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Explaining married women's' decision for being employed: a qualitative study

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Abstract

More than two third of university students in Iran are women, but this rate is not reflected in employment market. Many university educated women decide to be house workers and leave bread winning to their husbands. Recently, more married women are eager to find a job. Many scholars have interpreted this change as a proxy of women tendency to be more independent and less engaged to their husbands and children. This study challenges this idea through in-depth interviews with ten women half of them are employed and others are house workers. Participants' education were from high school diploma to bachelor degree and their family income were around lower middle class. Analyzing qualitative interviews by grounded theory processes, lead us to argue that these women's employment does not necessary mean that they have or even can attain more dependency. Their decision for being employed for leaving their job both in many cases reflects what their husband prefer or what they have both planned for the whole family. In other words they are not free to decide about their employment and they have accepted this. The result is that neither being at work nor staying at home can satisfy these women. At home they feel depressed and powerless and at work they are less resistant against tensions.

Keywords: Women, employment, family