

Exploring the Role of the Muslim Family in Socially Preparing Children for Married Life: A Qualitative Inquiry from the Perspective of Family Reform Experts in Jordan

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Abstract

This research explores the role of the Muslim family in socially preparing children for married life, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan. To achieve its objectives, the study adopted a qualitative research paradigm, using semi-structured interviews to collect data from a purposive sample of fifteen experts working in family reform institutions in Jordan. A thorough thematic data analysis was conducted to explore the main findings related to the research questions. The four main themes of social preparation for marriage that emerged were: the reality of the family's role, the social causes of marital disputes, the areas of social preparation, and the proposed perception of the family's role. The study yielded several important findings, including that the Muslim family institution suffers from significant dysfunction in terms of awareness and practice in preparing children socially for marital life. The research recommends enhancing the role of the family in socially preparing children for marriage by proposing educational and practical solutions, grounded in scientific methods and intellectual principles.

Keywords: Muslim family; social preparation; family reform; marital life.

دور الأسرة المسلمة في إعداد الأبناء اجتماعياً للحياة الزوجية من وجهة نظر خبراء الإصلاح الأسري في الأردن: دراسة نوعية

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ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف دور الأسرة المسلمة في إعداد أبنائها اجتماعياً للحياة الزوجية من وجهة نظر خبراء الإصلاح الأسري في الأردن. ولتحقيق أهدافها اتبعت الدراسة منهج البحث النوعي، وذلك باستخدام المقابلات شبه المنظمة لجمع البيانات من عينة دراسة قصدية مكونة من خمسة عشر خبيراً يعملون في مؤسسات الإصلاح الأسري في الأردن. تم إجراء تحليل نوعي شامل للبيانات بغرض الكشف عن أبرز النتائج الخاصة بالدراسة. ونتج عن هذا التحليل تحديد الموضوعات الرئيسية التالية في سياق التأهيل الاجتماعي، وهي: واقع دور الأسرة من حيث بيان الأسباب الاجتماعية للخلافات الزوجية.

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ومجالات الإعداد الاجتماعي، والتصور المقترح لدور الأسرة. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج المهمة منها: تعاني مؤسسة الأسرة المسلمة من خلل خطير في الوعي والممارسة في إعداد أبنائها اجتماعياً للحياة الزوجية. ويوصي البحث بالنهوض بدور الأسرة في إعداد أبنائها اجتماعياً للزواج من خلال اقتراح الحلول التربوية والعملية، باتباع الأساليب والتقنيات العلمية المبنية على أسس فكرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسرة المسلمة، التأهيل الاجتماعي، الإصلاح الأسري، الحياة الزوجية.

Context:

In the Islamic tradition, the marriage of Adam and Hawwa represents the original community of Islam, the invincible fortress for its children, and the supporter of Islamic values, as well as the builder of civilization¹. This family union, from the first creation of Islam, serves as the vital institution for the nurture, care, and education of children, framed within a set of lofty goals that can be counted among its advantages².

Children are a blessing and a source of happiness, so they must be cared for, nurtured, and protected by every available means. Among the responsibilities of the family in raising children is preparing them, in all aspects, to face their future responsibilities in marriage³. One aspect of preparation for marriage that deserves attention is socialization for an understanding of the family's purpose and function in Islam, as well as all of the family's social functions⁴. This serves as a means of preparing young adults to benefit from marital life and preserve the family's well-being. It may also help ensure that the goals of Sharia are realized, particularly the building of durable marital relationships where avoidable disagreements and disputes are prevented, thus contributing to the establishment of a cohesive society built on solid ground⁵.

The numerous roles performed by the family with regard to its children have a positive impact on both the individual and society. These include procreation and emotional interaction among its members⁶, in addition to behavioral control and the establishment a moral standard⁷. The family is also responsible for providing physical protection for its members, as well as conferring social status upon them⁸. These factors contribute greatly to the social development of individuals, enabling them to function efficiently in daily life⁹. Consequently, the Islamic social system contains many rulings that guide family life and interactions¹⁰. The positive impact that marriage has on society affirms the necessity of establishing it on firm foundations to ensure its continuation and

success, which can be achieved by ensuring the readiness of adult children as they enter into marriage. Thus, it is crucial to educate them about the importance of marriage, as well as the tried-and-tested principles of Islam in this regard¹¹. Since the family is the primary source for an individual to receive social morals, it is considered the first and most important institution for carrying out this task¹².

Few studies have focused on the concept of social preparation for marriage, despite its importance and the recognition that marriage is a societal structure and system of life designed to regulate newly formed relationships in society and solve any emerging problems¹³. The concept of "social preparation" refers to conscious, planned preparation for marital life aimed at achieving the goals of marriage and ensuring its continued existence¹⁴. This concept is related to another in the same context: marital education, which seeks to teach children the correct concepts of marriage, provide information they may not yet know, and correct any erroneous ideas about marriage that they may have acquired¹⁵.

In the absence of a model representing the axes of social preparation for marriage, the structural functionalism theory attributed to Parsons¹⁶ can be relied upon to formulate these axes. It is hoped that families will recognize these axes and use them to refine their children's social personalities. The theory shows that the family constitutes a miniature social system within the general social system and is organized into three systems: social, cultural, and personal¹⁷.

The social system expresses the actor's goal of obtaining the maximum degree of satisfaction of their needs during the performance of their role, based on their social status. The social status and reward system that results is the reason for repeating the interaction¹⁸.

The cultural system includes value standards, whether religious or secular, and customs that govern human relationships, acting as a mediator between personal needs and role expectations within the social system¹⁹. These are usually formed according to the expectations of responses among interacting parties²⁰.

The personal system expresses individualism versus collectivism, assuming that there is a difference between people and that each individual has an independent manner of satisfying their needs, which constitutes a healthy phenomenon for achieving integration and social cohesion with others. Conflicts between individuals can result from each person being influenced by different—and perhaps incompatible—social and value systems and resulting motivations, which they may have acquired primarily from their family and the culture in which it is embedded²¹.

In Islam, relationships have foundations that must be observed and respected, as they all originate from a single source—the belief in Allah—and the primary value of His message, which guides all human affairs and interactions. This belief in Allah’s will also transforms people’s transactions into acts of worship. Allah says: “I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me” (Qur’an, 51:56). Likewise, family relationships are linked to the worship of Allah²². Furthermore, community relations are also based on moral ties, not material considerations²³. Relationships, guided by Allah’s instructions and the Prophet’s Sharia (interpretation of The Message for everyday living), aim to refine the soul, establish justice, preserve the interests of the people, and protect them from evil. They are also a means to achieve the aims of Islamic Sharia, the legal framework that governs human relationships²⁴.

In this sense, Islam forbids every menace, whether material or moral, that threatens to destroy social relations²⁵. Abu Huraira reported Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: “Don’t nurse malice against one another, don’t nurse aversion against one another, don’t be inquisitive about one another, don’t outbid one another (with a view to raising the price), and be fellow-brothers and servants of Allah”²⁶.

The principle of relationships in Islam is to achieve balance in society, with the degree of balance judged by the extent and organization of relationships²⁷. This is why some people emphasize the necessity of practicing relationships until they are mastered, as they are the source of people’s happiness²⁸. We argue that relationships fall into one of three levels: the special relationship between men and women, in all its dimensions; the prevailing relationships within the (extended) family; and relationships within the wider community. At all levels, these relationships are governed by numerous values, each with its own effects.

Social values

Social values are classified according to different dimensions, among which we include permanence, intensity or obligation, clarity, as well as generality, purpose, and content²⁹. Islam calls for social and family values, and this call represents a legitimate demand for the spread of morals and the shift from the personal to the social sphere³⁰. The values of married life are considered part of the prevailing value system in Muslim society. They distinguish the family from others, preserve its cohesion, regulate the relationships between its members, provide them with the meanings of married life, the goals that unite them, and the methods of achieving them. These values serve as standards by which the actions of spouses are measured, and their behavior is evaluated³¹. The

Islamic perception of values is based on the Holy Qur'an: "And He has placed between you compassion and mercy" (Qur'an, 30:21); the Sunnah of the Prophet: "A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another"; and the moral conscience, which is the result of the teachings of religion and the recognized customs of society³².

Customs and traditions

Social customs can reach such a degree of control, stability, and constancy in the conscience of society that efforts are made to ensure that all people respect them. Furthermore, the highest authority in society may use executive force to make those customs a universal social constitution³³. Islam does not deny all social customs or belittle their impact, as people view their customs as a conduit that strengthens the bonds of relationship between them and helps form a homogeneous entity³⁴.

According to Diab³⁵, social customs perform many functions in society. They serve as a guide and compass for the behavior that society expects from the individual. Customs make it easier for individuals to recognize patterns of behavior and reactions. They facilitate interaction between individuals, guide them to what is beautiful, palatable, and desirable, and help them master the art of dealing with others. Dealing with social customs should take into account the different religious beliefs and rituals in society because, if they conflict with religious teachings and divine standards, they can have negative effects on society and the unity of its individuals³⁶.

Marital disputes

The reasons for marital disputes of a social nature can be understood through the lens of the constructivist-functional theory. The relationship between two individuals interacting on an equal level requires them to perform equal roles, during which the needs of both are met. In this ideal scenario, the relationship functions smoothly, unless a change triggers a defect, prompting the weaker party to withdraw or prepare for a dispute between the spouses. The dispute may escalate, with severe consequences for the institution of marriage³⁷. If the dispute cannot be resolved, Sharia law requires the spouses to resort to arbitration.

The family's guidance plays an important role in preparing children to prevent marital disputes, which usually requires gradual preparation and training to ensure they are well-equipped for marital life³⁸. This preparation should cultivate a culture of affection, compassion, and understanding of each

spouse's nature and mental makeup, in addition to fostering widespread trust between spouses. Such a foundation encourages the desire to correct mistakes and find positive support from family and close ones. It also instills a culture of understanding, a willingness to accept advice, and a commitment to adjusting the course of their relationship. Ultimately, marital life must be seen as a joint venture between the spouses from the outset³⁹.

Problem and questions

Sharia court records from 2016 show an increase in divorce rates among young Jordanian couples, a significant percentage of whom cited social reasons as the source of their disputes⁴⁰. The current research explores the role that the Muslim family is expected to play in preparing its children socially for marital life, with the ultimate aim of helping young married couples avoid destabilizing marital problems, thus ensuring a successful married life.

The current research responds to several previous studies, such as those by Halawa⁴¹, Umani & Brahmy⁴², and Al-Harthy⁴³, which call for conducting field research on the preparation for marital life to establish practical solutions based on Islamic education. Reality confirms the need for Muslim society to activate the role of the family due to its important position and significant impact⁴⁴. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following main question: What is the role of the Muslim family in socially preparing children for married life, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan?

The main question naturally leads to a number of sub-questions:

1. What is the reality of the family's role in socially preparing children for married life, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan?
2. What are the most prominent social causes of marital disputes, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan?
3. What are the main areas of social preparation for children before marriage, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan?
4. What is the proposed perception of the family's role in socially preparing children for marriage, from the perspective of family reform experts in Jordan?

Methodology

The current research is qualitative in nature and follows an explorative approach to investigate the social phenomenon in its real context by examining the perspectives of a selected sample of family

reform experts in Jordan regarding the role of the Muslim family in preparing their children socially for marital life, thus providing a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study⁴⁵.

Designing Interview Schedules

The design of the semi-structured interview questions was informed by the literature review conducted prior to developing the research tool. An external audit was performed by experts in the field of family reform courts and professional researchers in family studies. The audit included validating the interview schedule, the collected data, and the initial data analysis findings. All feedback was collected and addressed in different phases of the research.

Data Collection

The evidence for this research was gathered through fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with professionals and experts in the field of family reform in the Jordanian context. Participants of both genders and various backgrounds were selected because their involvement in the field of study made them suitable 'key informants' for the studied phenomenon⁴⁶.

Data Analysis

The analysis benefited from the steps suggested by Tesch⁴⁷ but was heavily based on the thematic analysis model outlined by Attride-Stirling⁴⁸. The fieldwork provided sufficient data to understand the perspectives of family reform experts. The researchers embarked on an extensive three-phase analysis of the notes and data collected from the interviews. The first phase of the analysis began with a thorough reading of the transcribed material and the notes taken during the interviews. This reading aimed to create codes and categorize key points found throughout the transcripts. Second and third deep, guided readings were conducted, and data were organized into tables for better understanding. The first phase revealed various codes and categories, while the second phase involved a more organized effort to establish relationships between the emerging themes. Attride-Stirling⁴⁹ called this process 'organizing themes.' The third phase sought to identify a systematic approach to presenting the main findings in a narrative style, named 'global themes' in Attride-Stirling's model⁵⁰. These are 1) reality of the family role; 2) social causes of marital dispute; 3) areas of social preparation; and 4) proposed perception of the role of the family.

Findings

The findings were informed by the four main research questions, which cover the reality of the family role, social causes of family disputes, areas of social preparation, and the proposed perception of the family role.

1- Reality of the family role

Experts highlighted two influencing factors when evaluating the status quo of the family role: the awareness of different parties regarding social preparation for married life and the practice of social preparation by families. The data revealed that experts viewed the reality of the family role in three different ways:

One: Lack of awareness and practice:

Participants opined that the family suffers from a lack of awareness regarding its expected role in preparing its children socially for marital life. The aspects of preparation that are carried out are traditional in nature and out of line with today's complex reality, which requires an advanced level of awareness among the family and those responsible for its empowerment. Participants confirmed that traditional practices are the result of two main factors. The first is *family reasons*, including a lack of feeling of marital and family responsibility among both parents and children. The second is *societal reasons*, where blame is partially placed on official institutions, which have abandoned their role in educating and empowering the family to enable it to carry out its assigned educational role.

Two: The presence of awareness but a shortfall in practice:

Participants pointed to several challenges facing the family, such as its inability to determine its educational priorities, including limiting the concept of marriage to a narrow scope. Further, the complexity of life and the evolving concept of the family from a social perspective have weakened the system of social values in families. Social values serve as a motivation in the process of social preparation for marital life. The widespread phenomenon of spinsterhood also haunts parents, causing them to focus on getting their children married without paying due attention to preparing them for marriage. The communications and technology revolution has contributed to the disintegration of the family, leaving young people unprepared to handle the demands of marriage.

Three: Achieving awareness and practice:

The participants asserted that a small minority of families are motivated by religious, social, and cultural incentives to make great efforts to prepare their children socially for marital life. However, in practice, these efforts are undermined by the lack of a sound scientific methodology,

which may result in much of their work being wasted. Individual family practices also lack a framework and often fail without guidance and assistance.

2- Social causes of marital disputes

Data collected from family reform experts showed that marital disputes of a social nature rank highly among the cases of conflict and discord presided over and recorded by the Jordanian Sharia courts. Social causes are classified into personal and societal causes, each comprising a group of sub-causes:

2.1. Personal reasons

The data indicates twelve causes of personal social disagreements. The first cause is the failure to adhere to the criteria of Sharia, resulting in a poor choice of spouse. The second cause is the failure to achieve parity between spouses due to the neglect of certain criteria by which parity is usually achieved. The third cause is the difference in character and attitudes between the spouses regarding the social aspects of marriage. The fourth cause is ignorance of the concepts of marital life and the rights and duties incurred by the spouses under the marital relationship. The fifth cause is the ignorance of the spouses, or one of them, of the customs and traditions of each spouse's original community. The sixth cause involves the disclosure of marital secrets and the inability of one of the spouses to maintain the privacy of their marital and family life. The seventh cause is the shaking of trust between spouses. The eighth cause is the husband's absence from the family in an effort to seek a livelihood far from where his family resides. The ninth cause involves the many new and emerging social variables in society. The tenth cause is the failure of spouses to use expressions of affection and love in their interactions. The eleventh cause is attributed to the fact that, in the early days of marriage, misunderstandings can easily forge gaps in the relationship, making it fragile before solid foundations have been built.

2.2. Societal reasons

Societal problems stem from the social circumstances of the couple and are, to some extent, related to the marital relationship itself. The participants explained these problems, saying that some young couples face outside interference in their decisions and private matters, whether from their families or others in their close community. Sometimes, one of the spouses is preoccupied with relationships formed through social networking sites, which leads to negligence in performing duties, resulting in indifference in the marital relationship. On other occasions, one spouse has a

poor relationship with the other's family, which contradicts the ultimate goal of marriage — the creation of lineage and affinity. Finally, recent times have seen an increase in the mingling of the two sexes, both in the work environment and within the family, which is contrary to Sharia.

3- Areas of social preparation

Analysis of the experts' statements revealed four key areas of focus when preparing children for marital life. These are:

One: Social relationships:

The participants described marriage as a framework within which relationships exist at multiple levels. Spouses need to be aware of these social relationships and their demands, in addition to the requirements for building good and healthy relationships, and how to act within them. Based on this, the impact that social relationships have on marital life can be either positive or negative. When a relationship is based on a solid value system, its outcomes will have a positive, strengthening impact. However, a relationship founded on religious and social violations, with flimsy moral standards, is sure to fail to provide stability in marital life.

The data also confirms the need for spouses to be made aware of certain matters that serve as prior indicators of the success of the marital relationship, which Islamic legislation encourages Muslims to adhere to. Those on the threshold of marriage should be taught the true meaning of marriage and how to build it within a dual framework. This involves constructing a marital unit that stands independent from, yet interacts with, their social environment.

Additionally, it is necessary to adhere to the teachings of Sharia in various aspects of building social relationships within marital life, so that these relationships are organized within a proper legal framework, one that does not disturb peace and preserves security.

Two: Social values

The results indicated the positive impact of adherence to values on the marital relationship, as it underpins its stability. One participant shared:

"I am almost certain that it will be a stable and happy life, if both of them adhere to religious values, because it means that each one knows his rights, limits, and duties, and acts accordingly". (H. B.)

This commitment to values gives the marital and family relationship an advantage over others. Hence, we can see the importance of preparing children in this aspect. In order for values to be accepted, they need to be regulated by religious considerations and social standards. One participant emphasized this point, saying: *"Values must be fixed, and if they shift out of line, we must return them*

to the constant.” (A. S.)

The numerous prioritized values in the marital life value system can be classified into two types. The first are cognitive or administrative values, which include managing dialogue and disagreements between spouses, appreciating differences, accepting criticism, understanding the other party, openness between spouses, and the value of communication. The second type of values are determined by religious morality, and include spouses' appreciation for married life, their awareness of its extension into the afterlife, their sense of the mission and purposes of marriage, and the preservation of the confidentiality of the marital relationship to protect their privacy and their marriage.

Among the values that positively impact marital life are honesty, understanding, loyalty, and trust between spouses, as they serve to clarify the relationship. Honesty and clarity strengthen marital relationships. One participant said, *“Clarity, frankness, and transparency in dealings are among the topics that should be raised (in preparation)”* (F. T.).

Other such values include affection, mercy, tolerance, patience, and apology when one of the parties commits a mistake. The necessity of cooperation and bearing responsibility are values that support the stability of marital life and the fulfillment of the mission of marriage, as well as being indicators of good relations between spouses. One female participant shared:

“Respect is very important, in addition to the distribution of responsibility, and mutual cooperation. My husband and I have tolerance for each other. He overlooks my mistakes and I overlook his mistakes, and I forgive him and he forgives me, and he apologizes to me and I apologize to him, since tolerance is, indeed, imperative between spouses.” (F. A.)

Three: Social customs and traditions

The data showed that preparing adult children about to get married in terms of social customs involves ensuring that they know the commonly-accepted customs in Jordanian society, by which their behavior is regulated in their married life. They must also be helped to adapt and integrate into their new social reality. One female participant says:

“The environment from which (each of the spouses) comes comprises the values, customs, traditions, and cultures that exist in their family, with which they were raised. I pass them on to my husband, and my husband passes them on to me, so that we create a merger between these customs, traditions, and values, so that we emerge with a new social axis.” (H. B.)

Customs and traditions are a serious consideration in Jordanian society, and therefore hold a tangible positive or negative impact on marital life and its establishment. In light of this reality,

there is call to take a stance against every negative habit that may mar marital life and lead to the outbreak of disagreements and the collapse of relationships. Where appropriate, the matter calls for positive reinforcement and teaching the children according to their positive repercussions on the couple and their surroundings. It is not sufficient to determine the impact in considering customs and implementing them, but rather there must be legal approval and social acceptance, in order for them to be approved and applied. One participant says:

“There should be an adjudicator to whom we can turn for judgment in this matter, so that we make the judgment according to Sharia. Regarding exaggeration in the [expense of the] wedding party, the bride’s personal preparation, exaggeration in the amount of gold, and exaggeration in requiring a specific hotel to hold the wedding ceremony, is this part of the religion, and does it have a positive future effect on family life?” (H. B.)

Four: Social marital disputes

The data indicated that the spouses' knowledge of possible steps by which marital disputes of a social nature can be dealt with serves to limit their occurrence and narrow their scope. This prevents destabilization of marital life which can lead to its termination. One of our male participants says,

“Sometimes we mention divorce rates and the most prevalent reasons for disagreements. The aim is not to mention the reason, as much as it concerns us, even if the reason passes us by, but to point out how we can overcome this reason.” (M. B.)

Marital disputes and their social causes can be overcome through several steps, represented by two main types: preventive steps and procedural steps that spouses resort to in facing the challenges of their daily lives. One of the participants points out the need for *“the preparation of preventive programs to curtail the spread of future problems.”* (M. B.)

4- Proposed perception of the role of the family

The participants’ statements revealed that their proposed perceptions of enhancing the family’s role in socially preparing its children for marital life entail two stages. The first stage involves raising awareness of the family role in socially preparing children for married life, and its mechanisms, since the current reality shows a lack of awareness and family practice. Thus, the matter requires that a state of sufficient awareness be reached in the family regarding its implications and importance. Therefore, it is necessary to work seriously and effectively to create an integrated educational system in which institutional participation is achieved, and which addresses the family in an effort to activate its role in preparing its children. One participant says, *“There must be*

diligent work...through schools, mosques and universities, to provide families with preparation programs. The concerned authorities must activate the role of the family and guide the family to fulfill its role.” (A. J.)

The second stage involves activating the family role in preparing children socially for married life, as indicated by several perceptions proffered by the study participants. The first aim is to achieve intellectual awareness of many aspects within the family, which would facilitate its practice and performance, as follows:

The practice of social preparation of children: Considering that preparation is a societal requirement, it is crucial that it be performed well in order to have a beneficial impact on society. The matter requires that the family employ a number of methods to achieve its goals. One participant says, *“With advice and guidance, we can refine the morals and behaviors of our children so that they will achieve future marital success through repeated and sustainable education”*. (K. S.)

One of the participants suggests that parents hold *“...conversations with children about many aspects of life (which) shape their personality, so when the parents see some negative behavior, they can point it out and warn them to be careful and refrain from that behavior”*. (K. A.)

The principles of social preparation for marital life: Preparation is an intentional process that stems from awareness and recognition of many cognitive principles that the family must embrace in order for the practice to proceed in a normal and correct framework. The data identified those principles in two aspects:

1. Principles of successful social preparation: The data included a reference to a set of criteria for judging the success of the preparation process. The family should keep these in mind when preparing its children socially for marital life.
2. The most appropriate time frame to begin the process of social preparation for marital life: The data confirmed that the family should be aware of the most appropriate time to begin the process of social preparation for marital life with its children, so that it can exercise the role in a manner consistent with its goals and objectives. The participants gave various opinions in this context which can be described as meeting one of three trends. First, they indicated that social preparation is an ongoing and long-term process that should begin when the child is small and continue until they reach the stage of becoming engaged and getting married. This opinion explains the impact that early upbringing has on the process of socially preparing children for married life, which is the main factor in shaping children's inclinations,

orientations and desires towards what is and is not important in their lives. The other approach believes that social preparation for married life should be confined to a specific stage preceding marriage, and is done by guiding children, making them aware of specific concepts about marriage, and correcting the negative ideas and attitudes they may have about it.

The data added a final trend in this context, as social preparation for marital life is an integrated and continuous process that occurs through a combination of the first and second trends. This is because matters within the social axis are acquired in the early stages of life, coinciding with the various stages of children's development. However, the outcome of this is not guaranteed, so emphasis is placed on some ideas and concepts being dealt with in the period preceding marriage, at which point the prospective spouses should be provided with the information and concepts they lack, and have any misconceptions corrected.

Discussion

One: Discussion of the results with regard to the first question

Taking a closer look at the overall description of the reality of the family role in preparing its children socially for married life, we can confirm that it is, to a large extent, currently characterized by disorder and lack of discipline, and that it suffers from a general imbalance, despite its importance and necessity. Behind every form of the reality of this role are intellectual and behavioral reasons that have led to its creation, whether they come from the family or society, and they come in the form of obstacles or motives.

The turbulent reality of the family's role in the social preparation of their children for marriage can be attributed to the intentional or unintentional neglect of this role. There has been a lack of seriousness in seeking to create a comprehensive and robust societal system, on the part of official and private bodies, alongside a reluctance to activate the family role in qualifying and socially preparing children for marriage in both respects of ensuring awareness and achieving its actual practice, by providing appropriate support to the family in terms of suggesting systematic and thoughtful methods to families and their children, which meet the currently unfilled need and facilitate the performance of their role. Even if some systems exist, they are not directed scientifically and thoughtfully, and are inconsistent with the extent of the need for them. Furthermore, they are presented in ways and methods that encourage people to receive them with an attitude of laxity and indifference.

The theoretical literature does not adequately address the family's role in socially preparing its children for marital life, except in narrow and general contexts. The topic is typically discussed within the broader framework of marital preparation, without specifically linking it to its social aspect. This discussion has often been limited to explaining the value added by the family in this role compared to other educational institutions, as noted by Al-Tarif⁵¹ (2008). However, this approach is usually insufficient to fully address the topic. It highlights the lack of effective use of scientific research to support and raise awareness of this role, even though such research could be a valuable tool in enhancing societal awareness of its importance.

Two: Discussion of the results with regard to the second question

The results of the data analysis showed the weight given to the social aspect, among others, in marital disputes in Jordanian society. These results are supported by Ibdah⁵², Gharaibeh⁵³ and Zahran⁵⁴.

This result highlights the urgent need for the actual practice of social preparation for marital life in Jordanian society. It can be attributed to the significant impact caused by the lack of awareness and practice among families and other concerned parties, including both official and private community institutions. This gap in awareness is likely one of the reasons behind the Chief Justice Department's implementation of mandatory and optional courses through its family reform offices. These courses aim to qualify individuals preparing for marriage, with the goal of reducing the cases of marital conflict and discord encountered by the department.

The researchers believe that the technological development and cognitive revolution of the current era have significantly contributed to the destabilization and destruction of many marital relationships. This issue is not due to the communication tools themselves, but rather to their misuse and improper handling. As a social variable affecting marital relationships, technological devices must be used mindfully and in a disciplined manner to prevent them from becoming a harmful source that undermines families.

Numerous studies, represented by Ibdah⁵⁵, Zahran⁵⁶, and Ghazwi⁵⁷, have pointed to many social causes for marital disputes, and given support to a number of aspects of the results of the current study, but they did not refer to them in the same terms.

Three: Discussion of the results with regard to the third question

The results showed that social preparation for marriage is based on four axes: relationships, values, customs and traditions, and how to deal with marital disputes. Several topics emerge from each axis.

This result may be attributed to the fact that these issues constitute a major cause of marital disputes of a social nature in Jordanian society. This may be due to the social background of the participants, their starting from sociological theories adopted in the socialization of children, and their lack of awareness of the demands of married life, which requires careful preparation for a future social life in order to bring about a positive effect. This can be achieved by ensuring that they have the ability to build disciplined relationships according to the standards of Sharia and society.

These axes are consistent with the findings of Abu Ajwah⁵⁸ and Umani & Brahmy⁵⁹ in the context of referring to the family role in marital education and considering social preparation for marriage as a subsidiary stage. This preparation is based on many of its components, deals with many of its outcomes, and seeks to achieve some of its goals. This constitutes a reason for considering these topics as axes of the social aspect of preparation for marriage.

This combination of the four axes can be attributed to social preparation for marital life, due to the dual comprehensive view at the same time of the subject of preparation, and to consider causality in presenting it in this way. Thus, it combines two purposes: Directing the balanced social interaction of couples and treating it if it becomes imbalanced.

This is indicated by many studies, such as the studies by Al-Mutairi⁶⁰ and Salem⁶¹. We can see that social marital disputes are, in one way or another, the result of tension in relationships and a transgression of the prevailing values and customs in society, as was confirmed by Al-Shboul⁶².

The necessity of considering relationships as a focus of social preparation for marriage comes through awareness of their forms and impact, and the resulting impact on marital life and the demands of relationships within marriage. This is due to the fact that awareness is considered a means to avoiding the negative impact it has on marital life in the event of ignorance of its details, as marriage is inevitably linked with many social relationships that fall within a range of scopes and levels. The theoretical literature has elaborated on the topics of relationships, as seen in the study by Al-Hazaymeh⁶³. However, the proposal was not within the framework of preparation for married life.

The results showed that it is the responsibility of the family to ensure that its children are socially prepared for marriage, both morally and ethically, based on the positive impact of this preparation on the marital relationship and social relations as a whole. This is consistent with the findings of Al-

Hazmi⁶⁴. Further, the study of Umani & Brahmy, considered it one of the social skills necessary for married life. Therefore, the Sharia came to regulate this matter, as indicated by the study by Al-Hazaymeh⁶⁵.

As for what the results concluded about the necessity of adopting standards of values governing the marital relationship, this can be attributed to the fact that the Islamic faith does not accept every value that is marketed in Muslim society and does not give it the status of normative unless it is regulated by Islamic controls. When social reality imposes changing values on us, the scale by which they are weighed and accepted or rejected is the extent of their compatibility with the Sharia and their consistency with its established principles.

There are several values that occupy priority and prominence in regulating marital relationships, and the data indicated a group of those values which can be classified into two sections: Religious values and administrative values. Within this classification, the values predominantly relied upon and adopted by the participants are religious values, out of deference to their source and the purpose of giving them reverence. They are derived from the texts of Islamic Sharia, and acting upon them is considered a matter of devotion.

Meanwhile, administrative values are classified depending on the function they perform in marital life and its management, and the importance of the spouses taking them into account in making their daily decisions. The literature has referred to the values of marital life in various ways, in presentation and classification. Al-Kazlan⁶⁶ referred to some of the values that this study brought forth, while Al-Haddad⁶⁷ discussed the issue of values in marital life in extensive detail, and with a different initial perspective in defining the meaning of values.

The participants' demand for the need to pay attention to social customs, and the call to consider them as one of the axes of the social aspect of preparing for marriage, can be attributed to their awareness of the current reality and their sense of its negative impact in Jordanian society on the establishment and continuation of the marital relationship. This is confirmed by the cases of conflict and discord that occur, of which customs and traditions are a direct cause. We say this in light of the spread and entrenchment of infected customs in society that contradict the purposes of Sharia and are harmful to marital life.

On the other hand, the data indicated that it is not necessary to educate young adults regarding social customs, as they no longer affect the reality that exists. This result can be attributed to the technological and electronic revolution we are experiencing in our contemporary reality that has made

members of society lose their grip on standards. Rather, individuals have been encouraged to rebel against society and reject its customs under the pretext of keeping pace with openness and global social development. The topic of customs in general and in the context of the preparation for marriage, and the extent to which they affect marital and social life positively or negatively, has not received much attention in previous literature, and this is what sets this study apart from others.

The results also showed the necessity of considering how to deal with marital disputes as an axis of social preparation for marital life, as recommended by Al-Refai⁶⁸. The data confirmed that marital disputes can be dealt with by the spouses resorting to preventive and remedial steps to reduce or resolve their differences. Many of these steps were mentioned in the study and this is also what the literature has suggested, as found in the study by Al-Mutairi⁶⁹.

The emphasis on the necessity of learning how to deal with marital disputes can be attributed to the desire to achieve comprehensive social preparation for marital life. The integrated practice of social preparation for marriage instructs the necessity of moving out of the scope of fragmentary thinking about the subject, which destroys its goals. This is in light of marital disputes resulting from the absence of guidance for the spouses on social issues. Therefore, raising awareness about it guarantees the strengthening of the marital relationship and enables the spouses to correct the imbalance in their relationship, before its impact advances, increases in severity, and expands in scope.

Four: Discussion of the results with regard to the fourth question

The results indicate proposed perceptions of the role of the family in socially preparing its children for marital life and confirm the necessity of establishing integrated work and a comprehensive system that makes awareness and practice a reality with tangible impact. Therefore, from these perceptions, practical steps can be taken to guide and educate the family about this role and its importance, followed by steps for actual practice by the family, in the form of methods and principles.

The first steps aim to achieve family awareness of this role and its importance. These steps can be implemented through all educational community institutions, directing their efforts toward the family using methods that serve and achieve this goal. Literature has indicated the necessity of educating the family and working to prepare it to play its role in preparing children for marriage, as indicated by studies by Al-Qazzaz⁷⁰ and Al-Tarif⁷¹.

This result can be attributed to the participants' awareness of the magnitude of responsibility and the weight of the role, which requires systematic preparation. It cannot be placed entirely on the family, burdening it and making it difficult for it to handle, because preparation for marriage is a societal

demand. Furthermore, it is a religious demand, stemming from the purposeful dimension and the devotional aspect of marriage. This becomes clear by broadening the horizon and taking a closer look at the goals of preparation for marriage. Therefore, moving it forward requires the existence of a comprehensive societal system, which can be achieved through organized and precise work. This requires institutional participation, where responsibilities are distributed among all concerned parties with an interest in family issues, to achieve a kind of fluidity in the family's practice of this role. It will emerge from the realm of the unfamiliar and become a common culture, ultimately becoming a reality with tangible impact. The study by Al-Qazzaz⁷² indicated the necessity of establishing a community system to perform this role, as was recommended by Al-Haddad⁷³.

The results of the data analysis also showed that there are several subsequent steps after the stage of raising family awareness of socially preparing children for marriage and the necessity of putting it into practice. The aim is to achieve actual practice by the family in socially preparing its children for marital life, through the use of many suggested means and methods that are appropriate to its capabilities and the opportunities available to it. This practice is based on cognitive awareness of several requirements for social preparation for marriage, which the family must be familiar with in order to perform its role effectively. The family must realize that social preparation has certain principles that contribute to its success, adhere to these principles, and take into account the time frame for its practice. This was also indicated by the study of Umani & Brahmy, which emphasized the necessity of the family possessing practical mechanisms and sound methods through which children are qualified for marriage.

Opinions have varied regarding this aspect, with some seeing it as an extended period that begins at an early stage, while others restricting it temporally to a period just before marriage. For example, the study of Al mzf and Aljwysr⁷⁴ preferred to combine the two viewpoints, stating that social preparation for marriage needs to be practiced from an early stage, while certain aspects should be emphasized as the young person approaches marriage. The theoretical literature did not indicate the appropriate time frame for practicing social preparation for marital life.

This difference in approach is due to the conceptual confusion among many workers in this field, as well as the confusion between marital education and social marital preparation. This issue needs to be examined and addressed. Returning to the theoretical literature, we find that it focuses on the concept of marital education rather than social marital preparation and does not set clear boundaries to regulate the terms or distinguish them from one another, especially since they share many commonalities while differing in several key details.

Marital education is a stage prior to social preparation for marriage and serves as the foundation upon which social preparation is based. Social preparation for marriage is a process that builds upon the outcomes of marital education, during which acquired ideas and experiences are corrected, gaps in knowledge about aspects of future marital life are addressed, and comprehensive preparedness for this important stage is ensured. Therefore, one cannot do without the other, as is indicated by Al-Kazlan⁷⁵, and Al-Tarif⁷⁶. Based on this, it is possible to affirm that the preferable standpoint is that social preparation for marriage is a temporary stage that precedes marriage.

Following this premise, the proposed principles for social preparation for marital life cannot be considered or accepted universally. Instead, what should be taken into account is what is consistent with the time frame during which social preparation for marital life is deemed appropriate. In light of the absence of suggested aspects of marital preparation in general, and social preparation in particular, the literature fails to outline the principles that should be adopted in its practice.

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