (p 1)

"My wife doesn't know anything about housekeeping; my mother and sister help her. (p 18)

"Most of the time, my daughter is with her grandmother, but my wife can't protect her. (p. 24)

4. **Not being understood in life:** Due to the large age gaps between some couples, the participating men said that they are not understood by their wives in their lives and that they have no understanding with them in terms of life priorities and needs. Also, due to having different interests and hobbies and having completely different views on life and the future, there is no understanding between them. These issues cause men to feel that they are not understood by their wives, and

this can lead to many challenges in the rest of their lives and eventually lead to separation.

"My wife and I do not understand each other on any issue; she thinks one way and I think another. (p. 9)

"I have a problem with my wife; because of her young age, she is mostly looking for spurious things. (p. 7)

"I like to go to the mountains and travel, while my wife likes to stay at home and watch TV. Even in the movies we like, we disagree. (p. 15)

"My wife and I rarely talk to each other; we have nothing in common to talk about, as if we belong to two different worlds. (p. 22)

"I try to save more so that our children don't have problems in the future, but my wife is not like that; she likes to buy clothes and spend money. (p. 3)

5. **Staying in the world of childhood:** Most of the participants summarized that they are not satisfied with their wives because they behave like children and have childish desires. Some participants who have a big age difference with their wives summarized that their wives do not consider them husbands and that their relationship is more like a father-daughter relationship than a husband-wife one, so most of the male participants felt dissatisfied.

"It is very difficult to live with a young woman because she acts like a child. (p. 12)

"Instead of thinking about buying a house and such, my wife behaves more like a child. Every time I go out, she calls and asks for snacks, while at home there are more important things that we don't have, and she needs to tell me to buy them. (p. 3)

"Sometimes I think I am my wife's father, but she acts as if I am her father. (p. 26)

"Some of my wife's behaviour is unbearable, especially when we go to a party and she behaves like a child, and this is very difficult for me. (p. 20)

6. **Emotional divorce:** Some participants, especially men who had a big age difference with their wives, summarized that there is not much interaction between them in terms of sex and conversation, and they are neglected by their wives. This might be rooted in the lack of common thoughts, which is caused by the big age difference between them.

"My wife and I don't have anything in common to talk about. In the whole week, we barely talk to each other. (p. 19)

"I thought that if I got a young woman, I could have more sex, but now it's not like that at all; neither I nor she are very interested. (p. 6)

"My wife doesn't pay much attention to me; it's not as if we are husband and wife. I'm tired of this life. (p. 13)

7. **Limiting progress and preventing the achievement of goals:** Adolescent females have little knowledge on pregnancy prevention matters, resulting in several unintended pregnancies that often need abortion owing to the physiological circumstances specific to this demographic, exerting a significant impact on their overall well-being. Also, since adolescent girls have a lot of dependence on their families, they cannot live in another city, so some participants stated that having an adolescent wife limits progress and achieving goals.

"We didn't plan to have a baby, but my wife got pregnant in the first month; the living conditions became difficult for us, and that's why I couldn't continue my university. (p. 27)

"A young woman has nothing with herself but misfortune; you will get in trouble; we are going to doctors for three years; our first child was aborted; and then my wife had problems. If I had known that we would have so many problems, I would never have married a young woman. (p. 15)

"I had found a good job in another city, but my wife refused to come. She said that I couldn't be away from my mother, so I didn't go. Maybe if we had gone, our life would have been much better now. (p. 14)

8. **Betrayal:** Some of the participants stated that the conditions they have in their married lives cause them to have sexual and emotional relationships outside the family. Of course, most of these relationships were emotional, and men reported that because they are not understood by their girls, they are forced to establish emotional relationships outside the family. Although they may have sexual relationships outside the family, due to cultural considerations, they are not willing to speak about that.

"Every person needs someone to talk to and understand. I don't have these conditions at home, and I don't have a good relationship with my wife, so I try to have girlfriends and talk to them. (p. 19).

"Most of the time when I'm at home, I go online and talk to different people. (p. 4)

"I never thought that I would have sex with other girls after I got married, but now I have many friends with whom I have sex." (p. 3)

9. **Chaotic life:** Some participants stated that they face a lot of tension in their married lives, and their lives are full of tension on a daily basis. Most of this is due to the lack of consensus that exists between couples and reduces the quality of their lives. Some participants reported things such as inappropriate behavior, rudeness, blaming, pessimism, lying, humiliating, and profanation.

"Now I am satisfied with my life, but in the beginning we had a lot of problems; we used to fight every day. (p. 9)

"We always fight with my wife; sometimes we insult each other. (p. 20)

"My wife is sceptical of me; she thinks I'm cheating on her. (p. 16)

"When I compare my life with others, I get upset and want to fight with my wife" (p. 25).

4 | DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to investigate the challenges faced by males who are married to adolescent girls in western Iran using a qualitative technique. The findings indicate that males have several

difficulties while cohabitating with teenage females, ultimately falling into the domain of deficient empathy and shared perspectives.

One of the obstacles faced by males in their interactions with young girls relates to sexual dissatisfaction. Upon first observation, it may seem that teenage females possess a greater allure for engaging in sexual relationships, perhaps influencing men's preference for them. However, within the context of marital relationships, the limited sexual understanding of adolescent girls might impact their sexual interactions and result in sexual discontentment among men. A significant proportion of the observed sexual dissatisfaction may be attributed to the manner in which individuals are socialized with regards to their sexuality. This can be attributed to the presence of societal taboos surrounding sexual matters, which results in a lack of education on sexual issues for adolescent girls within Iran's educational framework. Furthermore, families and parents exhibit a reluctance to engage in discussions pertaining to sexuality with adolescents. Consequently, the incomplete socialization of sexual matters among most adolescent girls contributes to their experience of sexual dissatisfaction. Numerous studies have documented the manifold obstacles encountered in the instruction of sexual matters to teenagers in Iran, mostly stemming from cultural and societal convictions. These problems, if left unaddressed, may yield detrimental outcomes, including but not limited to diminished sexual contentment, instances of sexual aggression, and premature pregnancies, jeopardizing the well-being of individuals in their forthcoming marital endeavours.^{35,36} Previous studies have shown instances of violence and sexual dissatisfaction among individuals who enter into early marriages.^{28,37-39} According to the findings of Budu et al. there is evidence to suggest that girls who enter into early marriages may feel a diminished sense of sexual autonomy within their marital relationships. This reduced sexual independence has the potential to contribute to instances of male-perpetrated sexual violence in subsequent periods.⁴⁰

The issue of girls' reliance on their families was a challenge for men while cohabitating with teenage females, aligning with the findings of Mardi et al.³¹ Adolescent females, due to their limited maturity, often rely on parental or in-law support to navigate the challenges of independent living. This phenomenon allows for intrusion into individuals' lives, resulting in discontentment among males.

One of the noteworthy outcomes of this study was the issue faced by males in light of girls' incapacity to complete their obligations as husbands. Adolescent females are compelled to assume novel responsibilities and swiftly adapt to them as a result of early pregnancy without having had any formal preparation for the mental maturity for parenthood. Moreover, as a result of the pervasive influence of patriarchal ideologies and cultural norms within the examined region, men tend to perceive girls as primarily responsible for household management and childrearing. This circumstance exacerbates the burden placed upon adolescent girls, potentially impeding their ability to effectively manage these multifaceted responsibilities. Consequently, their marital life may encounter significant challenges.

One of the novel results in this study is the problem faced by guys in terms of being misunderstood in life. This phenomenon was particularly observed among men who had a significant age disparity with their spouses. This observation can be attributed to the inherent differences in goals, desires, and thoughts that arise when individuals from distinct generations form a marital union. Consequently, these divergent interests and hobbies can gradually create emotional distance between partners, potentially leading to a state of emotional divorce, as indicated by the research findings. In the research of Tilson and Larsen (2000), it was reported that emotional divorce and divorce is one of the main consequences of early marriage in women.⁴¹ The research conducted by John et al.⁴² revealed that individuals who entered into early marriages also exhibited a prevalence of low-quality marital partnerships.

Remaining inside the realm of childhood was an additional obstacle for males navigating their lives alongside teenage females. Indeed, a majority of the respondents said that their spouses exhibit juvenile urges and behaviors, rendering them incapable of fulfilling the role of a traditional wife. Certain individuals have expressed that their marital dynamics have a resemblance to a paternal-daughter connection rather than a conventional spousal bond. This phenomenon may arise due to the disparity in age within a romantic partnership when older men anticipate their teenage spouses to exhibit maturity similar to that of adult girls, but their wives continue to navigate the realm of their youth.

Another experience of men was limiting their progress and preventing them from reaching their goals. Indeed, several individuals expressed that the presence of a youthful spouse hindered their ability to accomplish their objectives, seeing such a circumstance as a significant impediment in their pursuit of goals. A significant portion of these constraints pertained to untimely pregnancies that occurred during early adulthood and significantly impacted the lives of the couples involved. This was particularly evident in situations when both partners were young and lacked a firm professional and educational foundation. In certain instances, the girls' significant reliance on their families hindered their ability to relocate to another city. Consequently, the men were compelled to remain in the same location as their wives. It is worth noting that the areas under investigation were situated in economically disadvantaged provinces of Iran, characterized by high levels of unemployment. As a result, men were compelled to seek employment opportunities in other provinces. However, due to their wives' dependence on their parents, they were constrained to remain in their hometowns and subsist on meagre salaries. This circumstance engendered discontent among certain men.

An additional discovery from the research pertained to men's betrayal, which corroborated prior studies indicating that early marriage not only contributes to the development of sexual deviant behaviors in girls,^{43,44} but also creates circumstances that facilitate the betrayal of their husbands. The occurrence of emotional attachments outside the family among males, leading to potential marital strain and separation, may be attributed mostly to a combination of factors such as a significant age disparity and other

interpersonal challenges, resulting in a lack of comprehension and empathy. While the majority of participants' statements highlighted the presence of emotional relationships outside the family rather than sexual relationships, it is reasonable to infer that emotional involvement may serve as a precursor to engaging in sexual relationships. It is possible that cultural taboos discourage individuals from openly acknowledging their involvement in extramarital sexual activities. It may be posited that individuals engage in extramarital sexual encounters as a result of experiencing sexual dissatisfaction in their marital relationships. To date, there is a dearth of research investigating men's encounters with infidelity involving adolescent girls. However, existing studies exploring the experiences of adolescent girls have indicated that those who undergo early marriage may be more inclined to engage in extramarital sexual relationships as a result of their specific circumstances.⁴⁵

Chaotic life was another finding of the research. In general, it seems that satisfaction with married life decreases in early marriages, which is consistent with Hajihassani and Sim's⁸ (2019) research conducted in Iran. Indeed, a significant majority of the male participants expressed experiencing a considerable amount of stress within their marital relationships. These stressors manifest in various forms, including engaging in inappropriate behavior, displaying bad manners, engaging in blame-shifting, exhibiting cynicism, resorting to lying, engaging in acts of humiliation, engaging in profane language, and making comparisons. It is worth noting that these instances are primarily attributed to a lack of shared values and understanding, as well as a deficiency in empathy between couples. This deficiency can be partially attributed to the age disparity between spouses, incomplete socialization processes, and the unpreparedness of girls to enter married life. Furthermore, a significant portion of these issues can be attributed to the presence of a patriarchal culture within the society under study.

4.1 | Limitations and strengths

This research is one of the limited researches that examines the experiences and challenges of living with adolescent women from the perspective of men themselves, which can provide a lot of information to researchers and social workers as well as related organizations to reduce these problems. One further advantage of this study is its multi-provincial scope within Iran, which contributes to a more comprehensive of the phenomena under investigation. Another strength of the research is the high level engagement of the researchers with the research topic, especially the first author who has a lot of experience in the area under investigation in the field of issues related to women, especially child marriage, etc., that due to these experiences and familiarity with the culture, language and customs of the investigated area could easily communicate with the participants and gain their satisfaction and trust to participate in the interview. One of the most important limitations of the research was the dispersion of the study environment and the unknownness of the participants, who were identified using the potential of local trustees

and snowball sampling of the participants, and in some cases telephone interviews were used. The reluctance of some participants to record their voice and talk about sexual issues was another limitation of the research, which the researcher satisfied them by providing a friendly atmosphere during the interview and explaining the process of conducting the research as well as how to report them and making a commitment that their name and address will be kept confidential.

5 | CONCLUSION

The men married to adolescent girls' face many problems such as sexual dissatisfaction, women's dependence on the family, inability to fulfill the roles of a wife, not being understood in life, staying in the world of childhood, emotional divorce, limiting progress and preventing achieving the goals, betrayal and a chaotic life, which can cause the collapse of the family. Therefore, it is suggested to prevent its occurrence in the first stage by passing laws and properly monitoring them, as well as educating families, women and mothers about the harmful consequences of early marriage, but if due to circumstances, it is not possible to prevent this social harm, some of their problems can be solved with measures such as sex education for adolescent women and their husbands, teaching adolescent women and their husbands necessary skills for married life such as problem-solving, teaching anger control skills, etc., and training families on how to properly support adolescent couples.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Javad Yoosefi lebni: conceptualization; methodology; writing—original draft; writing—review & editing. **Arash Ziapour:** conceptualization; formal analysis; investigation; methodology; resources; writing—original draft; writing—review & editing. **Zahra Fazeli:** data curation; resources. **Mandana Saki:** conceptualization; project administration; resources; supervision; validation; writing—original draft. **Ahmad Ahmadi:** conceptualization; data curation; investigation; software; validation; writing—original draft. **Nafiul Mehedi:** funding acquisition; investigation; software; visualization; writing—review & editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the present study's findings are available on request from the corresponding author. However, they are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

ETHICS STATEMENT

After receiving the code of ethics from Lorestan University of Medical Sciences (IR.LUMS.REC.1401.178), the purpose of

conducting the research was explained to each of the participants in the first meeting with them and written consent was obtained from them to conduct and record the interview. Also, the participants were free to refuse or accept participation in the research. The participants were assured about maintaining anonymity and not mentioning their names or any information that would lead to their identification in the report. The time and place of the interview, as well as the decision to stop or continue the interview, were at the discretion of the participants.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

The lead author Mandana Saki and Ahmad Ahmadi affirms that this manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study being reported; that no important aspects of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned (and, if relevant, registered) have been explained.

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