

## Cultural Values and Marital Satisfaction: Do Collectivism and Gender Role Orientation Affect Marital Satisfaction among Palestinian Couples?

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of Gender Role Orientation (described as “masculinity” and “femininity”) and collectivism on marital satisfaction in Palestine. Three hundred and seven married participants (187 men and 120 women) completed four self-report questionnaires examining cultural dimensions of marriage, gender role orientation, and marital satisfaction. Based on the results, Palestinian participants reported to be more satisfied with marriages that were collectivistic, based on feminine characteristics, and held more egalitarian gender role orientation. All differences between males and females in all observed variables were insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ) except the differences in characteristics of “masculinity”, where males were significantly more masculine than females ( $p < 0.001$ ). The data supports the proposed model (with all paths coefficient significant) that collectivism, and “masculinity” on a cultural level, and gender role orientation at an individual level had significant effects on marital satisfaction. According to the results, counselors and social workers need to understand the roles of collectivism and masculinity in marital relationships when working with individuals from more traditional cultural backgrounds.

**Keywords:** Culture, Collectivism, Masculinity, Gender Role Orientation, Marital Satisfaction

Spousal relationships have long been an object of interest for psychologists (Dush, Taylor, & Kroeger, 2008; Hawkins; 1968; Huston & Robbins, 1982; Gunter, 2004; Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Litzinger & Gordon, 2005; Stanley & Markman, 1992). Indeed, the quality of long-term stable relationships has important implications for psychological health and well-being. Satisfying intimate relationships are associated with elevated levels of general well-being and life satisfaction (Walker, Isherwood, Burton, Kitwe-Magambo, & Luszcz, 2013). Research has shown happy marriages are associated with longer, healthier lives (Karren, Hafen, Smith, & Frandsen, 2002).

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Perhaps, the most important component of a marital relationship is satisfaction, (Dush, Taylor, & Kroeger, 2008; Gunter, 2004; Litzinger & Gordon, 2005) as marital satisfaction is the strongest predictor for happiness in many areas of life (Ozgun & Fons, A satisfying marriage is associated with better general adjustment and fewer health problems (Karren et al., 2002). Both partners experience better emotional and physical health, are more successful in their jobs, and seem to be protected from other sources of stress when they are satisfied with their marriages, compared with when they are not (Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001). Marital satisfaction is associated with higher rates of productivity, lower risks of emotional and physical illness, and better rates of recovery from illness (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 2005). The effects of marital satisfaction extend to children as well. Even within intact families, children have fewer emotional and physical problems and better educational outcomes when the relationship between their parents is satisfying and relatively free of conflict (Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002).

### **Marital Satisfaction and the Palestinian Culture**

In the Palestinian context, there are few studies concerning marital satisfaction and most have reported high levels of marital dissatisfaction (Al-Krenawi, 2010; Abu-Rmeileh & Larsun, 2008; Dhaher, Mikolajczyk, Maxwell & Kramer, 2010; Emad & Radwan, 1997; Haj-Yahia, 2000 & 2002; Khawaja, Lions, & El-Roueiheb, 2007; Palestinian Central Bureau Of Statistics [PCBS], 2005 & 2008; Palestinian Center for Democracy & Conflict Resolution [PCDCR], 2003). Conversely four studies (Asalia & Al-Bana, 2011; Barakat, 1993, as cited in Adams, 1999 & Adams, 1999; Khalili, 2013) suggested that the marital satisfaction in Palestine is high and divorce almost non-existent.

Palestinian society maintains some stigma surrounding divorce. Since divorce is considered shameful. Spouses may prefer to live in dissatisfying marriage to divorcing, if a woman seeks divorce, she is sometimes maltreated by her family of origin, as well as her husband's family, with shunning by the whole community. If a woman pursues divorce she is also obligated to return the dowry received from her husband. In general, in Palestine there are negative social and cultural views of divorce (Al-Krenawi, 2010; Attala'a & Ashareef, 2011; Haj-Yahi, 2002; Manasra, 2003).

Palestinian society is generally a traditional patriarchal culture where males are dominant. Extra-marital affairs do occur with the vast majority initiated by men (Abu-Rmeileh & Larsun, 2008; Dhaher et al., 2010; Haj-Yahia, 2000; PCBS, 2005 & 2010; Khawaja et al., 2007; PCDCR, 2003). The Palestinian context may be characterized by traditional attitudes towards women, sex-role stereotypes, sexual conservatism, non-egalitarian expectations of marriage, patriarchal beliefs about marital relations, and lack of empathy towards woman's needs (Haj-Yahia, 2000). However, the divorce rates are very low, and the marriages stable.

In Arab culture, an individual's decisions are often based on what aligns with the values of and benefits the extended family, while personal satisfaction and desires secondary to the

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collective well-being of the family. The husband assumes the role of financial provider and instills cultural, religious, and social values within the family unit (Jaghab, 2005). The wife acts as the caregiver, taking on the responsibilities of child bearing and homemaking (Nobles & Sciarra, 2000, as cited in Jaghab, 2005). Although, Palestinian women are allowed to work outside of the household, men retain final authority in the family, society, and culture. Due to the man's financial and social status, as well as his patriarchal role in the household, men expect that their wives and children will follow social conventions. Haj-Yahia (2002) explained that if family members do not obey or comply with the patriarch's rules, or he feels his rights as a father or a husband are threatened, he might respond with violence. Although the man has committed a violent act; there is a tendency to sympathize with his trials and tribulations as the head of the household.

Many researchers (Broman, 2002; Nakamatsu, 2005; Toth & Kemmelmeier, 2009) have attempted to identify underlying reasons for the lack of marital satisfaction across the world. Broman (2002) found that marital satisfaction is affected by cultural values for some cultural groups but is not among others. Generally, cultural values take years to acclimate into a system of standards and guidelines for each individual and thus are sometimes not easily negotiable. In addition, a marital relationship is heavily guided by norms, customs, and expectations that are derived from culture (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004).

In particular, satisfaction with one's spouse may largely depend on the degree to which a marriage fulfills culturally determined expectations and obligations. The criteria for a satisfying marriage may be highly varied and may depend on a unique set of culturally enforced norms, values, and obligations (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). Consequently, it becomes very important to recognize the impact that the cultural settings can have on the strength and level of satisfaction in the marriage directly and indirectly through some psychological factors (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

One prominent attempt to understand and quantify culture was conducted by Hofstede (2001, 2006, 2008, & 2010), who presented a cross-cultural model that includes five dimensions: power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long vs. short term orientation (Hofstede, 2001). Most cross-cultural studies using Hofstede's model have been conducted in business and marketing fields, with few concerning psychology. However, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) indicated that, these dimensions influence many factors in social life including marital relationship. The current study examined how these cultural dimensions, specifically individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity, affect marital satisfaction directly and through gender role orientation in the Palestinian context.

### **Individualism/Collectivism and Marital Satisfaction**

Based on the Hofstede et al. (2010) perspective, individualism refers to the extent to which relationships are prioritized between individuals (Hofstede, 2001). In individualist cultures,

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people look after themselves and their immediate family only. In collectivist cultures, people belong to groups that look after them in exchange for loyalty. In individualist cultures, the identity is in the person; in collectivist cultures, identity is based in the social network to which one belongs.

In relation to marriage, in collectivistic cultures, marriage may be satisfying to the extent that it fulfills familial duties (Hofstede et al., 2010). Those include the production of a male heir for the continuance of a family line, the acquisition of a daughter-in-law who will provide support for the husband's parents, and the begetting of sons, who will provide for the security of the couple in their old age (Hofstede et al., 2010). However, relatively less attention is paid to marital satisfaction in collectivistic cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010).

On the other hand, individualistic cultures generally view marriage as serving fewer instrumental and more personal functions and are thus thought to be satisfying to the extent that they fulfill happiness or hedonistic goals of husbands and wives (Lalonde et al., 2004). In addition, although social obligations are a defining feature of marriage in many Eastern cultures, such influences may be viewed as obstacles to personal happiness in Western cultures (Lalonde et al., 2004). Love and intimacy between husband and wife are assumed to be influenced by culture (Simmons, Kolke, & Shimizu, 1986).

Generally, romantic love is valued highly in less-traditional cultures with few strong extended family ties and is less valued in cultures in which strong family ties reinforce the relationship between marriage partners (Simmons et al., 1986). Dion and Dion (1993) examined the concepts of love and intimacy in individualistic and collectivistic countries and reported some paradoxical findings. Individualistic societies emphasize romantic love and personal fulfillment in marriage, but individualism makes realization of these outcomes difficult. In contrast, collectivism fosters receptiveness to intimacy, but intimacy is likely to be diffused across a network of family relationships.

Broude (1987) suggests that intimacy is likely to occur when individuals have no social support outside marriage. According to Dion and Dion (1993), individualism and collectivism help explain culture-related differences in marital relationships and the importance of emotional intimacy in marriage. Moreover, they suggested that psychological intimacy in marriage is more important for marital satisfaction and personal well-being in individualistic than in collectivistic societies.

Lucas and colleagues (2006) attempted to determine to what extent satisfying marriages are cross-culturally similar or unique. They examined two models of marital satisfaction: Love and Partnership (Lucas et al., 2008), where love is defined as the emotional and romantic attachment to one's spouse. Partnership in contrast is based on communication and support of one's spouse. The results showed that there was not much cultural invariance on these definitions, which implies that aspects like love and partnership in marital satisfaction may be

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defined uniquely by particular norms, values and expectations about marriage from a culture (Lucas et al., 2008).

Rehman and Holtzworth-Munroe (2007) videotaped couples from Pakistan and America while discussing marital problems. For American couples marital satisfaction was found to be strongly related to positive and negative communication behaviors during marital interactions, while for marriages from Pakistan marital communication behavior was unrelated or modestly related to their marital satisfaction.

Gao (2001) used the triangular theory of love from Sternberg for examining what marital characteristics are needed for experiencing marital satisfaction for couples living in China and couples living in the United states. Couples from China and America agreed that intimacy and commitment were important for satisfaction in a relationship. However, American couples valued passion in their relationship higher than the Chinese couples.

### **Masculinity/Femininity and Marital Satisfaction**

According to Hofstede et al. (2010) society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are defined as assertive, tough, responsible, and focused on material success, whereas women are ideally modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap, both men and women being modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. In masculine cultures, love and family life were more often seen as separate, whereas in feminine cultures, they were expected to coincide (Hofstede et al., 2010).

In masculine cultures, it is uncommon for wife to work outside the house, while the husband is expected to be healthy and wealthy (Hofstede, 2006). Preservation of family ties in these kinds of cultures is very important regardless of love between spouses. In turn, feminine cultures stress the importance of relationships and quality of life; both husband and wife are to be modest, tender and focused on their relationship, they share the responsibilities of care and provision, husbands play roles that are more similar to boyfriends, and the feeling of love is very important (Hofstede et al., 2010).

An important aspect of this masculinity-femininity dimension is role differentiation. While it tends to be small in feminine societies, it can be quite large in masculine societies. In masculine cultures, household work is less shared between husband and wife than in feminine cultures. Men also do more household shopping in the feminine cultures (De Mooij & Hofstede, 2010). On the individual level, most researchers classify gender-role orientation along a continuum ranging from traditional to modern. Traditional orientation asserts that men are more "important" than women and that it is proper for men to control and dominate women. In contrast, modern orientation represents a more egalitarian view, sometimes labeled a feminist position, in which women and men are equally important, and dominance

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of one gender over the other is rejected (Agarwal, Lester, & Dhawan, 1992; Rao & Rao, 1985).

Gender roles are shared cultural expectations which are performed by individuals based on their socially-identified gender (Kidder, 2002). Gender role theory suggests that “individuals internalize cultural expectations about their gender because social pressures external to the individual favor behavior consistent with their prescribed gender role” (Kidder, 2002, p. 630). These categorizations play essential part on individuals’ lives and relationships (Donaghue & Fallon, 2003; Williams, Consalvo, Caplan, & Yee, 2009).

Gender role theory proposes that women are encouraged to establish and maintain social relationships and prioritize the needs of others over their own, while discourages them from perform activities defined as masculine (Williams et al., 2009).

In Hofstede’s (2001) theory, feminine cultures tend to be more egalitarian, with less differentiation in gender roles; both men and women are concerned equally with relationships, tasks, household labor, quality of life, and less with power and personal achievement. As a result of the increased emotionalisation of partnership, it might be expected that feminine cultures contribute more positively to marital satisfaction than masculine cultures. Some findings revealed that femininity and adopting egalitarian attitudes towards gender-roles were important for marital satisfaction, as it increased mutual caring and tolerance (Dasgupta & Basu, 2011; Kapinus, 2004; Steiner-Pappalardo & Gurung, 2002). Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, & Fitzpatrick (1994) examined the relationship between masculinity, femininity and satisfaction among dating couples. Results indicated that for both males and females, relationship satisfaction was related to their own expressive competence and to perceptions of their partner as feminine. Also, levels of expressive competence mediated the relationship between self-perceptions of femininity and satisfaction.

A number of studies demonstrated that femininity is more consistently and strongly related to marital quality than are male traits (Antill, 1983; Bradbury & Fincham, 1988; Peterson, Baucom, Elliot & Farr, 1989). More specifically Antill (1983) demonstrated that males appear to be happiest when paired with androgynous and feminine females and less happy with low-femininity partners (masculine or undifferentiated). Also females tend to be happier when their male partners are typed as “feminine” or “androgynous” (Antill, 1983).

According to Bradbury & Fincham (1988) feminine thinking individuals would also behave in ways that promote marital satisfaction such as more positive problem-solving behavior and more accommodative behavior. Other studies however did not confirm the importance of femininity for spouses' satisfaction. Aube & Norcliffe (1995) found that masculinity is positively related to spouses self-report of marital quality, whereas Peterson et al. (1989) and Parmelee (1987) demonstrated that the masculinity of the wife in particular results in higher marital quality experienced.

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The few longitudinal studies available also show consistently that not femininity but masculinity seems to improve marital satisfaction over time (Bradbury, Campbell & Fincham, 1995). Kurdek (1991) has shown that femininity was unrelated to changes in satisfaction over 1-year and 3-year intervals for husbands and wives. However, his study was limited as no measure of masculinity was included and only newlywed couples were examined.

### **Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, and Gender Role Orientation**

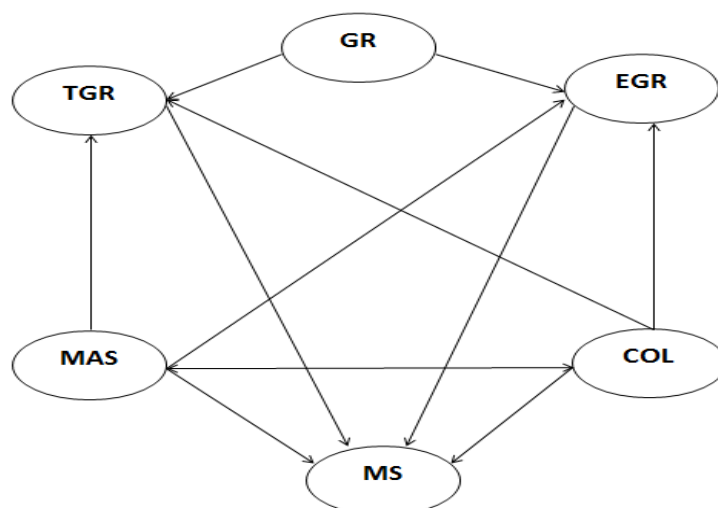
Individualism is characterized by a desire for independence and self-sufficiency. Such qualities in women tend to be associated with more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles (Shafiro, Himelein, & Best, 2003). Therefore, a more interdependent sense of self might be related to more conventional male-female relations, with an emphasis on traditional concepts of men as masculine (strong and responsible) and women as feminine (passive and dependent). In addition, Williams and Best (1990), found in their study of 14 countries more egalitarian gender role attitudes, or sex-role ideology, in countries that emphasized individualism. Therefore, collectivism and traditional gender attitudes might be positively correlated. Moreover, the world values survey by Inglehart, Basanez, and Moreno (1998) found that the highest stress on well-being occurred in individualist and feminine societies, while the highest stress on survival was found in collectivist and masculine societies.

### **Indices of Individualism/Collectivism and Masculinity/Femininity for Palestine**

Unfortunately, Hofstede et al. (2010) did not mention the position of Palestine on individualism/collectivism in their book. However, Palestine would likely be closest to the scores of Egypt and United Arab Emirates which are 25 (out of 76 countries and the range of this index is "between" 6 to 91), with the ranks 55 and 56 respectively. Jordan also seems relevant since it is very close to Palestine culturally and geographically and its population is mostly constituted by Palestinians that moved to Jordan after Israeli occupation in 1948 and 1967 (Shoup, 2007). Jordan received the score of 30 with 48th rank. In general, the Arab world has received the score of 38 with the 41st rank (Hofstede et al., 2010). Both the score and the rank are relatively modest and located in between extreme collectivism and individualism. Palestine is considered feminine since the Arab world has received the score of 52 with the 33<sup>rd</sup> rank (out of 76 countries and the range of this index is from 5 to 110). The score of Jordan was 45 with rank 42. These scores allow us assume that Palestinian culture may be in a transitional stage, which is caused by the globalization process (Hofstede et al., 2010).

The current study examined direct and indirect roles of individualism/collectivism and masculinity/femininity in marital satisfaction among a sample of married Palestinians. A correlational cross-sectional design was used for this study using self-report measures, examining the associations among individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, gender roles orientation, and marital satisfaction, to examine the causal relationships between independent and dependent variables.

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*Figure 1. Theoretical model of the relationships among individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, gender role orientation, and marital satisfaction*

## **METHOD**

### *Participants*

Three hundred and seven married persons completed the study questionnaires. There were 187 men and 120 women. The mean age of participants was 40.65 years (SD = 5.85). All participants were from West Bank in Palestine, most of them had a Bachelor degree (74.6%) and were married once (96%). Nearly 62% of the participants had been married for more than 10 years with a mean of 12.77 years (SD = 6.59) and an average of 4.67 (SD = 1.40).

### *Measures*

*Individual Cultural Values Scale [CVSCALE]* (Yoo, Donthu & Lenartowicz, 2011). The original version of this scale included 26 items with five cultural orientation factors (power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long vs. short term orientation). For the purposes of the current study, two subscales of the individualism/collectivism were used with 6 items and masculinity/femininity with 4 items. Respondents were asked to rate each item on the following scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Moderately Disagree, (4) Undecided, (5) Moderately Agree, (6) Agree, or (7) Strongly Agree. In the Yoo et al.'s (2011) study, all items loaded highly on the appropriate factors, and no item loaded on more than one factor, supporting the independence of the constructs and providing strong empirical evidence of their validity. In the Yoo et al.'s (2011) study, the clear factor patterns shown in the exploratory factor analysis were consistently found in the confirmatory factor analysis for the pooled sample. All items loaded on their corresponding constructs. In addition, the overall fit of the measurement model (26 items) was excellent:  $\chi^2$  (df = 289) was 714.14; goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.96; adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = 0.96; root mean square residual (RR) = 0.033; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.031; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.90; comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.94; and incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.94. In the Yoo et al.'s



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(2011) study, the reliability ranged from 0.85 to 0.89 for individualism/collectivism dimension and it was 0.84 for masculinity/femininity dimension.

**Gender role orientation.** Gender role orientation was determined by utilizing the Traditional-Egalitarian Sex Role [TESR] scale (Larsen & Long, 1988, as cited in Guzman, 1996) to assess participant's gender traits that inform whether one is masculine or feminine. The TESR is a 19-item, 4 Likert-type scale; six items are phrased to reflect an egalitarian [EGR] view and 13 to reflect a traditional view [TGR]. Responses for each of the items can range from one (Strongly Disagree) to four (Strongly Agree). The higher the score is the more traditional attitude and, conversely, the lower the score is the more egalitarian attitude. The TESR has a split-half reliability of 0.85 (Guzman, 1996). Its concurrent validity was tested using the Sex Role Orientation Scale, which is a measure of attitudes toward women and women's roles. The correlation between the two scales was 0.79 (Guzman, 1996). Larsen and Long (1988) did not offer instructions on scoring; however, as it is a basic summated rating scale, item scores are usually added to yield one total score (Davis, 2005).

**Marital satisfaction.** (Schumm et al., 1986) developed the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale [KMSS]; it was designed as a short and direct assessment of marital satisfaction. The theoretical foundation of the measure is based on Spanier and Cole's (1976) conceptual distinction between satisfaction with spouse, marriage, and the marriage relationship. Thus, the scale consists of three items where respondents are directly asked how satisfied they are with their partner as a spouse, with their marriage, and with their relationship with their spouse. In a series of studies, the scale has performed reliably, with alphas ranging from 0.89 to 0.93 (Mitchell, Newell, & Schumm, 1983; Schumm et al., 1983; Sheckman, Bergen, Schumm, & Bugaighis, 1985, as cited in Sabatelli, 1988). Evidence for the validity of the scale is derived from its correlations with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale [DAS] subscale (Grover, Paff-Bergen, Russell, & Schumm, 1984; Schumm et al., 1986, as cited in Sabatelli, 1988). KMSS consists of three items where respondents are directly asked how satisfied they are with their partner as a spouse, with their marriage, and with their relationship with their spouse. Responses were scaled from one to seven (1 = "Extremely dissatisfied", 2 = "Very dissatisfied", 3 = "Somewhat dissatisfied", 4 = "Mixed", 5 = "Somewhat satisfied", 6 = "Satisfied", and 7 = "Extremely satisfied").

### **Procedure**

The researcher benefited from recommendations of The United States Census Bureau [USCB] method in translating and adapting questionnaires. USCB recommended five steps for translating questionnaires' research: prepare, translate, pretest, revise, and document (USCB, 2004). Based on these recommendations, the translated (Arabic) questionnaires were reviewed by five academic members from the department of Psychology in Faculty of Education in An-Najah National University [ANU].

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Participants were recruited by a convenient non-probabilistic sampling plan from various occupational settings. The participation was voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants were asked to complete the four self-reporting scales in their homes. Questionnaires were administered in the same order: KMSS – MAS subscale in CVSCALE – COL subscale in CVSCALE - TESR. Seventy-four percent of protocols with responses were returned to the researcher.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

Path analysis, a type of structural equation modeling, was used to analyze the model and to evaluate the model's ability to fit the data for each gender. In statistical analysis, the model assumes a correlation of zero between any two unrelated variables on the model. The SEM with ML procedure assumes that observed variables have normal distributions (Bowen & Guo, 2012; Byrne, 2010). In the present study, the data were checked for univariate normality. Univariate normality can be examined by skew and kurtosis (Kline, 2005). Skew implies that the shape of a unimodal distribution is asymmetrical about the mean of a variable, positive skew indicates that most of the scores are below the mean, and negative skew indicates that most of the scores are above the mean (Thomson, 2004). Kurtosis represents the peakedness of the distribution (Thomson, 2004). For the unimodal, symmetrical distribution, positive kurtosis indicates a higher peak and heavier, short tails, and negative kurtosis indicates a lower peak and thin, long tails. The positive kurtosis is described as leptokurtic and the negative kurtosis is described as platykurtic (Kline, 2005). The data distribution of variables can be significantly skew, kurtosis, or both. The standardized skew index equals 3.29 (z-score); greater than 3.29 ( $> 3.29$ ) indicates positive skew; and less than -3.29 ( $< -3.29$ ) indicates negative skew (Kline, 2005). The standardized kurtosis index equals 10.0 (z-score) and kurtosis index greater than 20.0 ( $> 20.0$ ) may be a high peaked distribution (Kline, 2005), although there is less consensus about the kurtosis index. Normality of variables can be assessed by the graphical method as well as the statistical method. The data distribution of variables can be significant skew, kurtosis, or both. The standardized skew index equals 3.29 (z-score); greater than 3.29 ( $> 3.29$ ) indicates positive skew; and less than -3.29 ( $< -3.29$ ) indicates negative skew (Kline, 2005). The standardized kurtosis index equals 10.0 (z-score) and kurtosis index greater than 20.0 ( $> 20.0$ ) may be a high peaked distribution (Kline, 2005). Researchers can test whether a variable has significant skew or kurtosis by dividing the unstandardized skewness or kurtosis index by its corresponding standard error; this ratio is interpreted as a z-test of skew or kurtosis (Kline, 2005). Therefore, ratios greater than 1.96 would have p-value less than 0.05, and ratios greater than 2.58 would have p-value less than 0.01, indicating significant skewness or kurtosis in the data. However, in large samples, these tests may be overly sensitive to non-normality. Absolute values of kurtosis greater than 10.0 suggest a problem; values greater than 20.0 indicate a potentially serious problem with kurtosis (Kline, 2005). One approach to handle the presence of non-normal observed variables in SEM suggests the use of a bootstrapping procedure that yields more accurate ML estimates of parameters from a model (Byrne, 2010).

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The fitting between the hypothetical model and observed data was assessed by examining the following indexes; relative chi-square [CMIN/df], Bentler-Bonnett normed fit index [NFI], non-normed (Tucker-Lewis) fit index [TLI], comparative fit index [CFI], goodness of fit index [GFI], adjusted goodness of fit index [AGFI], and the classical root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1998; MacCallum & Austin, 2000): RMSEA is one of the most important indicators showing the degree to which estimated parameters of an SEM model are representative for the whole population from which the sample was drawn.

The present study used a parceling technique to combine individual items and using these combined items as the observed variables, most often as the observed variables in SEM. Parcels are an alternative to using the individual items (Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002). This helps avoid many problems in SEM analysis, since problems in the assignment of items to factors (e.g., item assigned to wrong factor; items that have correlated errors) will tend to be smoothed over if you parcel. Moreover, many scales have a number of items. Multiple-item scales pose challenges for SEM, since all the items are used as indicators of a latent construct (Yang, Nay, & Hoyle, 2010). A model could have a lot of parameters to estimate the relationship to the available sample size, resulting in reduced power to discover important parameters (Yang et al., 2010). In addition, it might not fit the data well, leading to the rejection of a true model (Yang et al., 2010). Thus, the researcher is left then with the option of reducing the number of observed variables (e.g., by parceling). There are many methods to parcel individual items (Rocha & Chelladurai, 2012); one approach that was followed in the present study was the single-factor method. According to this approach, all items of a given scale are examined through a factor analysis where a single-factor solution is extracted. Then, the item with the highest loading is paired with the item with the lowest loading. The item with the second highest loading is paired with the item with the second lowest loading and so on, until all items have been assigned to the parcels (Rocha & Chelladurai, 2012). The current study measured each construct by two parcels based on the items' means, except the MS items which were left as they are.

### *Reliability analysis*

Reliability analysis was used to determine if the results of using the selected instruments for the study are stable and replicable. Cronbach's alpha technique was utilized to examine the internal consistency of the four instruments. Chronbach's alpha greater than 0.70 ( $> 0.70$ ) is considered reliable for the internal consistency of the instruments (Kline, 2005). The reliability estimates for KMSS, MAS, COL, TESR is provided in table 1.

**Table 1. Estimates of Reliability.**

The constructs	N. of items	Cronbach's Alpha N = 307
MS	3	0.927
MAS	4	0.917

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The constructs	N. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
		N = 307
COL	6	0.959
TESR	19	0.745
EGR	6	0.883
TGR	13	0.893

As the estimates of the internal consistency in table 1 indicate, no problems with the reliability of the instruments were found; all reliabilities were greater than 0.70 (< 0.70), which in turn serves SEM analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for all study variables based on their total scores. In order to assess responses on all the questionnaires and to discover the positions of the respondents on the study variables, the researcher compared each score on every construct with appropriate cut point value, based on the mid-point between the minimum and the maximum values (hypothetical mean). To test the differences between each score and its cut point value, the researcher used one sample t-test.

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the Observed Variables.*

Variables	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Hypothetical mean	t-value	P-value
MS	14.72	4.72	3	21	12	10.01	0.000
MAS	14.56	6.39	4	28	16	-3.94	0.000
COL	26.78	10.15	6	42	24	4.79	0.000
TESR	41.50	10.96	19	76	47.5	-9.59	0.000

Participants tended to obtain high score in marital satisfaction (mean = 14.72, SD = 4.72), whereas this score is significantly greater than the corresponding hypothetical means ( $p < 0.001$ ). The researcher interprets this result that in the sample studied, individuals were generally happy in their marriages. Marital satisfaction is an outcome of two cognitive components (expectations and evaluation of rewards), that each spouse is waiting satisfying his/her needs from the other, therefore this related to rights and duties for both of them based on gender roles which are fulfilled. This study found Palestinian participants were satisfied with their marriages. A Palestinian marriage is likely to be described as traditional, according to Olson and Fower (1993); the profile for a traditional relationship is characterized by scores slightly above average on scales assessing satisfaction with marital interaction ( $14.72 \pm 4.72$  with hypothetical mean with 12). Participants tended to be younger (mean age of participants was  $40.65 \pm 5.85$ ), but stayed married longer ( participants had been married for more than 10 years with a mean of  $12.77 \pm 6.59$ ) and had multiple children ( $4.67 \pm 1.40$ ). They also tended to have a level of higher education (most of participants had a Bachelor degree 74.6%). In Palestine, marriage is considered a religious duty in Islamic belief and practice. Palestinians

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consider marriage a societal duty and the core of their social life. The key to a good society is strong families according to Palestinian culture and the Islamic religion. The current finding is consistent with the studies that found high levels of marital satisfaction among Palestinians (Asalia & Al-Bana, 2011; Barakat, 1993, as cited in Adams, 1999 & Adams, 1999; Khalili, 2013) and inconsistent with studies that found high levels of Palestinians who were dissatisfied with their marriage (Al-Krenawi, 2010; Abu-Rmeileh & Larsun, 2008; Dhaher et al., 2010; Emad & Radwan, 1997; Haj-Yahia, 2000; Haj-Yhia, 2002; Khawaja et al., 2007; PCBS, 2005 & 2010; PCDCR, 2003).

The scores of masculinity (mean = 14.56, SD = 6.39) and gender role orientation (mean = 41.50, SD = 10.96) were low and significantly less than their corresponding hypothetical means ( $p < 0.001$ ), this suggests that participants in the study scored within feminine characteristics. This results; when emotional gender roles overlap, both men and women are expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Both spouses in a feminine system show interest in their marital relationships and quality of life; sharing the responsibilities of care and provision.

Participants tended to obtain high score in collectivism (mean = 26.78, SD = 10.15), whereas this score is significantly greater than the corresponding hypothetical means ( $p < 0.001$ ) which suggests Palestinians are collectivistic. It may be the Israeli occupation enhances collectivism; related to continuous external threat supports the importance of one's in-group as the only truly reliable source of protection. Historically as Arabs, Palestinians also exhibit close and long-term commitment to group, whether it is a family, extended family, or extended relationships, loyalty is considered paramount, and supersedes other societal values. Therefore, based on these results, Palestinian participants reported to be satisfied with their marriages, are collectivistic and feminine, and hold more egalitarian gender role orientation than a neutral hypothesis.

Table 3 shows the standardized skewness (z-score) and standardized kurtosis values for parcels and Marital Satisfaction items. Ratios greater than 1.96 would have p-value less than 0.05 and ratios greater than 2.58 would have p-value less than 0.01, indicating significant skewness or kurtosis in the data.

**Table 3. Standardized Skewness and Kurtosis Indices for Parcels and Items.**

Parcels and items	Skewness z-scores	Kurtosis z-scores	Parcels and items	Skewness z-scores	Kurtosis z-scores
ms1	-5.08	-1.27	PTGR2	1.11	-2.89
ms2	-4.63	-1.92	PMAS1	1.06	-2.72
ms3	-3.34	-2.61	PMAS2	1.87	-2.86
PEGR1	0.15	-2.60	PCOL1	-1.13	-4.98
PEGR2	1.51	-2.67	PCOL2	-1.16	-5.13
PTGR1	1.89	-2.82			

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In the current study, MS items have significantly negative skew (skewness indices are less than -2.58,  $p < 0.01$ ), which indicates that most of the scores are above their means. Item ms3 is negative kurtosis. A negative kurtosis value indicates that the data distribution is too flat with several cases in the tails of the curve. In this case, the data values are widely dispersed across a range of ms3 values. The ms3 item is about the assessment of satisfaction with marital relationship (How satisfied are you with your relationship with your spouse?). Based on the result of kurtosis for this item, Palestinian participants assessed their satisfaction with marital relationship within a wide range, from sharply negative assessment to sharply positive assessment. On the other hand, no parcels are skew (skewness indices are greater than -1.96 and less than 1.96). Therefore, participants' scores of masculinity, collectivism, and gender role orientation are around their means. Meanwhile, all parcels demonstrate negative kurtosis. Therefore, Palestinian participants assessed their masculinity, collectivism, and gender role orientation with wide ranges, from sharply negative assessments to sharply positive assessments. Based on the results of skewness and kurtosis analysis, the distributions of the observed variables significantly departed from normality. The present study used the ML procedure, performing bootstrapping. Table 4 shows the results of independent sample t-test for the differences between females and males in all observed variables.

**Table 4. Results of Independent Sample T-Test by Gender.**

Variables	Females		Males		t-value	P-value	d-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
MS	14.22	3.56	15.17	5.61	-1.781	0.076	0.20
MAS	13.14	6.46	15.95	6.04	-3.929	0.000	0.45
COL	26.30	11.21	27.24	8.99	-0.807	0.420	0.09
TESR	41.89	11.83	41.12	10.06	0.622	0.535	0.07

According to results in Table 4, all differences between males and females in all observed variables were insignificant ( $p > 0.05$ ) except the differences in masculinity; where males are significantly more masculine than females ( $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, Cohen's  $d$  value for masculinity was 0.45, which indicates a moderate effect size. Cohen's  $d$  value for marital satisfaction, collectivism, and gender role orientation ranged from 0.07 to 0.20, which indicates a small and very small effect to the sizes. Table 5 displays the zero-order correlations among all observed variables. There were significant negative correlations among MS, MAS, COL, and TGR. Furthermore, there were significant positive correlations between MAS and TGR and significant negative correlations between MAS and EGR. There were insignificant correlations between MAS and COL. There were significant negative correlations between COL and EGR and significant positive correlation between COL and TGR. There were significant negative correlations between TGR and EGR. These results are consistent with previous research (Shafiro et al., 2003; Williams & Best, 1990) that collectivism and masculinity have impacts on gender role orientation. Traditional conceptions of men as strong and responsible are related to collectivistic and masculine countries. Collectivism is characterized by a desire for dependence and self-incapability; such qualities

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tend to be associated with more traditional attitudes about gender roles specifically for women. Therefore, a more interdependent sense of self might be related to more conventional male-female relations, with an emphasis on traditional conceptions of men as masculine (strong and responsible) and women as feminine (passive and dependent). Furthermore, Williams and Best (1990), found in their study of 14 countries more egalitarian gender role attitudes, or sex-role ideology, in countries that emphasized individualism. Therefore, collectivism and traditional gender attitudes are positively correlated.

In relation to cultural dimensions, the strongest correlation was between MAS and MS. In relation to gender role orientation, the strongest correlation was between EGR and MS. MAS correlated with TGR stronger than its correlations with EGR. May these results refer to the idea that husbands in feminine culture play roles that more similar to boyfriends and the feeling of love considered very important. Palestinian participants reported egalitarian view of gender roles that stress the importance of marital relationship; both spouses being modest, tender and focused on their relationship, sharing the responsibilities of care and provision, and the feeling that affection and love are important factors in marriage which in turn lead spouses to be more satisfied with their marriage.

**Table 5. Zero-Order Correlations among Observed Variables.**

	MS	MAS	COL	EGR	TRG	TESR
MS	1					
MAS	-0.409**	1				
COL	-0.244**	0.052	1			
EGR	0.441	-0.241**	-0.199**	1		
TGR	-0.377**	0.271**	0.177**	-0.434**	1	
TESR	-0.459**	0.301**	0.212**	-0.716**	0.940**	1

**SEM Analysis for the Relationships among Individualism/ Collectivism, Masculinity/ Femininity, Gender Role Orientation, and Marital Satisfaction**

Table 6 presents statistics on the model fit for the hypothesized model, standardized paths coefficients, and the estimate of the variance explained ( $R^2$ ). As shown in table 6, the  $\chi^2$  value for the hypothesized model was 45.902 (d.f. = 35, Bollen-Stine bootstrap  $p = 0.139$ ). So, the relative  $\chi^2$  was (CMIN/df = 1.311). Moreover, the RMSEA estimate of 0.032 (90% CI = 0.000; 0.055) succeeded in providing support for the model. Bentler’s CFI was 0.996 for the present model, which means the proposed model fit the data according to this index. For NFI, TLI, GFI, and AGFI, they were 0.982, 0.993, 0.975, and 0.952 respectively, so all of these values indicated the proposed model fit the data. According to results in table 6, all paths coefficient was significant. Otherwise, the correlation coefficient between MAS and COL was insignificant ( $p = 0.350$ ).

Moreover, it is important to note any mediation effects from MAS to MS through EGR and TGR and from COL to MS through EGR and TGR. Therefore, the current study computed

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standardized direct, indirect, and total effects, and it used the Sobel test to discover whether a mediator variable significantly carries the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable; i.e., whether the indirect effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the mediator variable is significant (Sobel, 1982). Table 7 presents the results of the mediation effects. As shown in table 7, the indirect effect of MAS on MS through EGR and TGR was -0.12, and the total effect was -0.43. The indirect effect through EGR was significant, the z value by Sobel test for mediation effect through EGR was -2.20,  $p = 0.027$ . Meanwhile, the indirect effect through TGR was insignificant; the z value for mediation effect through TGR was -1.49,  $p = 0.134$ . On the other hand, the indirect effect of COL on MS through EGR and TGR was -0.16, and the total effect was -0.24. The indirect effect through EGR was significant, z value for mediation effect through EGR was (-2.14,  $p = 0.031$ ). Whilst, the indirect effect through TGR was insignificant, z value for mediation effect through TGR was (-1.49,  $p = 0.136$ ).

**Table 6. Results of SEM analysis for Proposed Model.**

Model Fit Index	Observed values	Parameter Description	Unst. est.	S.E.	St. est.	P-value
CMIN	45.902	EGR from GR	1.000	-	0.936	-
d.f.	35	TGR from GR	-0.338	0.054	-0.340	0.000
P-value	0.139	EGR from MAS	-0.129	0.028	-0.265	0.000
CMIN/df	1.311	TGR from MAS	0.121	0.027	0.267	0.000
CFI	0.996	EGR from COL	-0.047	0.025	-0.170	0.003
GFI	0.975	TGR from COL	0.083	0.024	0.204	0.000
AGFI	0.952	MS from EGR	0.527	0.115	0.258	0.000
NFI	0.982	MS from TGR	-0.431	0.132	-0.197	0.001
TLI	0.993	MS from MAS	-0.305	0.054	-0.307	0.000
RMSEA	0.032	MS from COL	-0.139	0.046	-0.156	0.002
90% CI of RMSEA	0.000; 0.055	MAS with COL	0.138	0.148	0.057	0.350
		PEGR1 from EGR	1.000	-	0.990	-
		PEGR2 from EGR	0.816	0.037	0.788	0.000
		PTGR1 from TGR	1.000	-	0.950	-
		PTGR2 from TGR	0.842	0.070	0.832	0.000
		PMAS1 from MAS	1.000	-	0.942	-
		PMAS2 from MAS	1.072	0.080	0.904	0.000
		PCOL1 from	1.000	-	0.960	-



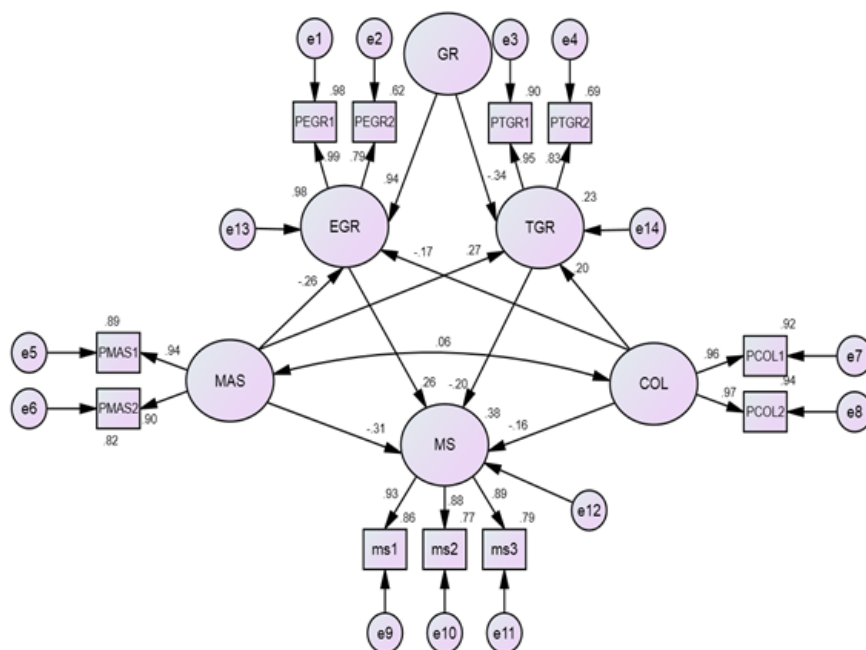
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Model Fit Index	Observed values	Parameter Description	Unst. est.	S.E.	St. est.	P-value
		COL				
		PCOL2 from COL	1.019	0.077	0.969	0.000
		ms1 from MS	1.000	-	0.930	-
		ms2 from MS	1.042	0.047	0.880	0.000
		ms3 from MS	1.056	0.044	0.890	0.000

Note. Unst. est. – unstandardized estimate; S.E. – standard error; St. est. – standardized estimate.

**Table 7. Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects and Results of Sobel Test for Mediation Effects of the Proposed Model.**

IV	DV			Through	Sobel test statistic	P-value
	Direct	Indirect	Total			
MAS	-0.31	-0.12	-0.43	EGR	-2.20	0.027
EGR	0.26			TGR	-1.49	0.134
TGR	-0.20					
COL	-0.16	-0.084	-0.24	EGR	-2.14	0.031
EGR	0.26			TGR	-1.49	0.136
TGR	-0.20					



**Figure 2. Standardized effects of the relationships among individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, gender role orientation, and marital satisfaction.**

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In the current work, collectivism had a significant negative impact on marital satisfaction as consistent with several previous studies (K. K. Dion & Dion, 1993; Hofstede et al., 2010; Lalonde et al., 2004; Simmons et al., 1986) note that in collectivistic cultures relatively less attention is paid to marital satisfaction. However, collectivism fosters receptiveness to intimacy, but intimacy is likely to be diffused across a network of family relationships. Broude (1987) suggests that marital intimacy is likely to occur when individuals have no social support outside marriage.

Moreover, the present study found that masculinity and traditional gender role orientation had significant negative influence on marital satisfaction. While egalitarian gender role orientation had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. These results are consistent with many studies in this field (Dasgupta & Basu, 2011; Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010; Kapinus, 2004; Steiner-Pappalardo et al., 2002). In masculine countries, preservation of family ties is very important regardless of love between spouses. On the other hand, in feminine cultures the relationships and quality of life are a priority. Therefore, with the increased emotionalisation of partnership it might be expected that feminine cultures contribute more positively to marital satisfaction than masculine cultures. Thus, femininity and adopting egalitarian attitudes towards gender-roles are important for marital satisfaction, as it increases mutual caring and tolerance.

In the current study and at the cultural level, there was no significant correlation between collectivism and masculinity. According to Hofstede et al. (2010), collectivism and masculinity are independent. Individualism/collectivism is about “I” versus “we”, independence from groups versus dependence on groups. Masculinity/femininity is about a stress on ego versus a stress on relationships with others, regardless of group ties. Relationships in collectivist cultures are basically predetermined by group ties: “groupness” is collectivist, not feminine (Hofstede, 2001).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Few studies investigated marital satisfaction among Palestinians or examined culture or gender role orientation demonstrating a need in this area.

As there is some evidence that individuals in collectivistic cultures tend to lean toward socially desirable answers, participants in the current study may have underreported particular constructs or may have aggrandized their perception of marital relationships. Further research using depth interviews to assess marital satisfaction among Palestinian spouses may be needed to better understand true marital functioning. Including social desirability scales to avoid responses bias is advised. Marital relationship studies should target both spouses to draw comprehensive understanding about marital relationship.

Conducting further research examining how Islamic rules, teaching, and globalization interact with current values related to private issues like marital life is recommended. Based on the

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results in the present study, counselors and social workers need to understand the role that cultural values play in the lives of individuals and Palestinians themselves need to be aware of the roles that collectivism and masculinity play in their family relationships.

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