Role Identity, Self-Disclosure and Expectations in Married Men and Women

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Abstract:

The present study investigated the relationship between Role Identity, Self-Disclosure and Expectations in Married Men and Women. Using quantitative approach data were collected from 300 married men and women (men=164 and women= 136) through a convenient sampling method. The Demographic Questionnaire, The Gender Role Beliefs Scale, The Relationship Standard Questionnaire, and The Self-Disclosure Index were employed. The Self-Disclosure Index (Miller et al., 1983) is a 10-item Likert measure 4. The reliability for the internal consistency of this measure is more than adequate i.e. Cronbach's Alpha a = .87. The Relationship standard questionnaire was developed by (Anita & John, 2005). It is a 9 likert scale having 30 items. The reliability for this scale is cronbach's alpha= 0.97. The Gender Role Beliefs Scale was developed by (Kerr and Holden 1996). It is a 20-item measure. The scale items would be scored by 7 Likert scale. The reliability for this scale is Cronbach's alpha= 0.88. Correlational analysis revealed that Role Identity and Self-Disclosure were significantly associated with Expectations. The Hierarchical regression analysis findings suggested that Role Identity is a negative predictor while Self-disclosure is a positive predictor of Expectations, with all blocks found significant. Mediation analysis indicated that Role identity has a positive relationship with self-disclosure, which in turn predicts marital expectations, while role identity does not have a significant direct relationship with marital expectations. This study had the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of role identity, self-disclosure and expectations in married men and women in Pakistan. The findings can inform interventions aimed at enhancing relationship satisfaction, improving communication and supporting couples in managing expectations.

Keywords: Role identity; self-disclosure; communication; expectations.

Background of the study

The word Role can be defined and explained in different ways. It is being used in different subject areas like civics, sociology, anthropology etc. but is more connected with psychology (Levant, 2011). Role means the man or women act and interacts with different people around them or A person's sense of self is greatly influenced by the role or function they play in a certain circumstance (Diemer, Gerstein & Register, 2022). The study defined the role as the position or purpose that someone or something has in a situation, organization, society, or relationship. It means that the role is the position of any man or woman who force them to work any specific work as per the situation (Löffler & Greitemeyer, 2023).

According to role identity theory, people establish their sense of self by acting out social roles. In society, these roles are relational positions that come with conventions, expectations for behavior, and related attitudes, values, and beliefs. For example, parental responsibilities are influenced by social, ethical, and legal frameworks. A role becomes a fundamental component of an individual's identity when it possesses specific salience, which is defined as its perceived relevance to the person (Said, 2022).

The foundation of intimate relationships, including marriage, is self-disclosure, or the voluntarily sharing of private information with others. Self-disclosure, defined as "the revelation of personal information, thoughts, and feelings to another person" (Priess, Lindberg & Hyde, 1987), is essential for promoting emotional closeness and marital relationship satisfaction (Shaver, 1988). Comprehending the intricacies of marital communication and its influence on relationship quality requires an understanding of the dynamics of self-disclosure in married relationships (Sayehmiri et al., 2020).

Self-disclosure can be defined as self-knowing, or a person can elaborate him/herself better than others. Wikipedia (2024) defines self-disclosure as "Self-disclosure is a process of communication by which one person reveals information about themselves to another. The information can be descriptive or evaluative, and can include thoughts, feelings, aspirations, goals, failures, successes, fears, and dreams, as well as one's likes, dislikes, and favorites". Greene, Derlega, and Mathews (2006) also defined self-disclosure and pointed out that verbal and non-verbal communication tell us about the self, and it is very difficult to figure out the exact meaning or definition of self-disclosure. The way we talk and the way we behave can represent the self. Same as the tattoos on the body and the jewelry the person wears to represent themselves. The author also explained that laughing, smiling, crying or talking may be examples of self-disclosure. But this expression may be called willful disclosure.

According to research, a number of factors, such as gender variations in communication styles and relationship satisfaction, affect married people's self-disclosure (Laurenceau et al., 1998). Given their propensity for emotional expression and relationship maintenance, women tend to disclose more personal information more frequently than men (Canary 2009). Men, on the other hand, might reveal less or only certain information, typically emphasizing practical details over sentimental ones (Afrin & Afrin, 2024).

Martial expectations can be defined as the thoughts, views and opinions people have in their mind before marriage. This phenomenon also covered the relationship of a married man and woman with other relations particularly spouses and other family members. These family members are very important to one's life and the person may not plan anything without their guidance, support, help, and approval (Ali, McGarry & Maqsood, 2022).

Theoretical Background

Social Exchange Theory

It was developed by sociologist George Homans in 1958 (Johnson, 2021) and then John W. Thibaut and Harold H. Kelley are recognized for focusing their studies within the theory on the psychological concepts Social exchange theory argues that social exchange involves the idea that one person gives another favor, and while there is a general hope of any potential return, its exact essence is not specified in advance (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021). Social exchanges as voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others. As with Homans (1958) definition, this definition emphasizes people consciously incurring a cost with an expectation of receiving a reward, and as discussed earlier, the reward should produce either profit or at least equity. According to social exchange theory, individuals enter relationships, including marriage, with certain expectations. These expectations are influenced by societal norms, personal values, and past experiences. Rewards in social interactions within relationships include pleasure, satisfaction, gratification, and fulfillment of needs (Cook et al., 2013)

Literature Review

For this paper, different quality databases were consulted and got the relevant literature as per required variables/objectives.

A study by Hendrick (1981) showed that self-disclosure was highly reciprocal between partners and that self-disclosure and marital satisfaction were consistently positively correlated. The study also found that attitude similarity was a strong predictor of marital satisfaction, indicating that couples who shared attitudes were more satisfied with their relationship. Dobrowolska, et al., (2020) described that building a strong expert identity among sport psychology professionals can increase the likelihood that one will work ethically, recognize professional roles, and ultimately lead to a more effective and sustainable career. Another research (Abreu-Afonso et al., 2022) described

that there is a negative correlation between the basis of sexual identity scale and positive attitude towards the women's movement. This study was carried out with N=301 participants who were college students. This study was an attempt to examine relationships among gender role identity, support for feminism, nontraditional gender roles, and willingness.

Priess, Lindberg & Hyde (2009) conducted a study on the topic Adolescent Gender-Role Identity and Mental Health Gender Intensification Revisited and found that the gender roles change as per the changing environment, status, and differences in phenomena. This study was longitudinal in nature and the data were gathered from 410 respondents. The results showed that females have higher femaleness as compared to boys but with teen ages like thirteen and fifteen. Korlat et al., (2022) conducted a study within area "how employment and household/childcare responsibilities are shared within a marriage" and the result of the study explored the advantage and disadvantage of the marriage and also the benefits of both roles i.e. living a bachelor or a married life. Potvin (2021) conducted a study with 106 female respondents and 38 male respondents belonging to any public university in Texas and found that men and women have different roles and responsibilities in their life and both spouses look after their children as per their skills, capacity and time available to them. As compared to women, the men are likely to agree to work full time when the other partner works at home to look after the kids.

Chowdhury (2024) examined the relationship between moms, peers, and gender-role identity and discovered that, in addition to the effect of their own mothers, adult women's labor force involvement is greatly influenced by the mothers of their high school peers.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal the great poet of Urdu and Persian named the self-disclosure is "*Khudi*", meaning revolves around "I". The word "*khudi*" is a great philosophy presented by the

Iqbal in his poetry which means selfhood and it also represents the man who believes in the potential of himself. This philosophy encourages individuals to recognize their inner strength, uniqueness, and their role in society. Iqbal explored that each person has innate spiritual essence and everyone can reach the high point of self through self-awareness and self-realization and everyone can achieve this high point of personality. One he stated that

خودی کو کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سنے پہلے

خدا بندے سنے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے

Iqbal's philosophy urges people to transcend limitations imposed by external forces and embrace a dynamic, proactive approach to life, thus fostering a more enlightened and empowered human existence.

Rationale

The purpose of this research is to investigate various connections between married men and women's self-disclosure, role beliefs and expectations because these influences appear to be more salient and may lead to adverse mental health effects. Prior research has indicated associations between these variables and pointed to a potential of further investigation of issues of concern prevalent to them. In drawing this discussion, it should be noted that the current study's efforts of examining the connections between self-disclosure, role belief and expectations particularly among married men and women augments this understanding. The purpose of the research is to ensure that there is only a limited number of gaps in the knowledge regarding the mentioned intercorrelated variables so that it will be possible to propose interventionist strategies that will be useful in improving the psychological wellbeing of married men and women in general.

Objectives

The objectives that follow have been drawn through an investigation of prior research, empirical structure, local context, and theoretical guidelines.

1. To explore the relationship among role identity, self-disclosure and marital expectations in married men and women.
2. To investigate role identity and self-disclosure as predictors of marital expectations in married men and women.

Hypotheses

Following an analysis of prior research, empirical framework, regional context, and theoretical principles, the following hypotheses have been developed.

1. There is likely to be a relationship among role identity, self- disclosure and marital expectations in married men and women.
2. Role identity and self-disclosure are likely to predict marital expectations among married men and women.
3. Self-disclosure will likely to be the mediator between role identity and marital expectation

Research design and methodology

A correlational research approach was used to investigate the relationship between

Role identity, Self-disclosure and Expectations in Married Men and Women. In this study, data collection was based on the goals of the research and population characteristics using a convenient sampling method technique. Convenient sampling strategy was used in this study to collect data. The sample comprised of (N=300) married men and women. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data from Lahore, according to the following criteria. The sample was recruited from married men and women who will be easily available and fall under the following criteria:

The researcher obtained permission to use the questionnaires from the authors via email. Married men and women were

selected for data collection through convenience sampling, and the researcher introduced herself, provided a brief overview of the research purpose, and assured participants of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The whole administration took 7-10 minutes with each participant, with a total of 300 questionnaires distributed.

Assessment Measures

The following assessment measures will be used for the purpose of assessment in the present study.

Demographic Information Sheet. The demographics sheet gathered information on age, gender to be a discrete variable (male or female), education as a constant variable in years, family structure as a discrete variable (nuclear or joint), years of education as a continuous variable, and marriage type as a discrete variable (arrange or by choice). The study variables were given further analysis and discussion using this demographic sheet.

The Self-Disclosure Index. The Self-Disclosure Index (SDI; Miller et al., 1983) is a 10-item Likert measure that assesses the breadth of personal information an individual has revealed to a particular target person. The response format ranges from 0 = "not at all to 4 = 'fully and completely. The reliability for the internal consistency of this measure is more than adequate i.e Cronbach's Alpha a = .87.

The Relationship standard questionnaire. The scale was developed by (Anita & John, 2005). It is a 9 likert scale having 30 items. Each 30 standards have a description and each description was followed by 9 step likert type scale. The reliability for this scale is cronbach's alpha= 0.97.

The Gender Role Beliefs Scale. This scale was developed by (Kerr and Holden 1996). It is a 20-item self-reported measure of individual perceptions about gender roles. The scale items would be scored by 7 Likert scale. The reliability for this scale is Cronbach's alpha= 0.88.

Results and findings

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between Self-Disclosure, Role beliefs and Expectations in married men and women. Software for statistical analysis, SPSS version 26, was used. First, Cronbach's alpha was used in reliability tests on every metric. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyses the variables. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the research scales were calculated to assess the internal consistencies.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of Demographic Variables

Characteristics	ƒ (%)
Age	
Below 20	18(6)
21-30 years	164(54)
31-40 years	91(30)
Above 40	27(9)
Gender	
Male	164(54)
Female	136(45)

Family System	
Nuclear	173(55)
Joint	127(45)
Birth Order	
Only child	16(5)
Eldest child	110(36)
Middle child	134(44)
Youngest child	40(13)
Area of Residence	
Rural	71(24)
Urban	226(76)
Employment Status	
Full time	201(67)
Part time	36(11)
Self employed	16(5)
Unemployed	48(16)

Descriptive Analysis

Table 2

Reliability of Scales

Scale	M	SD	Cronbach's(α)	Range Min	Max
Self-Disclosure Scale	21.49	7.03	.88	17	52
Role Beliefs Scale	63.13	13.22	.70	23	65
Expectations Scale	75.40	34.60	.94	21	55

Note: N=300, (M) Mean, (SD) Standard Deviation, (α) =Alpha, (Min) =Minimum, (Max) =Maximum

The central tendencies and reliability ratings for the psychological scales utilized in research are shown in table 1's data. The Self-Disclosure, Role Beliefs and Expectations scale comprise a few of these measures.

The self-disclosure scale, Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency, is 0.88, indicating a high degree of reliability. The internal consistency rating of 0.70 (α) indicates a reasonable degree of trustworthiness on the role beliefs scale. The Expectation Scale, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.94, suggests that its items are highly reliable.

Table 3

Correlational Analyses among the variables

Variables	N	M	SD	1	2	3
1-Self-Disclosure	300	21.49	7.03	-	.20*	.54*
2-Role Belief	300	63.13	13.22	-	-	.38*

3-Expectations	300	75.40	34.60	-	-	-

In table 3, the provided data shows the correlation between our study variables. The variables include Self Disclosure (1), Role Beliefs (2) and Expectations (3). The coefficient of correlation is bounded between - 1 and + 1, to indicate the degree of positiveness or negatives and strength of the linear relation between two pairs of variables.

This table showed that there is a significant correlation between self-disclosure and role beliefs. This means that there is a weak positive correlation between Self-Disclosure and Role Belief. This indicates that as self-disclosure increases, role beliefs tend to increase slightly. From the correlation table, there is a moderate to strong correlation between the variables self-disclosure and expectations. This implies that, married men and women with higher levels of self-disclosure exhibit high levels of expectations. Therefore, there is a moderate positive relationship between role belief and expectations. Thus, the results proved that this result is statistically significant and the more one knows about their role belief the more are the expectations toward their partner and marriage.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Variables	B	SE B	B	Adj R^2	ΔR^2	P
Model 1						
Constant	.84	.25				.001
				.545	.17	
Self-Disclosure	.8	.12	.41*			.001
Model 2						
Constant	1.25	.34				.001
Role Identity	-.14	.10	-.18*	.70	.16	.001
Self-Disclosure	.81	.11	.42*			.001

The hierarchical regression analysis table explores the relationship between self-disclosure, role identity, and a dependent variable (Expectations). In Model 1, self-disclosure was examined as a predictor. The regression coefficient for self-disclosure (B = 0.80) indicates a positive relationship with the outcome variable, with a standardized

coefficient (β = 0.41), suggesting that as self-disclosure increases, the dependent variable also increases. This relationship is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.001. The model explains 54.5% of the variance in the outcome variable (Adj. R^2 = 0.545), and self-disclosure alone accounts for an additional 17% of the variance (ΔR^2 = 0.17).

In Model 2, role identity is added as an additional predictor. The regression coefficient for role identity (B = -0.14) indicates a negative relationship with the outcome variable, with a standardized coefficient (β = -0.18), suggesting that higher role identity is associated with a decrease in the dependent variable. This relationship is statistically significant (p = 0.001), although the effect is relatively weak compared to self-disclosure. Self-disclosure remains a significant positive predictor (B = 0.81, β = 0.42), with a similar effect as in Model 1. The model now explains 70% of the variance in the outcome variable (Adj. R^2 = 0.70), a notable increase from Model 1, with role identity accounting for an additional 16% of the variance (ΔR^2 = 0.16).

Both self-disclosure and role identity are significant predictors of the outcome variable. Self-disclosure has a positive effect, while role identity has a weaker negative effect.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis

Variables	Estimation	SE	P
SD←E	.20	.02	.000*
RI← E	-.02	.03	.409
RI← SD	.33	.06	.000*

*Note: ***level of significance, SD=Self Disclosure, E= Expectations, and RI= Role Identity*

In Table 4.5, the mediation analysis examined the direct and indirect effects of Marital Expectations (X) on Role Identity (Y) through Self Disclosure (M). The analysis identifies several key paths: the effect of Marital Expectations on Self Disclosure (a), the effect of Self Disclosure on Role Identity (b), the total effect (c), the direct effect (c'), and the indirect effect (ab).

First, the analysis revealed a significant effect of Marital Expectations (X) on Self Disclosure (M) (a: β = 0.2065, p < 0.001). This finding suggests that individuals with higher marital expectations are likely to engage in greater self-disclosure (Path a). This indicates that expectations are a crucial factor that influences communication behavior, encouraging openness and sharing of personal thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, Self Disclosure (M) was found to significantly impact Role Identity (Y) (b: β = 0.3314, p < 0.001). This suggests a positive relationship where increased self-disclosure is associated with more constructive role Identity (Path b). This implies that open communication can foster a more positive outlook on roles within the marital context, enhancing relationship dynamics.

Overall, the total effect of Marital Expectations on Role Identity was found to be non-significant (c: β = -0.0291, p = 0.409). This
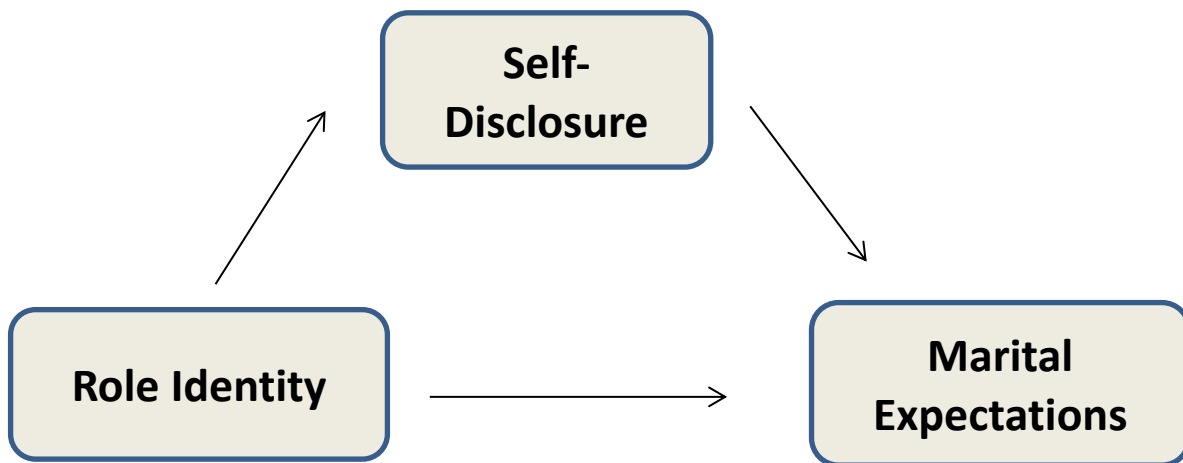
indicates that Marital Expectations do not have a direct impact on Role Identity when the mediating effect of Self Disclosure is not considered, suggesting that the relationship may not be straightforward without the mediation.

Additionally, the analysis indicated a significant indirect effect of Marital Expectations on Role Identity through Self Disclosure (ab: β = 0.0684). This suggests that the relationship between Marital Expectations and Role Identity is partially mediated by Self Disclosure. The presence of a significant indirect effect indicates that while Marital Expectations influences Role Identity through the pathway of Self Disclosure, the direct effect remains negligible, pointing to the importance of communication in shaping beliefs about roles in marriage.

Hypothetical Model

Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the current study considering previous research. The objectives of this study were to investigate the relationship among role identity, self-disclosure, and marital expectations, assess whether role identity and self-disclosure predict marital expectations, and explore the mediating role of self-disclosure between role identity and marital expectations. The findings are organized around the study's three hypotheses.

The first hypothesis proposed a relationship among role identity, self-disclosure, and marital expectations in married men and women. The findings supported this hypothesis, demonstrating significant correlations between these variables. Role identity, as influenced by traditional gender norms, showed a mixed relationship with marital expectations. Previous research has highlighted how rigid adherence to conventional gender roles can limit flexibility in relationship dynamics and communication (Simran & Nambiar, 2022; Laurenceau, & Pietromonaco, 1998; Affram & Osei-Tutu, 2023).

The second hypothesis looked at how self-disclosure and role identity might predict marital expectations in married women and men. The findings supported this theory by showing that self-disclosure and role identity are both highly significant predictors of marital expectations. It was discovered that marital expectations were negatively correlated with role identity, suggesting that conventional role

beliefs may restrict marital expectations. These results are consistent with earlier studies that found that conformity to traditional gender norms may lead to decreased emotional engagement and adaptability, which in turn may reduce expectations for companionship and emotional support in the marriage (Düval, 2023; Wibisono & Pratisti, 2022).

Based on the third hypothesis, self-disclosure would have a moderating role in the connection between role identity as well as marital expectations. As hypothesized, the results supported that self-disclosure acts as a mediator between the role identity and marital expectation. This has support for the Social Penetration Theory (Wibisono & Pratisti, 2022).) which argues that intimacy in relationships is based on self-disclosure. By self-disclosing, couples can enhance their relationship satisfaction alter meanings given to roles and expectations.

The partial mediation of study also fits into prior literature, which shows that self-disclosure is one mechanism through which partners renegotiate their roles in marriage and, in so doing, shape hopeful expectations (Schlosser, 2020; Luo & Hancock, 2020).

Conclusion

The overall findings of the study revealed that self-disclosure acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between role identity and marital expectations. The results indicate that marital expectations are significantly predicted by role identity. Role identity continues to have a direct negative impact on marital expectations, even though it influences self-disclosure, which in turn positively predicts marital expectations. These findings emphasize the intricate dynamics shaping marital expectations, highlighting the interplay between role identity, self-disclosure, and the expectations held within marital relationships.

Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study have several important implications:

- The strong link between self-disclosure and marital expectations highlights the need for interventions that promote open communication in marriages. Couples counseling and communication skills training can help partners share their thoughts and feelings more openly, enhancing relationship satisfaction.

- Given the negative impact of rigid role beliefs on marital expectations, promoting flexibility in role perceptions may help couples adapt better to changing relationship dynamics. Educational programs could focus on challenging traditional gender norms and encouraging couples to develop more egalitarian role beliefs.

- The observed gender differences in self-disclosure suggest that relationship support services should consider the unique communication needs of men and women. Tailored interventions that address these differences can help both partners engage more effectively in self-disclosure, improving marital outcomes.

Limitation

- The study utilized a quantitative research approach, which, while useful for identifying statistical trends, may overlook deeper contextual and experiential insights. Integrating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide richer data and uncover hidden relationships among variables
- The reliance on self-report measures introduces the possibility of social desirability bias and subjective reporting, which may affect the accuracy of the findings. Future studies could incorporate mixed methods, such as in-

depth interviews or observational techniques, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena.

- The study primarily included participants from non-clinical settings, which may limit the generalizability of findings to clinical populations. Future research could include individuals from therapeutic or counseling contexts to understand the dynamics of self-disclosure, role identity, and marital expectations in such settings

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