

# Understanding the Family Role in Shaping a Broken Identity

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**ABSTRACT:** The family plays a highlighted role in the formation of positive and negative emotions in individuals. Previous studies had described the role of the family in shaping a broken identity, so having this in mind, we were trying to study the family role in the formation of feelings of failure. Participants were selected based on three criteria: clients' claim, therapist's diagnosis, and failure emotion test. Interviews went on to get to theoretical saturation (65 people). The subjects of the study were purposefully selected (using quota sampling) from psychology clinics in 5 regions of Tehran. Subjects were selected from 25 to 45-year-old individuals. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, and thematic analysis was used to interpret and analyze the data. Findings indicate that families have a reinforcing and causal role in the experiences of failure, the family tries to control the individual by imposing mental and objective restrictions, using mechanisms such as intimidation, humiliation, analogy, giving privileges, rejection, labeling, guilt, or fear induction. On the other hand, some families seize opportunities for the development of children (especially women) by instilling traditional beliefs, leading to the formation of a broken identity in the individual. Extreme rejection and control by family members breed feelings of hopelessness, alienation, and abandonment, and failure in general. Some of the strategies used by these individuals are family avoidance, immigration, scheming, self-blaming, rumination, regret, and anger.

**KEYWORDS:** feelings of failure, broken identity, family, rejection, failure

## **Introduction and Statement of the problem**

Mental health is a state of well-being in which a person recognizes his or her capability and uses it effectively and useful for society, and has the full ability to play social, psychological, and physical roles (Robinson 2019). Therefore, in order to develop, communities look to pursue policies related to mental health and the prediction of mental illness (Ganji 2011). Emotions are the society pillar and form the structure of the bond. Emotions have always been studied as individual phenomena and social analysis of emotional causes and consequences such as failure in studies had been left out. The results of the studies emphasize on the impact of the emotions social dimension (Rouhani et al. 2015).

Emotions are often negative in Iran (Navabakhsh & Alibakhshi 2005, 81). According to some official statistics (State Welfare Organization of Iran), Iran is a frustrated and sad society (Mirzadeh 2017, Gallup World Emotional Report 2016). Studies indicate that mental disorders prevalence in Iran is about 32% (Moulavi & Khaleghi 2018). Negative emotions such as anger, aggression, fury, depression and ... are more visible in Iranians daily life. These negative emotions affect the most individual form of daily life as well as the tiniest ones. Hence, profound study of emotions, especially the negative ones (such as failure) is important because it disrupts interactions and social solidarity. Emotions are one of the most significant elements of identity, which are neither an internal experience nor the product of extrinsic society, but are the creature of interaction of them both. Individuals' life experience is full of pleasant and unpleasant experiences which are mostly within emotions framework and are formed as a result of social actions with positive and negative orientations; so, the genesis of negative emotions should be searched in social realities.

Negative emotions and mental disorders are not an individual issue but an interactive process involving all family members. Studies indicate the function of the family, including behavioral disorders and alcohol abuse (Maynard 1997), parents' separation (Johnson,

Thorngren & Smith 2001) and parenting styles (Schwartz, Tigpen & Montgomery 2006) have a profound impact on individuals' mental health.

The two institutions of family and school form the failure identity in individuals (Glaser 2020; Barber et al. 1992; Whit Bean 1992; Quoted by Man K. Weining 2012). The share of family in children and adolescents' social and psychological harm is more than school (Negravi 2001). Various studies have shown the relationship between family and anxiety (Goody Kunst and Nishida 2001; Kouroshnia 2006), social anxiety (Doronto, Nishida, and Nakayama and 2005), responsibility, self-concept, religious orientation and hope for the future (Golchin et al. 2007) depression (Kouroshnia 2006) and its positive relationship with self-esteem (Huang 1999), between optimal family performance and children's stubbornness (Sharifi, Arizi and Namdari 2005), behavior control and resilience against drug use (Javadi et al. 2011) and quality of life (Rahimi 2007).

Helplessness, inability to pursue commitments and building intimate relationships, as well as feelings of worthlessness and rejection are among the characteristics of failed people who are irresponsible and suffer anxiety and depression (Whit Bean 1992; Quoted by Man Ki Wefning 2012). The broken identity is caused by family background and parenting styles (Barber et al. 1992; Whit Bean 1992; quoted by Man K. Weining 2012).

In general, the family is an important social institution in creating mental health for the individual and the society. The family has both positive and negative role on human life quality and can reduce the sense of self-worth and gradually develop a sense of helplessness and a sense of victimhood, resulting in a sense of failure that leads to a failed identity in individuals (derived from Zalizadeh and Sahebi 2014).

The personality and upbringing characteristics of the family are important in forming and maintaining an intimate relationship and the breakdown of emotional relationships (Fardis 2007), low socioeconomic status, experiences in the family and during childhood (childhood trauma) (Linskat & Venus 2013; Stellen and Der Ven, Rutten and Connor-Orientalism 2013) are the main factors shaping feeling of failure. This study sought to understand the role of the family in the formation of feeling of failure in individuals.

## Research Methods

The research method of this study is qualitative and semi-structured interview technique is used in data collection and thematic analysis is used in the interpretation of data analysis. The sampling method of this research is quota. Participants include 65 people. To find the subjects for the study, the researchers went to psychology clinics. Thus, 5 clinics in Tehran were purposefully selected in the following regions: center of region 6, east of region 8, north of region 1, west of region 5, south of region 18. At first, the therapists with a doctorate degree in clinical psychology were interviewed. With the clients' personal consent, the therapists introduced us to the clients who, after performing a test of failure and based on the therapists' diagnosis, were having a feeling of failure.

The collection of findings continued to get to the theoretical saturation of each region, so 10 to 15 interviews were conducted in each region. The subjects of this study are individuals who have been diagnosed with three main criteria: 1- client's claim, 2- therapist diagnosis, 3- feeling failure test. Participants were selected from 25-45-year-old individuals.

## Research Findings

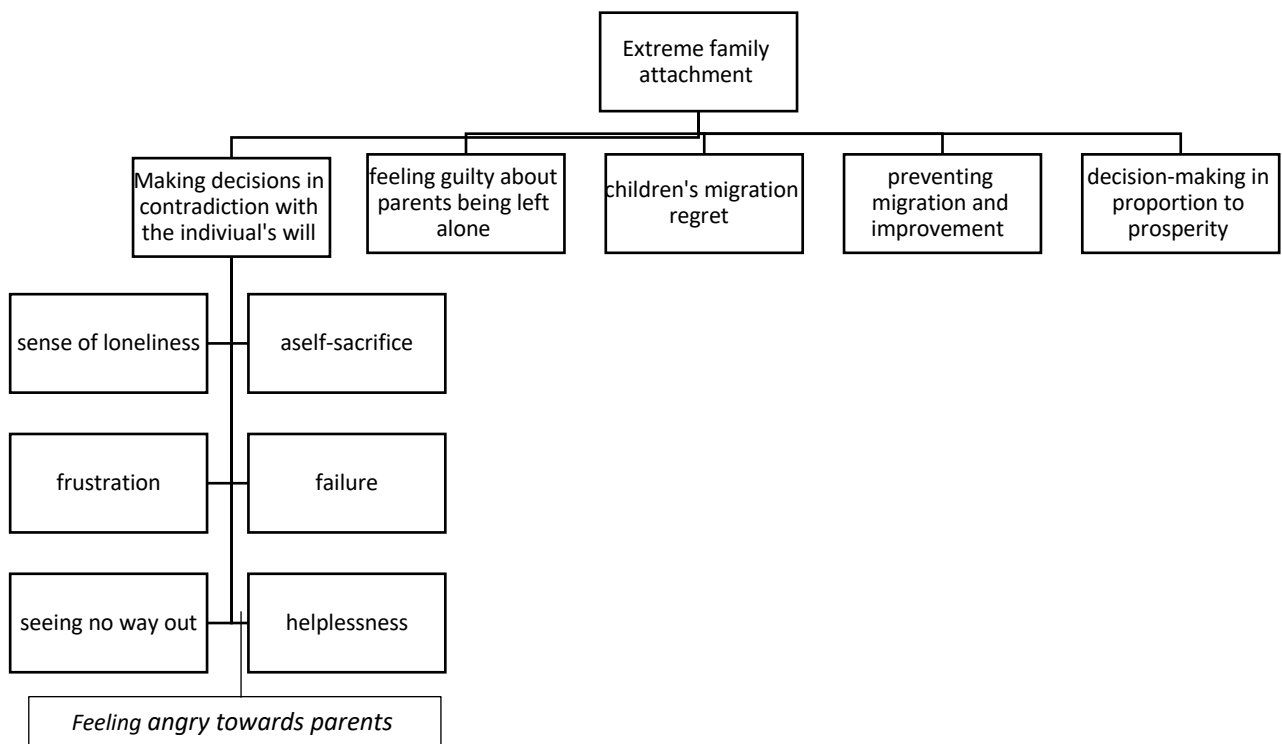
### *1. Restrictions imposed by the family*

According to the subjects, the family is one of the main obstacles and factors in the formation of failure feelings in individuals.

1.1. Extreme dependence on family

Dependence on the family is one of the main barriers to decision-making in proportion to prosperity. Subjects who are extremely dependent on their families refuse to migrate for the sake of improvement. While they long to go, this dependence has taken away their power of action. Many give up because of feeling guilty about their parents being left alone. Because they always seek the extreme approval of their parents, they make decisions about marriage, choosing their major, and other key issues that are somehow different or incompatible with their goals and desires. These decisions intensify the causes of failure, frustration, feelings of hopelessness, loneliness, and self-sacrifice. They find themselves in a predicament from which there is no escape or way out. These kinds of unwanted decisions shape the anger in subjects' hearts towards their parents. Lack of self-confidence, inability to make decisions, anxiety and fear, questioning individual independence, interfering in personal life and dissatisfaction in married life are the result of this dependence.

*"I did not have the feeling (emphasis) to stay in that house without my mother. Until the age of 16, I slept next to my mother because I was so much attached to her. I have nothing to do ... (he says quickly) (tears)."* (Seyed)

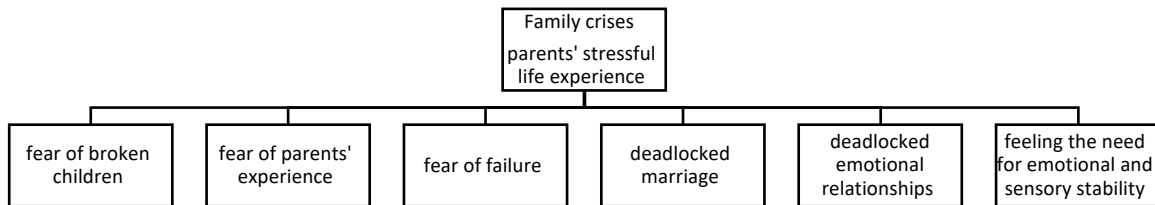


1.2. Stressful family

Family tensions and crises are vital factors in the formation of failure feelings in some participants. One of the main reasons for the breakdown of their emotional relationships and marriage is the experience of their parents' married life. They carry the fear of failure along with the repetition of their parents' experience and are afraid of raising injured children like themselves. This family experience has taken their hope and belief in the possibility of forming a healthy relationship away and as a result due to the fear of repeating their parents' mistakes, they do not enter into serious and long lasting relationships while they are strongly in need of a companion as well as emotional and sexual stability, all the time. Some seek to smooth out their sense of need through transient and cross-sectional relationships. As a consequence of choosing this lifestyle, they are rejected and labelled by their family of origin. The pressures our clients endured in family life have predisposed them to show impulsive and aggressive behaviors that have disrupted their friendly, social, and work-related relationships.

*"When I was 16, my parents got divorced. I was hurt badly ...I guess I won't get married seeing my mom and dad's life. They, so called, loved each other at first but then everything ended in fights and beatings day-to-day. We were out of touch for a while, even with my dad, I feel like he has left us alone. We are left." (Sahel)*

Stressful family



1.3. Family with old thoughts

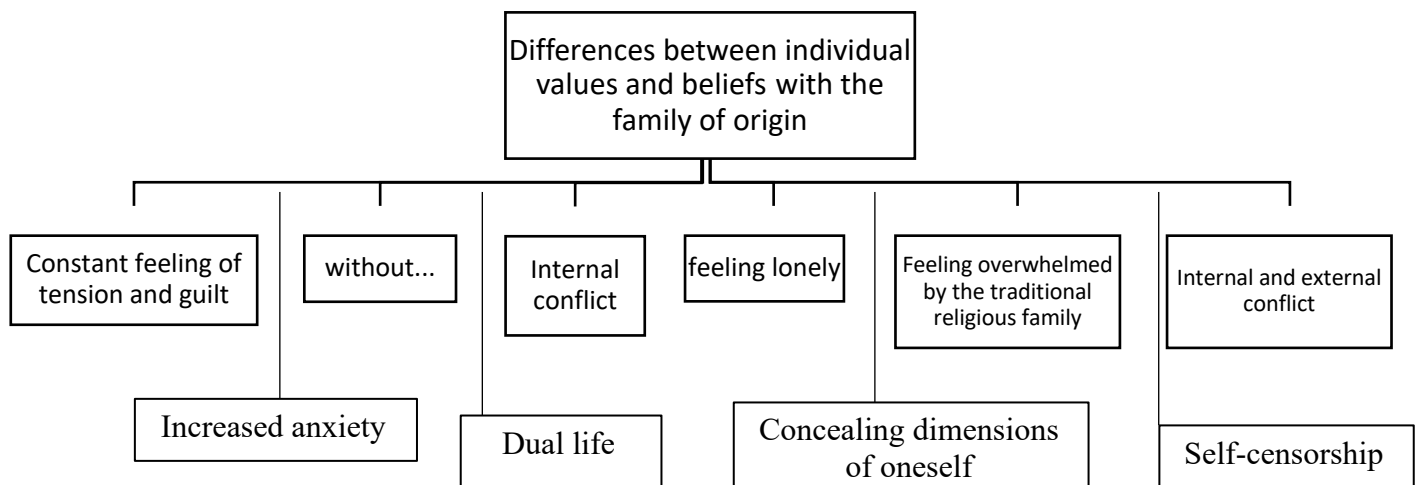
The difference in one's values and beliefs with one's family are among the causes of internal and external conflicts. Participants with a traditional-religious family find their beliefs a burden. These subjects feel very lonely, internally conflicted and having no one to talk to. Not being able to meet the demands of their families, they have a constant sense of tension and guilt. Self-censorship is one of the main mechanisms these people use in confronting their family of origin, so they not only do not express themselves but their emotional partners also hide some of their dimensions. They lead a double life that results in anxiety.

The family impact on the formation of failure feelings has sometimes been direct. Individuals withdraw opportunities and chances for improvement in order to confront the family perfectionist and competitive beliefs and principals or the family directly raises the children with feelings of failure, which means that they limit children's mentality and talents by cultivating limited good principals and non-developmental stereotypes.

*"In my family, especially on my mother side, they got stuck in some issues. I keep saying, guys, you have to do this. Do that. I don't know why they don't move at all." (Kobra)*

*"As my family is traditional-religious, I have to censor myself in front of them, I don't want to, but I have to be less like myself. Even my wife pretends to be accepted by them and make fewer stories, their minds are rusty. They don't let us live comfortably. All my life is tension, harassment, torture. They don't allow us to be happy. They are interfering. They taunt my wife." (Hadi)*

Family with old thoughts



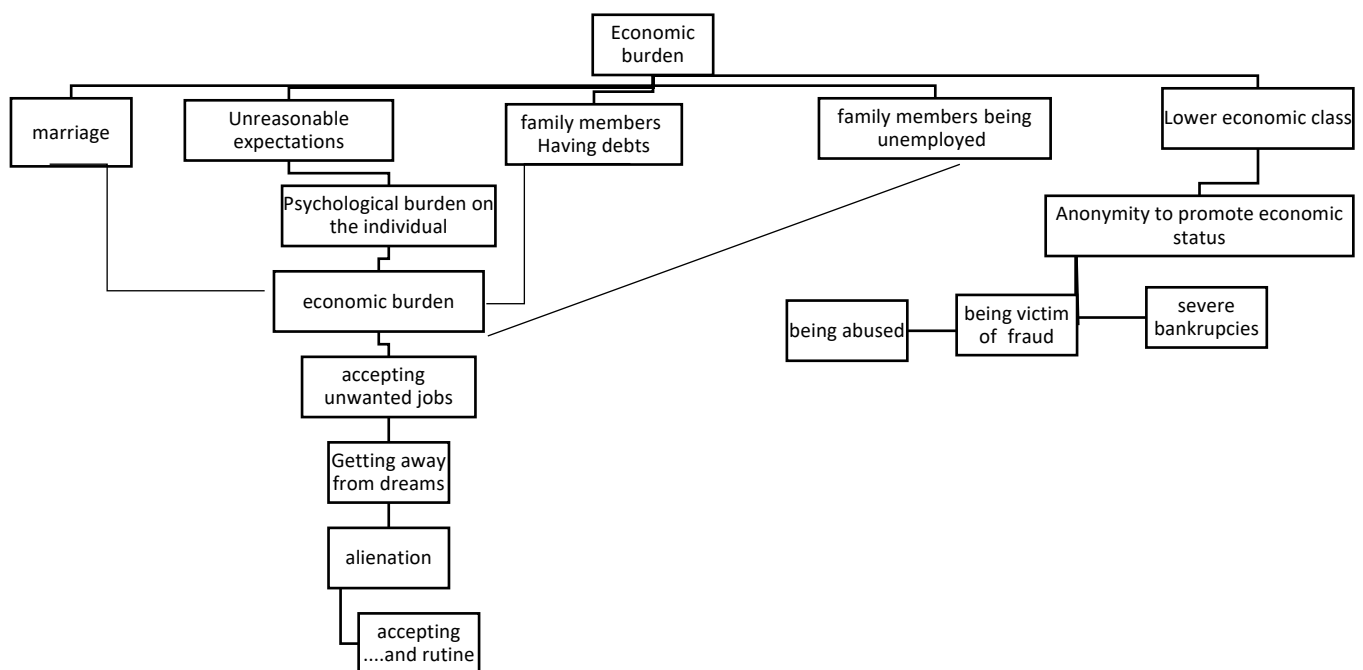
#### 1.4. Family as an economic burden

The subjects of the study, who come from families with a weaker economic class, usually try to change their economic situation so quickly that this haste cost them dearly and some experiences of theirs like severe bankruptcies, fraud, economic and legal abuse can be mentioned as the samples. That is, after gaining a minimum of economic status by the family of origin, the participant reaches a position that he/ she had not experienced before. Large families' children, especially with the aim of being noticed and loved, make concessions that are not very wise and put plenty of economic and psychological pressure on them. Another type includes married individuals who, due to economic constraints, are forced to endure a job with which they are not satisfied and somehow give up their dreams. In this way, the individual suffers from a kind of alienation and finds her/himself lost in everyday and repetitive life.

*"After my dad's death, his loans took me away from my goal." (Amin.K)*

*"My father's financial situation was like a stick on my head. It was a pity for us."(Kobra)*

#### Family as an economic burden:



#### 1.5. Not being understood by the family of origin for separation

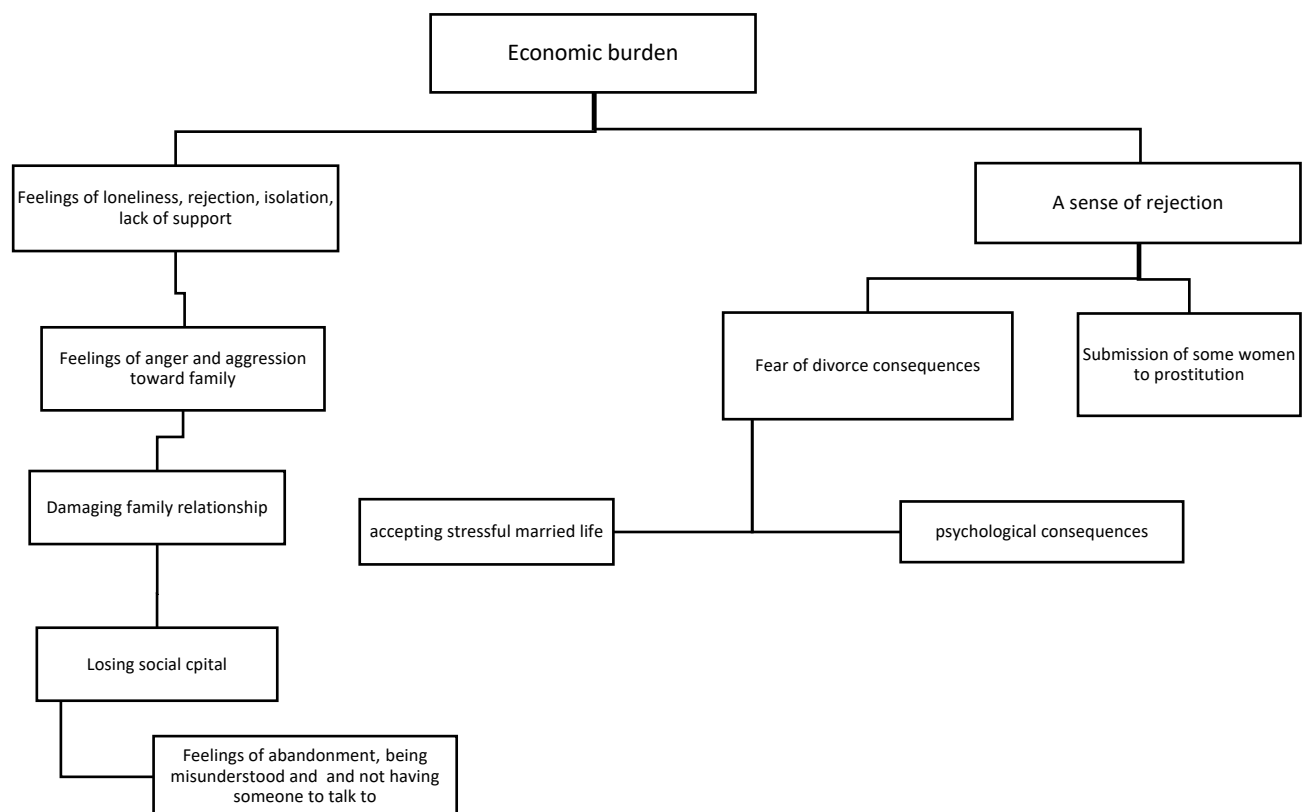
Many admitted that their family of origin did not support them for separation. Women, meanwhile, are more likely to be treated unfairly. This action itself is followed by feelings of loneliness, rejection, isolation, lack of support and support. Subjects who have experienced this are more likely to feel anger and blame towards the family. Their relationships with their families are severely damaged, so they lose a large amount of their social capital. The main consequences of this story are feelings of abandonment, being misunderstood, and not having someone to talk to. Some of these women even believe that the rejection by their families was the reason for their prostitution. Many women remain in a stressful married life with serious psychological consequences, fearing the repercussions after divorce and the rejection by their relatives.

*"I'm afraid of my family's behavior. Since then, this has made me just put up with everything and stay with my spouse." (Khadijeh)*

Family rejection after divorce has brought the displacement experience to some women. For example, the experience of living in a park has popped a sense of loneliness and being alone into their minds.

*"They told me 'Go back to your life.' They didn't understand what I was going through. Since, I didn't say anything, but I was in a bad mood... Maybe if my mom and dad didn't reject me, I wouldn't be here now. Maybe if I hadn't been humiliated when I was a kid by saying they didn't like me, I wouldn't be here now. Maybe if they hadn't discriminated between me and my bros, I wouldn't be here now ... I didn't return. My parents did not let me in. I stayed in the park for three nights."* (Zohreh)

#### Not being understood by the family of origin for separation



#### 1.6. High level of family expectations

The families of some subjects bring up their children as all the time indebted by their perfectionist training methods. In a way that gaining parents' love and attention is due to fulfilling their desires and goals. These families bring up children with a sense of self-blame who, despite all their attempts, are still far from their parents' ideals; this fuels the children's sense of powerlessness and incapability, itself. Due to the heavy burden of expectations and the inability to meet the ideals, some children begin to be passive and not to try any more but they carry the anxiety with them all the time.

The high level of parental expectations means that the parents force their child to participate in any competition and want their child to be the best in everything he/she does. Unrealistic expectations upset the child.

*"I did these things many times for the others. They say "do it". You are the good boy. You do not grow a so-called long beard. Other people are effective too. Well, these put pressure on me."* (Arash)

As a result of high parental expectations, feelings of incompleteness and inadequacy are formed in the subjects to the extent that they see their lives as a constant effort to prove themselves and their abilities to their parents.

*"In my dream, I wished that someone like me, exactly like me, would come and I would go to an island by myself and one would come who would be a good girl and grants all the wishes of her parents, teachers and others. Someone who would be great and let me go free. Let me go to an island to be alone."* (Saideh)

### 1.7. Family members' addiction

Subjects with addicted families were more likely to become addicted. This addiction causes them to be rejected and lose their social prestige in such a way that they become more and more trapped in their mistakes and choices due to the reduction of social relations. Some people consider their addiction to be due to their family history and somehow try to neutralize their actions with this perception. The experience of family members injured in war has been the underlying factor for the desire of addiction in this group. Addiction is considered as a way to forget the damage done to the family, and they justify their sense of being neglected and lonely under the pretext of other members focusing on the injured one. One of the consequences of addiction is losing job opportunities. This group attributes their failures to addiction and believes that any attempt to quit is useless because they have missed opportunities and practically it is too late. Others still refer to these addicted people as broken and negative identities, so they see no way to change this situation.

*"I forgot to say that after my brother became veteran; my dad became addicted to opium. Then my brother got involved to get better. It got to the point that addiction became our family problem. I was following their example ... I wanted to go to work. Well, I was addicted and nobody trusted me. When my sisters didn't trust me, the employer didn't either."* (Bagher)

#### 1.7.1. Parental addiction

Family members' addiction lowers the status of participants among the others, especially their spouse, resulting in a sense of helplessness. This group considers any kind of domestic violence and insult due to the addiction of the family of origin and believes that in other circumstances they did not tolerate such threats and humiliations. Having broken families and addicted family members creates a feeling of helplessness and bewilderment.

*"I remember once I told my father, who was addicted, that if you were normal, this man wouldn't dare to treat me like this. I was right. As soon as he found out I had no back, my family was in a mess. They don't support me. He caught me alone for a divorce."* (Mansoureh)

#### 1.7.2. Spouses' addiction

The addiction of a spouse has taken away the interviewees' opportunity for peace and progress. Despite their severe efforts, they sometimes believe that the shortcomings and problems in their lives are due to their lack of work so they have a kind of self-blame.

*"We didn't move forward at all. Even a little, I don't know if it's because of my life, because of my circumstances, because of my lack of effort, because of the conditions of our country, because of my husband's addiction."* (Khadijeh)

*"We were spurious, we were. I had no feelings or relationships and by chance I fell in love. Of course, I didn't know I was in love, but I couldn't continue anymore. He was addicted, too."* (Shirin)

### *1.8. Lack of training to face failure by the family*

Many have complained about not learning failure skills in the family and have admitted that they have paid a lot of psychological and social costs which could have been prevented if they had learned these skills. In other words, they blame their family's parenting style for their failure experiences.

*"I was hit hard because I didn't know how to fail. I had everything when I was a kid. The family had high expectations for whatever I wanted. When I got away from my goal, I got badly hurt. I felt defeated." (Rosa)*

## **2. Involvement of families**

### *2.1. Controlling family*

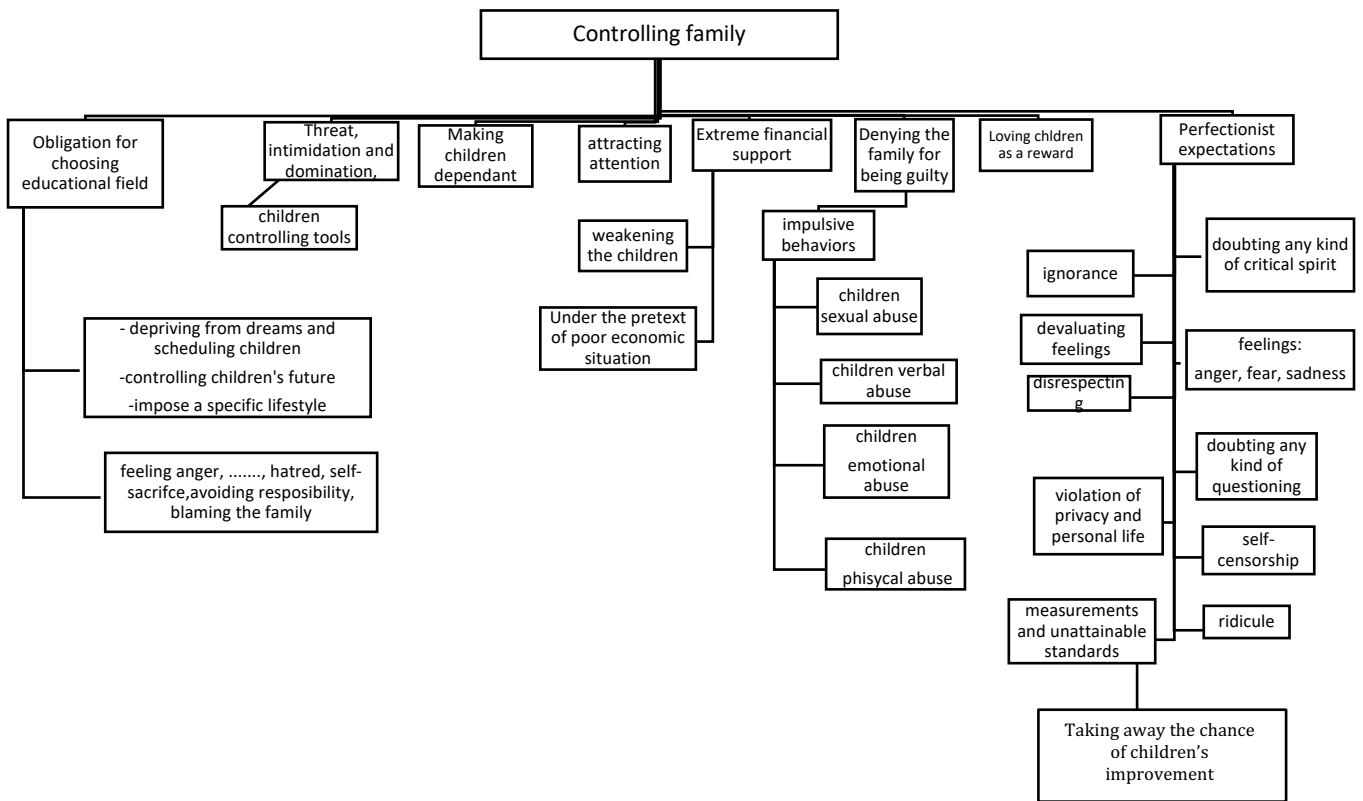
The controlling family scrutinizes the child's appearance, social interactions, desires, thoughts, clothing, hobbies, and social life. In a way, the possibility and chance of growth would have been deprived from the child. These families have perfectionist expectations and unattainable standards from their children which put them under pressure.

These families have killed any kind of questioning and critical spirit in the subjects. By forbidding the members' expressions of their feelings (anger, fear, and sadness), they suppress these emotions and promote self-censorship, which is often accompanied by ridicule, disregarding, and devaluation of the feelings. This disrespect usually leads to violation of privacy and the most private layers of individuals' lives. Many of our research subjects' families do not consider any independency for their children. They look at love as a reward. Domination, intimidation and threat are the main tools to control subjects. The most important mechanism for these families to control their children is to keep them dependent and incapacitated. Under the pretext of help, support and poor economic situation they weaken the children to be their pensioner so that they can maintain their dominance. They usually control their children's lives and privacy by the mechanism of cutting off these privileges. Many of our subjects expressed their peace of mind by staying away from their family. In many conflicts, subjects have explained that the family is reluctant to admit their guilt and fault, and deal with individuals using impulsive behaviors along with sexual, verbal, physical, and emotional abuse.

These families force individuals to choose their field in university and high school. With this mechanism, they are moved away from their desires and mental planning for the future, and the family determines other ways for their future. They use this method to impose their approved lifestyle on their child, which leads to the formation of blaming and feelings of anger towards the family. Grudge and anger accompany the individual and the result is cutting and distance from the parents. So that subjects avoid responsibility for their subsequent mistakes in life using self-sacrifice approach. They point their finger of blame at the family and blame the family for all their misery and failures.



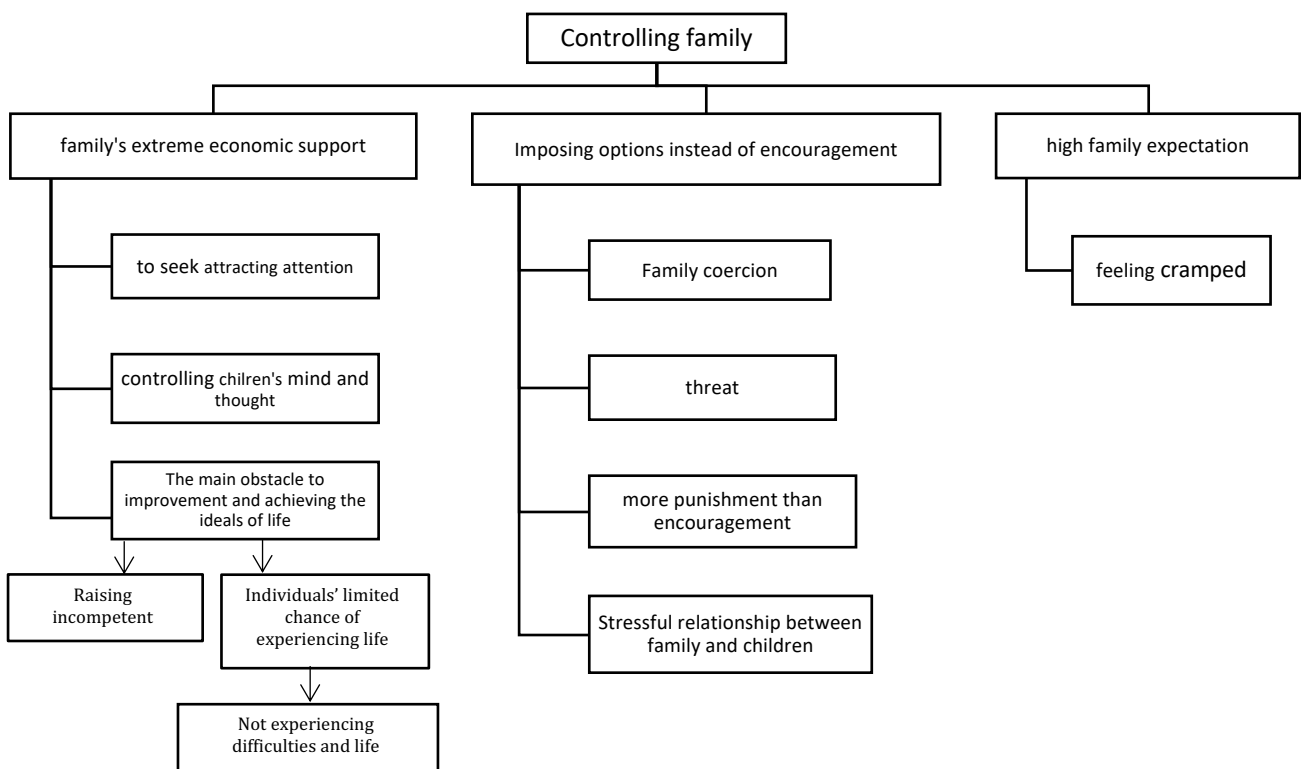
### Controller family



### 2.2. High family expectations

Families sometimes put pressure on subjects with their expectations and practically make them feel cramped.

*"My upbringing was in the way that everything should be the best. My mother always told us that we had to be the best. You see, my English is good, but I do not speak very often for the fear of making a mistake. It's the same all over my life."* (Arash)



### 2.3. Imposing options instead of encouraging

Subjects with suppressive families have experienced family coercion and pressure. Their family uses the mechanism of intimidation and punishment far more than encouragement and positive privileges. As a result, a tense relationship develops between this type of families and their children.

### 2.4. Extreme economic support

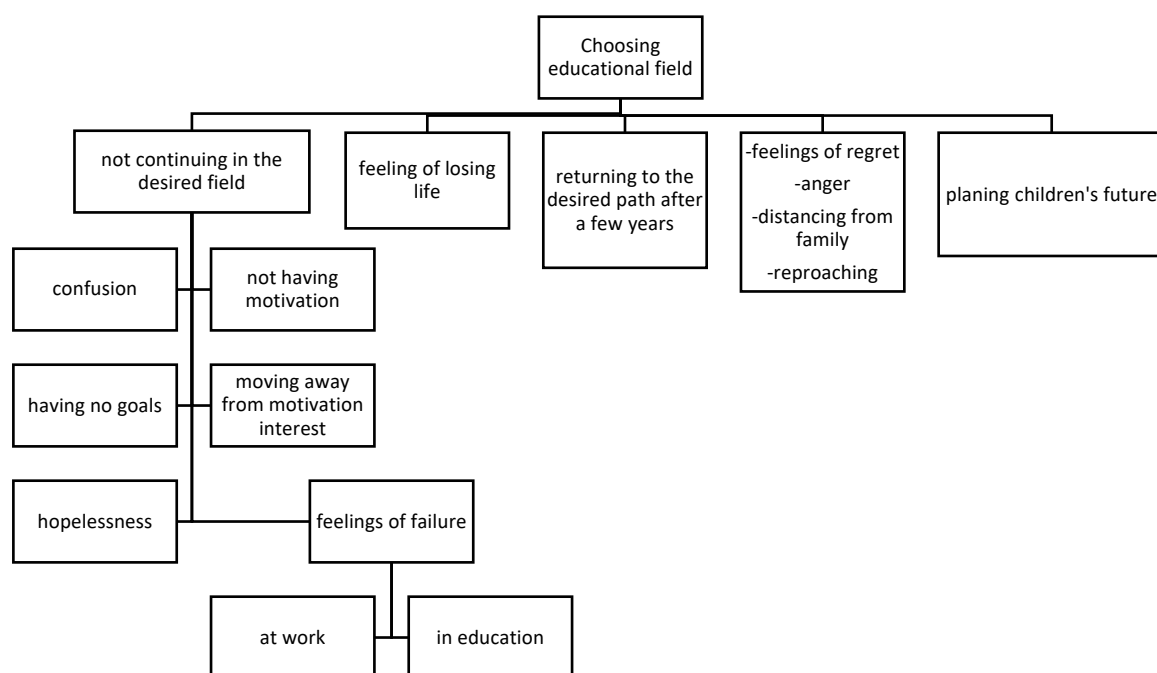
According to the subjects, extreme economic support is a kind of buying children's attention, mind and thought and is the main obstacle to improvement and achieving their life ideals. The result of this kind of upbringing is incompetent and immature children; individuals who have not got the chance to experience life and were not the lucky enough to learn about the difficulties and changes of life.

*"We have always had money, me and my brother. My mom says 'work is for animals' ... One of the dreams I want to achieve is to get rich. I'd like to make money easier. (She laughs) I don't like to work from morning till night" (Sahel)*

### 2.5. Interfering in the choice of field and educational affairs

Many find themselves under family pressure to choose a field, model and plan for their future so that families strongly discourage their children from choosing disciplines such as human science and vocational courses. The result of this action is a feeling of regret, anger, distance from family and reproaching. Something that some people think has led them astray. After a few years, individuals usually try to get back on the track that their parents initially withheld from them. Not continuing education in the desired field causes feelings of hopelessness, aimlessness, confusion, and as a result, feelings of failure in the field of education and even work would be followed. Moving away from this interest often takes away the individuals' motivation and reason to try; it takes away something like the spirit of life.

*"I said I'm going to study physical education. The family objected. My father objected by saying no that; I hate him, he deprived me." (Anna)*



## 2.6. Threat and Domination

One of the main mechanisms that families employ to maintain control over different subjects is threatening to take away their children's privileges, so that they live in a constant state of fear and apprehension. This fear extends beyond family relationships to all individuals. Fear of losing love and attention; privileges assigned by parents weigh on them well into adulthood, and have double the adverse effect on their emotional relationships. Parents' threats cause a kind of self-rejection in individuals that plunges them further into isolation.

*"When I didn't have as much financial independence, my father was basically my boss. The more financially independent I become, my father realizes there are aspects of my life, which he cannot dominate. He doesn't have the power anymore."* (Marjan)

## 2.7. Hinder the flourishing of talent

Families' trapping their children's wings is what many activists call it. This experience is more common amongst upper or upper middle-class families. Parents who cannot tolerate to see their children have a tough time, are raising incompetent children unable to do the most basic things in their personal lives, they will experience severe stress and difficulties in their married life. There are only two possible outcomes to their marriages, separation, a stressful relationship or taking responsibility and trying to stand on their own, because they have not been prepared for cohabitating with others. Another defect of this kind of upbringing is ending up with irresponsible and dependent children.

*"I'm telling you, my father wasn't the type to give me any kind of responsibility, he did everything himself."* – Massoud

### 2.7.1. Extreme emotional dependency

Some miss out on social situations due to their extreme emotional attachment to the family. For example, they slept with their parents for many years as teenagers. This lack of independence has caused them to always define their identity with that of another, and not consider themselves an independent individual. This feeling is followed by disorientation and a type of alienation. These groups have stated that they cared more about the interests of others than their own, to the extent that in some cases it resembled a manner of self-sacrifice.

*"I didn't feel like (emphasizes) staying at home without my mother. I slept next to my mother until I was 16 because I was dependent on her. Anyway (Says sharply) (tears)"* – Seyed

### 2.7.2. Preventing investment

Many have stated that economically, families have deprived them of their chances for financial growth and advancement. In other words, families are the main inhibitors of achieving financial independence, especially women, who are effected more tragically and their families have intentionally or unintentionally destroyed their chance for independence.

*"Talking about investment, I really wanted to get something for myself. My family was insistent that I don't need it, asking me why I want it anyway. They believed that it had no use for me; it was useless; and since I was not a boy, I did not need to have any property of my own. So I'd better save my money in a bank because it's safer. They constantly made me feel like I'm going to fail."* (Elham)

### 2.7.3. Being the barrier to doing military service

In this study, interviewees who have high-income families are more likely to be raised in an unrealistic and fantasy environment. Families have confined them in an artificial world from which all factors of danger, adversity, and difficulty of social life have been removed. Not doing military service is one example. As a result of the compassion and irrational support of families,

some subjects have missed opportunities such as immigration, finding a suitable job, and marriage.

*“Should I do military service? They didn’t let me decide. My time was wasted. And they were my so-called intellectual family. Hoping that military service would be bought but it didn’t work out. I blame my mum and dad a lot, as they didn’t let it happen. My parents trapped my wings.”* (Ali K)

Not doing military service due to the family obligation, has imposed restrictions on subjects that have kept them away from their desires and plans in life. Finding the opportunity to leave the country and emigrate impossible, the impossibility of finding their desired job due to not having an end-of-service card, the loss of emotional relationships and chances of marriage have led to the delay in childbearing, as a result.

*“My parents caused a kind of conflict within us. I’d consider myself a failure even if I had a billion dollars now; since I wanted to be a father as soon as I could. I’m not even married yet ... I wanted to work somewhere. After they found out that I haven’t done my military service, they rejected me. I told my parents ‘look, you didn’t let me go’”* (Parham)

#### 2.7.4. Preventing employment

Many interviewees complain about family restrictions on getting a job. Among them, due to cultural stereotypes, the girls have experienced this the most and always recall it with a sense of regret.

*“Working was hard for me for a while. My family had restrictions for me. The older I got, the less they could force me.”* (Zeynab)

*“They say, ‘Well, if we’d let you go to work, what specialty would you depend on?’ Come on, is specialty gained at home being buried in books? They didn’t let me work. Expertise is acquired through work.”* (Meysam)

#### 2.7.5. Preventing children from migration

Many families have prevented their children from migrating under the pretext of taking care of them, uncertain future, loneliness, and so on. The result is men and women who believe they would have a better future if they had migrated. Girls have experienced this limitation more than boys.

*“I had a scholarship. I wanted to emigrate, they didn’t allow. I wanted to go see my friends, they didn’t allow. I wanted to ... they didn’t allow.”* (Elaheh)

#### 2.7.6. Preventing marriage and romantic relationships

The participants’ parents consider their children mentally immature. These parents try to make their way by being stubborn and sulky. Their family often rejects children, who seek to start a relationship without their approval. This greatly affects the quality of romantic relationships between couples. Severe parental dependence has caused children anxiety. Subjects have stated that their parents have always taken extreme care of them. Through these extreme oppositions in relationships, they cause their children vulnerability and stress.

*“I was hurt emotionally. I was a wreck for maybe two or three years. The mark it left on me will be there forever.”* (Mahmood)

#### 2.7.7. Inducing a sense of fear

Families have tried to limit their children socially by instilling fear and apprehension of society. Intimidating women from the outside world is considered a way of violence that has consequences such as depression, disorders and anxiety. These types deprive themselves of many social standards and sink deeper and deeper into their shell.

*"My family instilled a series of fears in me. These fears should not have been in me" (Hamid)*  
 The imposition of a false fear of the impossibility of success and progress has alienated subjects from social areas and activities other than the traditional role of a woman. This departure is voluntary and happens under control of the person's mental structure. It is much more difficult for women who have been brought up for employment and social activities to tolerate this isolation.

*"I think the concern of most women around me, and myself, is that we have a fear of entering society. It's because of the way we were brought up. Our families scare women of society. It becomes more difficult for us, especially after marriage." (Cobra)*

#### 2.7.7.1. Induction of the belief of women's inability

One of the existing educational shortcomings that targets women is recognizing girls as the second sex and depriving them of numerous opportunities, humiliating their thoughts, ideas and talents. In a manner that it even burns their hopes and kills their self-confidence. These traditional and patriarchal stereotypes in practice deprive women of the opportunity to participate. Using concepts such as "a girl's dignity is death", "women are gentle", etc. is a romantic image based on emotional patterns in which girls are less rational and more emotional. All of these factors have led to the restriction of women and girls by families.

Indoctrination of the idea that women are fragile, prepares subjects to accept the need for men and to think of themselves as secondary.

*"They always forbade me saying: 'you're just a girl. If you want to go and do it yourself, it will be difficult for you. They will harass you. The community is full of wolves.' They scared me so that I did nothing. 'Don't go near it.' They made me fear everything... 'You're a woman. You cannot make it. You cannot handle things on your own'." (Elham)*

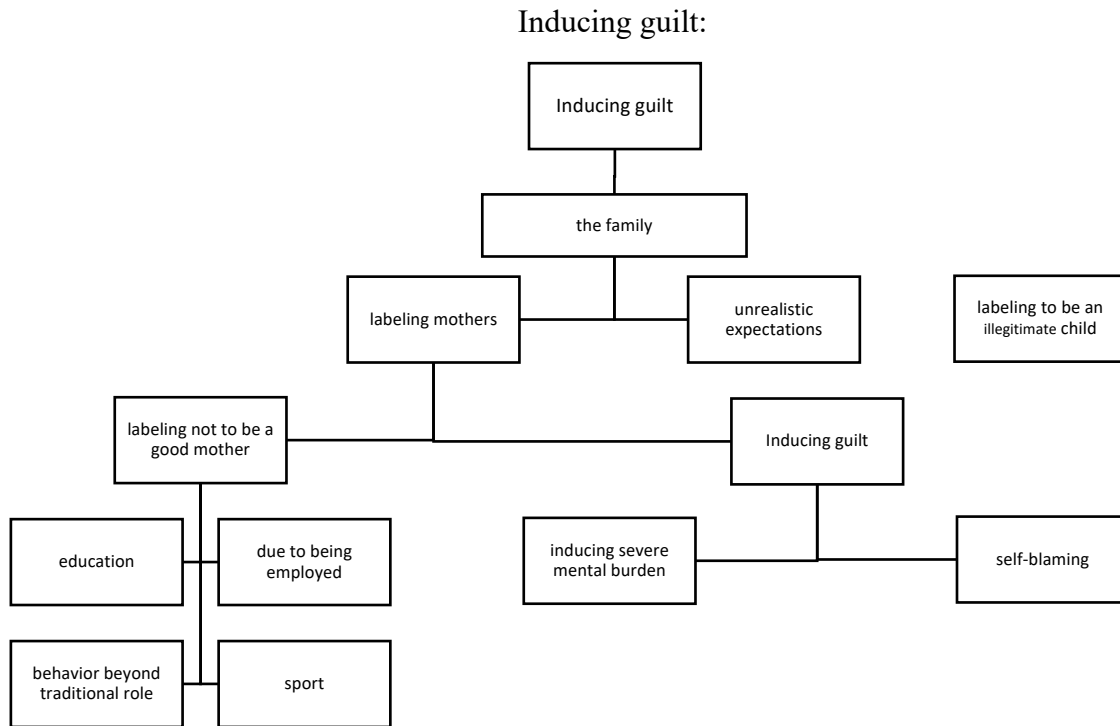
#### 2.7.8. Stigma of mental disorder

Labeling people of mental disorder is very common. This makes subjects hide their mental illness, and prevents them from seeking treatment. These labels cause more stress and escalates their mental illness. This is similar to the approach that society takes towards minorities. The irresponsibility and incompetence of these subjects makes them feel deficient. As a result, under the influence of social stigmas, they consider themselves inferior to others.

*"Throughout my childhood and teenage years, even now my family is taking me to a counselor and a psychiatrist. I remember I was four or five years old, maybe the fact that I went to the counselor all the time made me suspect that there's was a problem. It seems that from the beginning, from their point of view, there was something wrong with me." (Zahra)*

#### 2.7.9. Induce guilt

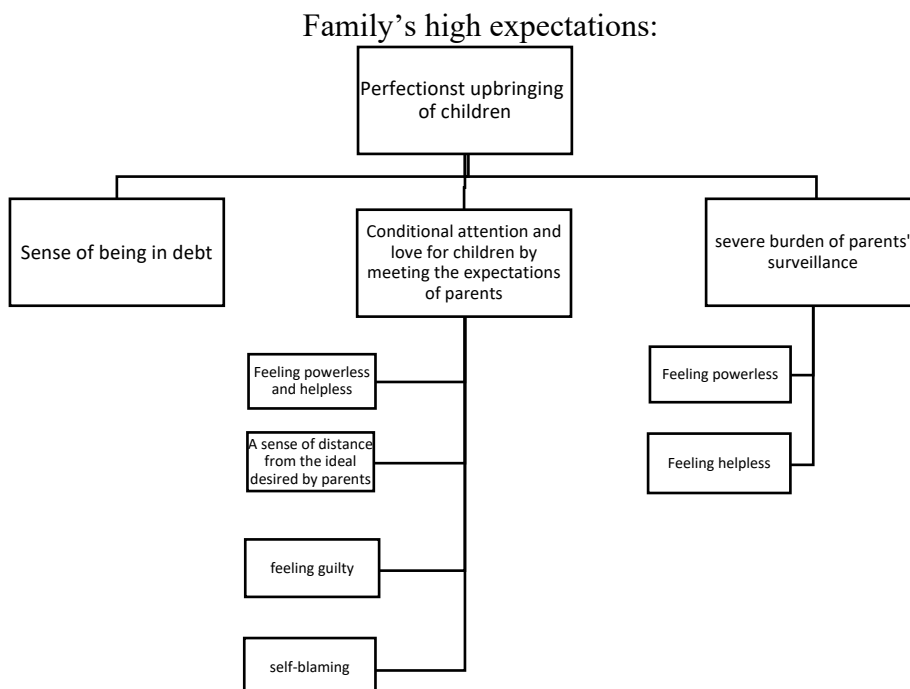
Inducing guilt is one of the most oppressive behaviors that the society especially families inflict on individuals. This is a bitter feeling that society imposes on individuals. The child is usually questioned and stigmatized by the family for being immoral, ignorant and ungrateful. Families often have unrealistic expectations of their children, such as nursing and extreme care, which, if not met cause them to be accused of being irresponsible and heartless. Another induction of guilt occurs in mothers by imposing that they do not have proper principles for parenting, or being misunderstood by their spouse because they are employed or continuing their education, not receiving any support. The first principle that is questioned is their motherhood. This stigma puts a heavy psychological burden on women and always rouses a kind of self-blame in them. This pain always accompanies mothers whenever they do something beyond their traditional duties such as studying, employment, sports, etc. She is always facing the question of whether she is a good mother or not? This is the feeling that is reflected on the mother by her husband and others.



*2.7.9.1. Unrealistic illustration of perfect children*

Parent’s high expectations have made every effort made by the subjects seem insufficient and erroneous. Inducing guilt through upbringing traditions is a system of parental exploitation. They blame this upbringing discipline responsible for their feelings of frustration.

*"There has always been a phenomenon called 'other people’s children', I have always had the feeling of discouragement by how other people’s children serve their families and I don’t, so I’m a useless person because I don’t serve. I’m such an unworthy child. There is a sense of disappointment that my family has instilled in me by saying that if you do this, I will do something for you or something." (Soraya)*



2.7.9.2. *Inducing a sense of being the wrong doer*

Some parents criticize their child's every move. These constant rejections impose a strange psychological burden on the individual, who considers his every choice and behavior to be wrong and inappropriate.

*"They're used to making you feel guilty. I always feel like a bad person and child."*  
(Muhammad)

2.7.9.3. *Parents pretending to be sick*

Some subjects' parents pretend to be sick and weak in order to get their children's attention. These dramatic behaviors impose a heavy sense of guilt on them. In reality, these actions are a means of controlling children.

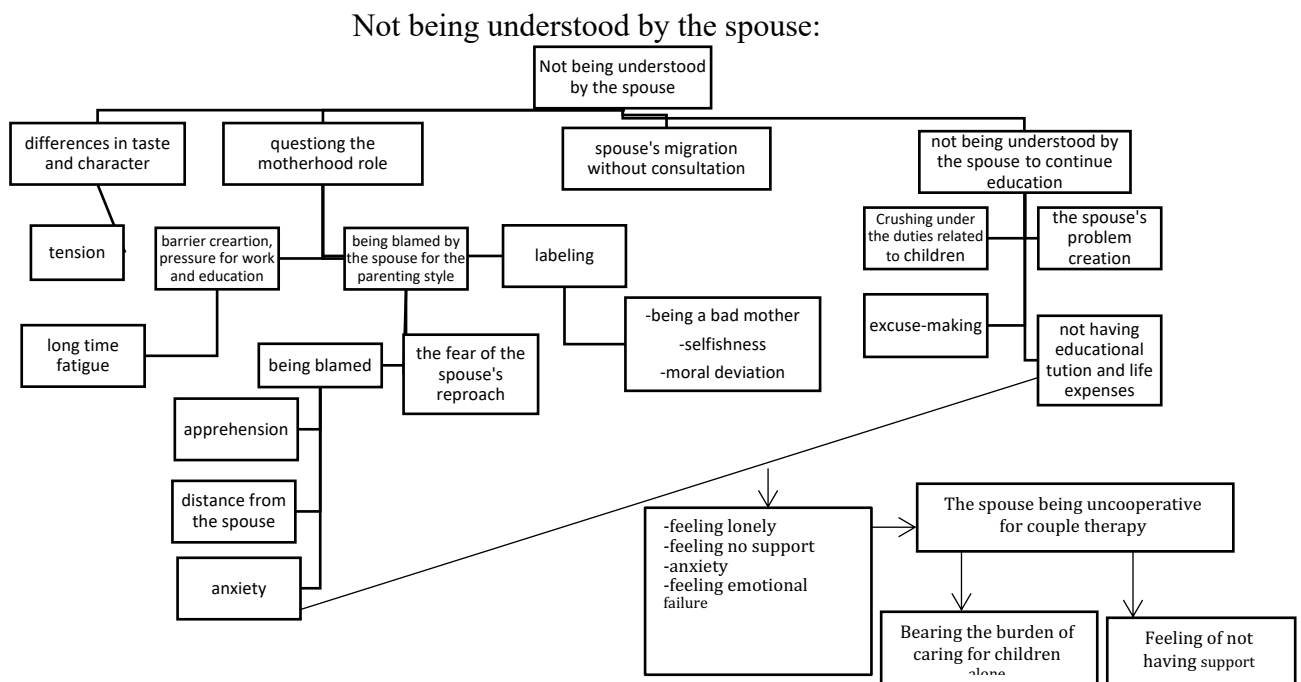
*"They gave me the feeling of being negative so much (emphasizes with disgust), and look where it has driven me. In previous rows, my mom would faint in front of me. I'd do nothing. You know why? Since she was acting; it was her show off."* (Amin)

2.7.10. *Married life problems*

2.7.10.1. *Being misunderstood by the spouse*

Lack of understanding by the spouse is one of the main causes of loneliness, lack of support and anxiety. This group believes they are suffering from emotional failure. They see no reason to try anymore. Many long counseling sessions have taken place without the presence of one spouse who has taken on the burden of improving the relationship. Their spouses, who refused to attend couples therapy sessions, said the subjects somehow did not have their backs when facing difficulties, claiming that they were carrying the burden of raising and caring for their children alone.

*"It's very hard. I remember the night before my exam, my little boy Radin had diarrhea and was vomiting. On one hand I was studying, on the other hand I had a travel blanket around my son; I was walking around the house like that. It was a difficult situation. My husband did not understand the situation and I was alone."* (Azadeh)



### 2.7.10.2. Spouse migration without subject consent

Partners of a group of participants migrated to another city without coordination and decided to work in that city.

*"My husband has gone to the town and we have no life at all. We have to overlook many things. He thought of himself. He didn't think of me. He didn't understand me."*  
(Andia)

### 2.7.10.3. Questioning the subject's role as a mother

Some participants were questioned by their spouse due to their employment and continuing education. They have been labeled as being bad mothers, irresponsible, selfish, morally deviant, etc., which has increased the pressures of work and education for them. In other words, it has imposed long-term fatigue on the person.

*"My classes were three days a week, I arrived at 9 pm, and I had to get home quickly. We fought every night about how bad a mother I was. 'You leave your children and go. You are neither a woman nor a mother; you leave a 2-year-old child in your mother's arms, so what? It's a pity to call you a mother. Why should our children eat cold food?'*

*If one of the children caught a cold, that night would have been my funeral, not because of my child, for the fear of my ex-husband. I remember one time my daughter broke her leg, he constantly said 'It's your fault. If you had been watching her, this wouldn't have happened. You are always buried in your books. To what end?'"*  
(Fereshteh)

#### 2.7.10.3.1. Being blamed for the parenting style by the spouse

Being blamed by the spouse for the way children are treated and raised, in case of common health problems for children (such as scratches, colds, etc.), has always created fear and anxiety for the individual who sees his/ her spouse as a strict and ruthless guard.

*"My husband used to say 'you want to educate children with books the way foreigners do. It doesn't benefit us. The child must be afraid. They are girls. They will grow up to be rude like you'."* (Fateme)

## Conclusion

The feeling of failure is a social phenomenon, including psychological feelings. Negative social experiences and past failures, low social class or class degradation, being an immigrant, controlling families, being female and being divorced are some of the things that lead to the formation of failure identity.

Meanwhile, families play a reinforcing and causal role in experiences of failure, trying to control the individual by imposing mental and objective constraints, using mechanisms such as threats, humiliation, analogy, concessions, rejection, motivation, guilt, and fear. Some blame the family for their failures and believe that the solution is to eliminate contact with the family. Individuals with a controlling family make all of their decisions in response to family-imposed choices, and look for a respond to the inner voice of the family's desires in their life.

By instilling traditional beliefs, families have prevented women from taking advantage of opportunities for success. This process of attachment creates a duality for middle-class women. On the one hand, they have grown up as independent women under the influence of educational and academic teachings; on the other hand, society's expectations have caused this group to have a duality of values. This conflict in values takes much effort and energy. Attempts to adapt to traditional patterns are always unskillful and unsuccessful due to the lack



of roots in the imitative educational structure. Feelings of loss, alienation, anger, guilt, and despair are common feelings in these people.

Financial barriers and the economic needs of the family force people to pursue jobs and situations that result in despair, so a dual sense of anger and duty is formed in the individual, which has consequences such as family tensions and a sense of self-sacrifice, whereas the family and society play an oppressive role. Losing the opportunity to succeed due to economic constraints makes a person angry, so they point the finger of blame at the other person, as a result of which the family relationships of these people become an arena of anger.

As described, family communication is one of the challenging areas that has conveyed a sense of despair to the individual. Rejection by family members results in feelings of hopelessness and alienation that affect marital and work relationships. Feelings of abandonment in the family of origin, lack of healthy emotional bonds with parents (especially after parental separation) cause emotional failure in adulthood.

Individuals with controlling families experience a dilemma of values due to the threat of abandonment and deprivation of economic privileges by their parents. Parents' emotional and mental management puts a lot of stress on the child by instilling a sense of guilt. Some consider escape to be the solution to get away from their family. In this group, scheming, self-blame, rumination, regret and anger are strong.

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