

ABSTRACT

The dissertation aimed to discover whether female Gestalt Psychotherapists have shared thinking and beliefs about the reasons why the participants decided to retain or retrieve their original name when they entered or left a contract of marriage, using participative enquiry to uncover and describe phenomenon. The research examined whether the effect of living in a hierarchical, patriarchal system was in awareness and whether they were feminists, and if so either partly or solely because of this. The research showed that their individual personalities included rebelliousness, defiance and independence.

Gestalt Psychotherapy challenges adaptation through increasing self-awareness, by enabling clients to recognise how they inhibit themselves and why. The research examined whether the participants were fully self-aware when making the decision to retain or retrieve their original name. The participants had a shared belief in making a statement about equality and empowerment. Professionally they were all confident that it had been a positive statement to their clients that they are women who were able to challenge convention as a positive step towards changes in society that will benefit people of either gender.