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Exploring Individual Foundations of Marital Relationship Sustainability in Women with Veteran Spouses: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this research was to explore the personal foundations of marital relationship sustainability in women with veteran spouses.

Methods: The current study employed a qualitative interpretative phenomenological research design. Among women with veteran spouses (Iran-Iraq War veterans), 14 individuals from Sardasht city (Iran) were selected purposively and interviewed. The interviews were analyzed using the interpretative phenomenological analysis method.

Results: Exploring the lived experiences of these individuals led to the identification of 18 sub-themes and six main themes (love, spirituality, conscientiousness, perception of meaning, social connectedness, and high acceptance). These findings reveal the reality that sustaining a lasting interaction and coping with marital life challenges with a veteran spouse may be achievable through the core elements of love, spirituality, conscientiousness, perception of meaning, social connectedness, and high acceptance.

Conclusions: Counselors and psychologists working in the field of marriage and family can foster these dimensions in individuals to facilitate successful entry into marital life and the continuous sustainability of relationships.

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Introduction

War refers to the organized and often prolonged armed conflict between governments or different groups (HassanZadeh, 2017; Smart et al., 2021). Apart from its destructive impact on the environment, physical, psychological, and social well-being of individuals, war disrupts the security of families and society as a whole (Imanpour; Sherman et al., 2018a). War affects many individuals, both military and civilians, leading to physical or neurological injuries and a lifetime of living with these conditions (Oliver, 2020). Disability resulting from war, known as war-related disability, involves physical injuries or neurological disorders acquired due to exposure to warfare and weaponry (Azad, 2011).

Caring for the wounded is a significant concern (Imanpour; Yazdanbakhsh et al., 2021). Typically, the care of this group is assumed by their spouses, and it comes with its unique challenges depending on the extent of disability (HassanZadeh, 2017).

In addition to these indirect costs, the immense toll on the physical, mental, and social well-being of chemical war survivors and their families is present (Molkari et al., 2013). The role of a war veteran's spouse is pivotal, as they grapple with similar life circumstances as the rest of society, but with the added burden of coping with the physical and psychological consequences of war-related disabilities in their partners (Shindel et al., 2008). Within this context, spouses of chemical war survivors, serving as their primary caregivers, experience stressors that threaten the well-being of both the survivor and their family (Sharpley, 1988).

Clinical experiences, including studies by Brezsnyak and Whisman (2004), demonstrate that families of war survivors, especially their spouses, suffer from psychological distress. Lindsay and Powell (1994) suggests that providing care for a chronically ill patient by family members leads to feelings of pressure and hardship, negatively affecting their quality of life. On the other hand, the presence of a serious chronic illness in a family member deeply influences the family system, roles, functioning, and overall quality of life for family members (Yahyazadeh & Masomzadeh, 2016).

Paying attention to one's mental health is of paramount importance. Studies indicate that mental health is intricately connected to well-being and even physical health under psychological stress (Atkinson et al., 1987). It is likely that women who have lost their spouses or whose spouses suffer severe physical or psychological injuries experience intensified psychological stress. In families

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of war veterans and martyrs, the central role typically falls to women. Carrying the responsibility of a central family member, especially under adverse circumstances, exerts a significant toll on the health, well-being, and educational environment of the family (Fletcher & Martin, 1982).

The issue of primary concern and the main question is: Despite the challenges and psychological-social distress faced by women with war veteran spouses, as mentioned earlier, what characteristics contribute to their resilience and ability to maintain their quality of life?

Although multiple research findings have assessed the positive and negative effects of caregiving on caregivers, due to the subtle and unpredictable nature of illness symptoms and a lack of accurate understanding of the disease, it often leads to frustration and distancing from friends and family (Azad, 2011), subsequently resulting in isolation, depression, anxiety, deterioration in family functioning, conflicts, and ultimately divorce and separation (HassanZadeh, 2017). Grieger et al. (2006) emphasized four main themes in their study of spouses caring for husbands with multiple sclerosis, including the caregiver's roles and the need for acquiring information, changes in roles and relationships, and human-environmental barriers. They recommended addressing the needs of caregivers and patients and working to address them.

Another study highlighted the impact of individual training on enhancing coping strategies among caregivers of schizophrenic patients, indicating that training led to a greater utilization of helpful coping mechanisms and reduced use of non-effective coping strategies (Heiser et al., 2000). Nurses and doctors can promote the quality of life of care recipients by facilitating accessible methods, such as creating support groups and offering useful coping strategies, with nurses acting as guides to help care recipients adjust and select effective coping methods for life's challenges (Blanchard et al., 2006).

In a survey of 100 counselors in veterans' centers, the most common problems reported by the spouses of Vietnam War veterans and soldiers were dealing with issues, loneliness, social isolation, feelings of being lost, loss of responsibility, impotence, and feelings of identity loss and lack of control over life (Osváth et al., 2001). Nappi et al. (2008) concluded that veterans and soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) face more challenges in family adaptation, marital issues, and parenting problems compared to those without the disorder. In this study, approximately 60% of these patients and their spouses reported moderate to high levels of marital problems. Families with veterans suffering from PTSD experienced more violence compared to

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families of veterans without this disorder. Many spouses of these patients reported high levels of unidentified distress, with about half of them feeling on the verge of nervous breakdown.

Focusing on mental health is of paramount importance. Studies have demonstrated that mental health, well-being, and even physical health are influenced by psychological stress (Penk et al., 1981). It is likely that this impact is exacerbated for women who have lost their spouses or whose spouses suffer from severe physical or psychological injuries. In families of veterans and martyrs, women predominantly assume central roles. The stress on a key family member's well-being has a greater impact on family health, well-being, and educational environment than on others (Soleymani & Shaker Dioulagh, 2022). The responsibility for the family of martyrs or the primary responsibility within their family usually falls on the surviving spouse. In the case of veteran families, dealing with the physical and psychological problems of veterans, especially when the extent of injury is high or when the veteran experiences post-incident stress disorder, often falls to the spouse. Therefore, from a mental health perspective, they can be considered one of the vulnerable groups in society (Soleymani & Shaker Dioulagh, 2022). This highlights the ongoing negative effects of war, particularly on the spouses of veterans.

In the midst of this, families of veterans who may have been affected due to the consequences of war (Pastor, 2011) also need attention. Given that women play a crucial role in every family, ensuring the mental health in families and society, they also bear the most significant role and the greatest burdens in families of veterans. Therefore, focusing on the personal foundations of marital relationship sustainability in women with veteran spouses, preventing serious problems in marital relationships and family mental health, becomes crucial, underscoring the need for further attention in this area. As such, this research aims to explore the personal foundations of marital relationship sustainability in women with veteran spouses.

Material and Methods

The present research was conducted using a qualitative method and an interpretative phenomenological design. In this research design, the researcher aims to explore the experiences of participants regarding the phenomenon under study by focusing on their explicit and implicit expressions through interviews.

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The population of participants in this study included all women with war-disabled spouses (Iran-Iraq war veterans) in 2022 in Sardasht city (Iran). To select the desired sample, a list of Iran-Iraq war veterans was obtained from the Martyrs and Veterans Affairs Foundation in Sardasht city. Then, participants were selected from this group using purposive sampling and considering the inclusion criteria. The sample size was determined based on the saturation principle. The interview process continued until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurred in the eleventh interview in this study. To ensure saturation, three additional interviews were conducted, all of which also confirmed data saturation. In the present study, participants were selected from various regions, age groups, education levels, and occupations to achieve comprehensive information. The degree of war disability among their spouses also varied. The inclusion criteria for women in this study were: having a war-disabled spouse with over 25% disability, a minimum of 30 years of married life, willingness to participate in the interview, having good mental health (diagnosed by the researcher during counseling sessions and clinical interviews), having at least a high school diploma, and not participating concurrently in another educational or therapeutic program. The exclusion criteria included: providing vague answers to interview questions, not participating in subsequent interview sessions when necessary, and not reviewing the obtained interview findings for validation.

Table 1. Sociodemographic information of participants

Participant	Age	Education	Job	N of children	Marital life duration	Spouse's veteran percentage
1	65	Diploma	House keeper	4	42	45
2	63	Master	House keeper	5	28	40
3	55	Bachelor	Employee	2	34	60
4	64	Bachelor	House keeper	6	41	55
5	57	Master	Retired	3	37	65
6	60	Master	Retired	2	41	70
7	66	Diploma	House keeper	6	38	50
8	70	Bachelor	Retired	3	42	40
9	58	Bachelor	Employee	0	39	65
10	61	Master	Retired	3	30	70
11	64	Diploma	House keeper	4	36	70
12	60	Ph.D.	Retired	2	31	30
13	59	Bachelor	Employee	3	29	35
14	67	Diploma	House keeper	5	37	65

Table 1 illustrates that there were 14 participants in the study, with an average age of 62.7, Four participants had a diploma degree, five had a bachelor's degree, four had a master's degree, and

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one had a doctoral degree. Six participants were housewives, and the remaining eight were employed. They had a minimum of two children and a maximum of six children. The average duration of marital life among the participants was 36.7 years. The percentage of disability in their spouses ranged from a minimum of 40% to a maximum of 70%.

Research Instrument and Data Collection Method: A semi-structured interview was used to collect data. In this method, the researcher explored the theoretical and empirical background of marital relationships of war veterans and the caregiving experiences of women with war-disabled spouses. General questions were designed based on the extracted information and foundations. The interview process began with general questions such as "How would you describe your marital relationship?" and "Please explain your caregiving and nursing experiences." Follow-up exploratory questions were used to further elucidate the information provided. Fourteen interviews were conducted with the target group, each lasting from 90 to 120 minutes, and the time and location were determined in advance and agreed upon with the interviewees. Some interviews extended over multiple sessions to obtain comprehensive information. Data were collected, recorded, and analyzed over an eight-month period. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analyzed after completion. To protect participants' rights and ethical principles, interviews were kept confidential, and the identity of participants was not revealed. The recorded interviews were deleted after the analysis process and completion of the research. The researcher then recorded interpretive summaries based on the collected data and reexamined them to uncover their meanings. Another qualitative research expert was consulted to enhance the comprehensiveness and depth of themes and meanings through collaboration and discussion.

With ongoing interviews and analysis, the extracted themes and concepts became clearer and more comprehensive. Some themes merged and combined with previous themes, while others generated new themes. The process involved returning to the text to clarify, categorize, and resolve any discrepancies or shortcomings in interpretation. After coding and categorizing the data, common and related themes were combined into sub-themes, which eventually led to the formation of the main themes. Irrelevant themes were excluded.

Data Credibility Process: To assess the credibility and reliability of the data, the Guba and Lincoln (1989) criteria were employed. To ensure data credibility and accuracy, the researcher refrained from imposing personal views or interpretations and relied solely on the interviewees'

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statements and perspectives. Building a close relationship with the interviewees was critical to reduce the likelihood of concealment or providing incomplete information. The researcher reviewed the interview questions repeatedly before the interviews to enhance familiarity with the interview format. This internal stability significantly improved the acquisition of comprehensive and rich information. To enhance the data's trustworthiness, a qualitative analysis specialist (Ph.D. in counseling from Isfahan University) provided assistance and oversight in the analysis process, increasing the stability of the coding process and obtained findings. To ensure confirmability, the researcher shared exploratory information from each interview with the interviewees and applied necessary changes based on their feedback.

Results

The analysis of participants' experiences in the study led to the identification of 18 sub-themes (subcategories) and 6 main themes (core categories) regarding the individual foundations of the sustainability of marital relationships among women with veteran spouses, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Individual foundations of marital relationship sustainability in women with veteran spouses

The main theme	Sub themes
Love	Kindness, care, sacrifice.
Spirituality	God's satisfaction, knowing the value of care, replacing the reward of the hereafter with worldly comfort
Conscientiousness	Conscientiousness, responsibility, compassion
Perception of meaning	A sense of worth, a sense of peace, the joy of the experience of being a savior
Social connectedness	Altruistic, empathetic, willing to be intimate
High acceptance	Companionship, tolerance, compromise

A) Love: Love is the first individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (affection, care, and self-sacrifice). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. Veteran spouses held a special love for their partners and experienced a strong passion in being with them and interacting. This group believed that the chain connecting them to this life and its continuity was the love they felt towards their spouse; a love that is the most fundamental and beautiful aspect of their lives.

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B) Spirituality: Spirituality is the second individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (satisfaction with God, valuing care, replacing eternal rewards with worldly comfort). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. Life with a veteran spouse comes with its unique hardships, and one of the factors contributing to the sustainability of this group's relationships is spirituality, which both veteran spouses and themselves immersed in. Interviewees regarded being a veteran spouse as a form of value, and they believed that striving for God's approval, while challenging, leads to a life full of tranquility and devoid of suffering in the afterlife.

C) Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness is the third individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (sense of duty, responsibility, compassion). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. Interviewees demonstrated a high level of duty awareness, responsibility, and compassion in their interactions with their veteran spouses. According to them, possessing these traits is a prerequisite for maintaining a sustained relationship with a veteran spouse. The absence of these traits can't guarantee the stability of the relationship and could lead to instability, even if it continues.

D) Meaning Perception: Meaning perception is the fourth individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (sense of worthiness, sense of tranquility, passion for the experience of salvation). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. One of the most important factors that has led to the steadfastness of women with veteran spouses in marital relationships is the perception of meaning that they experience on this journey. According to this group, a sense of worthiness and tranquility is deeply embedded in marital care, and this perception leads to a high level of satisfaction in this path.

E) Social Connectedness: Social connectedness is the fifth individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (friendliness, empathy, willingness for intimacy). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. All interviewees demonstrated a high level of social growth and sociability. They possessed a strong sense of empathy, were friendly, and valued

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intimate relationships and actively pursued them. These characteristics played a significant role in the sustainability of their marital relationships.

F) High Acceptance: High acceptance is the final individual foundation of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses, which is accompanied by three sub-themes (companionship, consideration, adaptation). These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. Interviewees emphasized that their lives come with their own set of challenges that ordinary lives might lack. Nevertheless, through acceptance of these conditions and mutual companionship, it is possible to build a life filled with satisfaction and continuity.

Discussion

This research was conducted with the aim of phenomenologically exploring the individual foundations of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses. The empirical examination of participants' lived experiences led to the identification of eighteen sub-themes and six main themes (love, spirituality, conscientiousness, meaning perception, social connectedness, and high acceptance).

The first foundational aspect of marital relationship sustainability among women with veteran spouses was love, which is accompanied by three sub-themes: affection, self-sacrifice, and care. These were identified during the analysis of the interviewees' statements. Participating women emphasized that life with a veteran spouse comes with its own difficulties and specific shortcomings, and the continuity of this bond requires the presence of love for the spouse. All participants in this study exhibited a high level of care, self-sacrifice, and kindness, attributes that allowed them to embrace the challenges of caring for a veteran spouse and find satisfaction in their life's journey despite its limitations and hardships. In essence, love and its dimensions (affection, self-sacrifice, and care) were foundational elements that committed this group of women to interact with their veteran spouses and created conditions for intimate, satisfying, and stable relationships. Love is a prerequisite for successful marital relationships and is necessary for interactions characterized by intimacy, contentment, and stability. From the perspective of Bahr and Bahr (2001), the existence of selfless and sacrificial love significantly enhances the commitment of both parties to sustaining the relationship, and any disruption in this aspect can provide a basis for the collapse of the relationship. When there is no deep emotional connection between a man and a

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woman, and their bond lacks care and compassion, it is evident that tension and conflicts will gradually arise, leading the relationship towards dissatisfaction (Bakhtiari et al., 2019). Mesbah (2019) stated in his research that marital life is inevitably accompanied by tensions, problems, and specific conflicts, and for couples to navigate successfully through these challenges, it is essential for them to have a high level of affection for each other. Women with veteran spouses, in comparison to other women, play a continuous caregiving role and face significantly more deficiencies (Oliver, 2020). In order to cope with the current situation, it is necessary for them to passionately love their spouse and continue their bond in the shelter of this loving relationship (Smart et al., 2021). Vulink et al. (2006) mentioned in their research that sustaining a relationship with a veteran spouse, despite the difficulties involved, requires a profound level of self-sacrifice and patience in women. Love for a veteran spouse, nurtured through the components of care, self-sacrifice, and kindness, empowers women with veteran spouses to continue their lives with a greater sense of security and satisfaction. When there is no heartfelt affection towards the veteran spouse, one cannot expect their life together to be stable or even satisfactory. Generally, the presence of love eases the endurance of hardships in this type of life and empowers women with veteran spouses to transition through this phase (Imanpour). Another factor that played a role in the sustainability of marital relationships, as revealed through the analysis of interviewee statements, was spirituality. The interviewees attached great importance to God's satisfaction and believed that caring for their veteran spouses not only held a value of its own and created a strong sense of passion within them, but it also increased God's satisfaction with them. This group expressed that although life with a veteran spouse brings about numerous challenges, they do not prioritize worldly pleasures, and the rewards in the afterlife take precedence for them. Prioritizing God's satisfaction, valuing care, and substituting the rewards of the hereafter for worldly comfort were three factors that, together, significantly contributed to the sustainability of marital relationships with veteran spouses.

One of the factors that determines the acceptance of the difficulties associated with a particular action is the outcomes that action entails. The higher the value of the outcomes and consequences of an action, the higher the individual's commitment to carrying it out and accepting the challenges associated with it will be (Ibrar & Khan, 2015). According to the interviewees, caring for a veteran spouse pursued heavenly rewards and led to an increase in the satisfaction of the Almighty. Women

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married to veterans highly valued God's satisfaction and spirituality, believing that there are abundant rewards in the afterlife hidden in caring for a veteran spouse (HassanZadeh, 2017). This perspective strengthened this group's commitment to the care process and increased their willingness to continue the relationship. Alirezayi Moghadam Bejestani et al. (2021) emphasized in their study the high level of spiritual intelligence among women with veteran husbands and pointed out that immersing oneself in spirituality not only enhances the mental health and well-being of this group, but also facilitates the acceptance of the hardships of caregiving, improving the quality and stability of their marital lives. Considering the spiritual value of caring for a veteran spouse and the challenges and deficiencies experienced in interacting with them, this influential factor can facilitate the inclination of women with veteran husbands to continue the relationship. Forgetting some of their personal desires, suppressing certain needs and wishes, and accepting the hardships of caring for a veteran spouse can only be achieved with strong motivations, such as spiritual incentives. Generally, the higher the level of spirituality among women with veteran spouses, the more their satisfaction with the bond will be, and their interaction will have greater stability (Sherman et al., 2018b).

Conscientiousness among women with veteran spouses, characterized by the dimensions of duty-consciousness, responsibility, and devotion, was the third individual factor that, according to these individuals' perspectives, influenced the sustainability of their marital relationships. This group of women not only had a comprehensive understanding and awareness of their duties toward their spouses but also considered themselves committed to attending to those duties across all aspects of life. This level of duty-consciousness and responsibility, alongside a level of devotion, grounded this group's commitment to caring for their veteran spouses. The interviewees emphasized that they derive great pleasure from the caregiving process and find tranquility within it. When they are indifferent or negligent towards these duties, they experience significant mental and emotional stress. According to the interviewees, women with veteran husbands will be able to initiate and sustain marital life with a veteran only if they possess qualities of duty-consciousness, responsibility, and devotion. These attributes allow them to remain committed to the relationship and preserve the intimacy and satisfaction inherent within it.

Quality of task performance and commitment to assigned responsibilities surrounding it are largely dependent on the level of individuals' professionalism and responsibility (Evans et al., 2022).

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Topino et al. (2021) stated in their research that the higher the level of individuals' professionalism and responsibility, the more committed they are to fulfilling their roles and tasks throughout their lives. Women with veteran spouses have a high sense of duty, and this characteristic significantly contributes to maintaining marital intimacy and preserving their quality of life (Alirezayi Moghadam Bejestani et al., 2021). If women with veteran spouses lack professionalism and responsibility, it can't be expected that they will adequately attend to their responsibilities towards their spouses. The absence of professionalism and responsibility not only disrupts the quality of relationships for women with veteran spouses but also becomes a significant factor in marital distress for all groups. Maleki et al. (2019) emphasized that for a successful and committed marital life, spouses need to have a high level of responsibility and an understanding of the nature of marital rights and responsibilities. When individuals lack these qualities, it's certain that their mutual marital needs and desires won't be adequately met, leading to instability in their relationship.

In the context of caregiving for veteran spouses, the perception of meaning during the relationship and care plays a crucial role in maintaining their marital stability, according to the interviewees. They stressed that life with a veteran partner has brought them a great sense of value and tranquility. Despite the challenges, interacting with a veteran partner is rewarding and fulfilling. Most interviewees held a heroic view and believed that if they were to choose a spouse again, they would choose a veteran over a non-veteran partner. From their perspective, caring for someone in need, though challenging, is meaningful and creates a sense of purpose in them.

The sense of meaning during task execution is a factor that motivates individuals to perform high-quality and consistent work (George & Park, 2017). When engaged in meaningful activities, individuals have strong motivation and a heightened sense of tranquility (Evans et al., 2017). Essentially, having meaningful tasks not only provides pleasure but also ensures their continuation to a great extent (Nappi et al., 2008). McCray (2015) stated that when individuals value their marital life and find meaning in it, they not only experience great satisfaction but also ensure its stability. A key factor contributing to the satisfaction of women with veteran spouses in their marital life is the value this relationship holds for them (Imanpour). When individuals feel valued and meaningful in their interaction with their veteran partners and consider their caregiving role sacred, they can accept the relationship's imperfections and sustain it with happiness and hope

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(Falahati et al., 2019). In general, gaining a sense of value and tranquility during the relationship with a veteran partner, along with the enjoyment of the nurturing role, are factors that, alongside other identified factors, play a significant role in the stability and sustainability of marital relationships for this group. The absence of these factors can undermine the quality, satisfaction, and intimacy present in these relationships.

Women with veteran spouses possessed a high level of social growth and their main characteristics included camaraderie, empathy, and a willingness to experience intimacy. These characteristics, according to the individuals' statements, played a significant role in sustaining their marital relationships. Interviewees expressed that they understand their spouses well, acknowledge their situations, comprehend the necessity of conveying empathetic understanding, possess sufficient sensitivity towards their needs and desires, and make compassionate efforts to meet those needs. These qualities have contributed to the stability of these women's interactions with their spouses, allowing them to feel passion and contentment in the relationship.

Having a successful marital relationship requires both parties to have the power of empathy and the capability for establishing an intimate connection (Jahandoost et al., 2020). When couples, or one of them, lack the inclination for intimacy and the ability to understand each other, it's evident that their interaction won't be accompanied by sufficient satisfaction and stability (Alimohammadi & Aghajani, 2021). Women with veteran spouses, influenced by life skills such as empathy and compassionate care, not only perceive marital satisfaction at a desirable level but also exhibit a strong desire for relationship continuation. Naturally, when women with veteran spouses lack the capacity for empathy, they struggle to manage their marital relationships effectively and are faced with significant tension and dissatisfaction.

High levels of acceptance, along with its three dimensions of companionship, consideration, and adaptation, were the last influential factor on the sustainability of marital relationships for women with veteran spouses. Participants emphasized their possession of a high level of companionship, navigating through challenging life circumstances with compassion and attaining a level of ability to genuinely embrace this difficult situation. This group stated that many issues arising from interacting with a veteran spouse are unsolvable, and the only path forward is acceptance. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that a high level of acceptance can facilitate coping with the challenging aspects of this form of married life.

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Acceptance is a quality imperative for any sustained and satisfying interaction (Buyukcan-Tetik et al., 2017). Many couples who have separated or experienced high levels of tension in their interactions lack the power of acceptance and are unable to navigate through the difficulties inherent in marital life. Women with veteran spouses have a highly adaptable nature, a factor that has preserved their satisfaction with their bond and brought intimacy and stability to their relationship. Falahati et al. (2019) stated in their research that enhancing the power of acceptance in women with veteran spouses can increase their happiness levels and contribute to the stability and intimacy of their relationships. Overall, life with a veteran partner comes with its unique challenges, often insoluble, and the only way to confront them is through acceptance. Over the course of several years, women with veteran spouses have increased their capacity for acceptance, relying on their inner and spiritual strength to reach a high level of adaptation and compassion. This factor has facilitated their ability to cope with the demanding circumstances of life and exhausting care, paving the way for relationship stability.

In this study, the focus was on identifying the individual foundations of the sustainability of marital relationships with veteran spouses. It's recommended that future research also evaluates and examines the family and environmental aspects that contribute to the stability of marital relationships within this group.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by ethics committee of University of Raparin.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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