



GENEROSITY, GENDER ROLE BELIEFS, AND NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION AS PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined generosity, gender role beliefs, and neighborhood cohesion as predictors of marital satisfaction. A descriptive-correlational design was employed to investigate this study. One hundred eighty seven participants were selected using multi-stage sampling techniques, and the data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The results showed that marital satisfaction was significantly and positively associated with generosity and egalitarian gender role beliefs. Besides, multiple regression analysis demonstrated that generosity and egalitarian gender role beliefs were the main positive predictors of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, this study indicated that gender role beliefs moderated the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction and the relationship between marital satisfaction and neighborhood cohesion. In addition to these, neighborhood cohesion also moderated the relationships between generosity and marital satisfaction. It is recommended that counselors and social workers should work on enhancing their clients' quality of generosity. Practitioners should also educate couples to develop an attitude of equality in their involvement in household responsibility. Finally, it also recommended that creating supportive neighborhood environments might be beneficial.

KEYWORDS: gender role, generosity, marital satisfaction, neighborhood cohesion

INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction has attracted the attention of many scholars in the modern world. It enhances mental health and promotes positive family functioning.

Satisfying marital relationships improve the mental health of the couple and the family as a whole (Baneian et al., 2006). A satisfying marriage is the aspiration of many people. Evidence has shown that marital satisfaction is crucial for enhancing the quality and stability of

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marriage (Li & Fung, 2011) and the adaptability of individuals in marital relationships (Kluwer, 2010). Despite the high aspirations of a satisfying marriage (Carroll & Doherty, 2003), many couples are dissatisfied with their marriage (Tegegne et al., 2015). The experience of marital dissatisfaction (Tegegne et al., 2015) and divorce (Abdol Rahimi et al., 2012; Lavner & Bradbury, 2010) is a serious problem in modern marriages. Although research on marriage in Ethiopia has increased in recent years (Tegegne et al., 2015), studies specifically focusing on marital satisfaction are still limited. Marital satisfaction refers to the assessment of one's marital relationship quality (Li & Fung, 2011).

Scholars have identified various intrapersonal, interpersonal, and external factors in relation to marital satisfaction (Bradbury et al., 2000; Fincham & Beach, 2010). While there has been a great deal of research related to marital distress (Broman, 2005; Bulanda & Brown, 2007; Raley & Sweeney, 2009), less attention was given to positive factors that enhance the marital relationship (Fincham, Stanley, et al., 2007). Due to the prevalence of selfishness, negative attitudes, and undesirable behaviors in modern marriages (Cherlin, 2010; Fincham & Beach, 2010), scholars have redirected their focus toward studying factors that contribute to positive relationship behaviors (Braithwaite et al., 2011; Brandau-Brown & Ragsdale, 2008). Positive individual qualities and behaviors are crucial factors in a healthy marital relationship. Scholars have linked marital happiness with positive attitudes and behaviors (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013; Fincham & Beach, 2010). Similarly, a substantial body of research has identified essential qualities such as generosity (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013) and gender role beliefs ((Faulkner et al., 2005; Minnotte et al., 2010) in relation to marital outcomes. Studies on the relationship between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction have yielded inconsistent results. Although some studies have found that the relationship between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction varies across sexes (Faulkner et al., 2005; Stanik & Bryant, 2012; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2014), others have found no such difference (Hohmann-Marriott, 2006; Minnotte et al., 2010; Nourani et al., 2019). In addition to research inconsistency between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction, studies on these constructs are scarce, particularly in Ethiopia.

In addition to the individual and interpersonal factors that influence marital satisfaction, external factors can also play a role (Karney & Bradbury, 2005). For instance, neighborhood cohesion has been linked to alleviating marital distress (Minnotte et al., 2008) and reducing marital conflict (Madigan et al., 2016). However, research that assesses the relationship between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction is limited (Mannon & Brooks, 2006; Minnotte et al., 2008). Specifically, none of the marriage studies conducted in Ethiopia (Mekonnen et al., 2019; Tegegne et al., 2015; Yizengaw et al., 2014) have examined marital satisfaction with gender role beliefs, generosity, and neighborhood cohesion. This, in turn, has limited our understanding of the role of external factors in marital satisfaction. Thus, this study aimed to examine the role of generosity, gender role beliefs, and neighborhood cohesion as predictors of marital satisfaction.

This paper is significant because of its theoretical and practical contributions. The results of this study explain how generosity, egalitarian gender role beliefs, and neighborhood cohesion positively contributes to marital satisfaction. Therefore, it is significant for psychosocial practitioners and policymakers who would intend to improve marital relationships between couples and build healthy families. Professionals such as family counselors, social workers, and therapists might use the findings of this study in their approach to creating more effective interventions program for individuals experiencing marital distress. Policymakers from different governmental institutions (.e.g. family guidance office, social affairs office, and child and women affairs office) might also get important information on how to improve family health. In addition to serving as a baseline for further investigation, this study also contributes to the marital literature.

LITERATURE

Gender Roles beliefs and Marital Satisfaction

One of the important factors related to marital satisfaction is the division of marital roles, which depends on gender-role beliefs. The relationship between gender role beliefs and marital relationships has attracted scholars from different social science disciplines. Family scholars have found that gender role beliefs are associated with marital satisfaction and stability (Faulkner et al., 2005; Stanik & Bryant, 2012). However, scholars

showed that the nature of the relationship between these variables was inconsistent. While some studies linked egalitarian gender role beliefs with high marital satisfaction for husbands, others associated it with lower marital satisfaction for wives, and the remaining studies found no direct relationships. According to other studies, more than the types of gender role beliefs couples hold, the difference and similarities in these beliefs are important in influencing their marital satisfaction. For instance, some studies have linked reports of more traditional gender role beliefs with a low level of marital quality among couples (Stanik & Bryant, 2012) and husbands (Faulkner et al., 2005), whereas; it was not related to wives' marital quality (Stanik & Bryant, 2012). However, Japanese wives with traditional gender roles experienced better marital relationships than gender-egalitarian wives (Kaufman & Taniguchi, 2009). This might be because wives with traditional gender role beliefs usually accept unequal division of labor due to their low expectations from their husbands (Fuwa & Tsutsui, 2010). Gender role beliefs refer to people with traditional gender role beliefs who expect women to take all household responsibilities and people with egalitarian gender role beliefs who expect both husband and wife to equally share all household responsibilities (McGovern & Meyers, 2002).

Due to modernization and changes in lifestyle, there have been shifts in beliefs about gender roles and the division of responsibilities within marriages. With changing gender roles, men and women have started to exhibit egalitarian behaviors (Davis & Greenstein, 2004). The increase in dual-earner households may be the primary factor contributing to the changing beliefs about gender roles. A study has shown that egalitarian gender role beliefs are positively related to men's marital satisfaction (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2014). Other scholars have linked marital satisfaction with the congruence of gender role beliefs among couples. For instance, Hohmann-Marriott (2006) found that couples who share similar gender role beliefs are more likely to have happy and stable marriages. Similarly, couples who share gender role ideologies are likely to be satisfied with their marriage (Minnotte et al., 2010). Due to the inconsistent findings and lack of research

regarding the relationships between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction, it is crucial to conduct further investigations to replicate the information in Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa.

Generosity and Marital Satisfaction

All relationships, including marriages, experience periods of ups and downs. The difference between couples who terminate their relationship and maintain it is not due to the problems they experienced but rather how they work on those problems matter (Fincham, 2003). A healthy marital relationship depends on a positive attitude and behavior (Fincham & Beach, 2010) and problem-solving ability (Hunler & Gencoz, 2005). In this study, generosity refers to the exercise of acts of kindness, willingness to forgive, and sacrifice in marital relationships (Dew & Wilcox, 2011). The study of partners' virtues has shifted the emphasis of research from problems to strengths and virtues (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The study of positive psychology identified individual and relational positive qualities as contributing factors to marital functioning (Snyder & Lopez, 2001). However, this day marriage has exposed to different problems such as selfishness and negative behaviors. For instance, due to social and cultural factors, individuals were started to behave in a way that gratifies their personal needs, which may harm their marital relationship (Cherlin, 2010).

The practice of generosity within the marital relationship has been documented as an important positive behavior in fostering harmony and unity among couples (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013). Individuals with the quality of generosity are more likely to be kind, nurturing, and compassionate towards their partners. Being equipped with this quality is indispensable in enhancing marital functioning. Supporting this statement, scholars have identified generosity as an important contributing factor to marital quality and satisfaction (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013; Dew & Wilcox, 2011). On the other hand, the practice of generosity in a marital relationship is linked to one's ability to recognize their partner's faults and view things from a positive perspective (Fowers, 2000). The character of generosity can boost marital relationships by fostering mutual reliance and a feeling of appreciation between partners. Furthermore, generosity also plays a crucial role in fostering solidarity in modern

marriages by reducing negative behaviors among couples. According to Dew and Bradford Wilcox (2013), generosity was found to be associated with lower marital conflict and a decreased likelihood of divorce. Similarly, forgiveness was associated with positive relationship behaviors such as sacrifice, accommodation, and remaining faithful (Fincham et al., 2004; Fincham, Beach, et al., 2007). Despite some empirical evidence indicating that generosity is a significant aspect of marital relationships, no studies have yet explored its impact on marital satisfaction in Ethiopia, specifically in Addis Ababa.

Neighborhood Cohesion and Marital Satisfaction

Previous studies have primarily focused on dyadic processes and individual factors that influence marital satisfaction. The roles of these studies in identifying adaptive and maladaptive marital behaviors are undeniable (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). However, limiting the scope of marital research to only individual and dyadic factors has been less effective in understanding the holistic nature of marital relationships. As a result, there has been a growing interest in studying external factors such as neighborhood cohesion in relation to marital relationships (Hostetler et al., 2012; Minnotte et al., 2008). These studies will enhance our understanding of how the broader sociocultural context can influence marital outcomes (Fincham & Beach, 2010). The vulnerability-stress-adaptation (VSA) theory model of relationship functioning, proposed by Karney and Bradbury (1995) supports this argument. According to the VSA model, external factors such as the neighborhood environment can impact marital outcomes by providing resources that couples can use to overcome obstacles (Bradbury et al., 2000; Bradbury & Karney, 2004). However, despite the growing body of work in the field of family literature, researchers studying couples have only recently started investigating the influence of neighborhood context on relationship functioning. Scholars have linked the lack of neighborhood resources with undesirable relationship outcomes, such as conflict and intimate partner violence (Cunradi, 2009; Wickrama et al., 2010). Hostile neighborhood environments were also associated with lower marital satisfaction (Funk, 2009). Couples' social networks and social capital can influence their level of marital satisfaction. A supportive neighborhood is a

crucial social capital that creates a fertile environment for better marital functioning. An investigation on the family-friendliness of neighborhoods and its impact on marital satisfaction were conducted among a sample of 96 Mormon families. The study found that those who perceived their neighborhood as a better place to live and raise children reported higher levels of marital satisfaction (Mannon & Brooks, 2006). Similarly, a study by Hostetler et al (2012) has linked neighborhood networks with higher marital satisfaction. Furthermore, a study conducted by Minnotte et al (2008) involving 192 couples revealed a strong positive correlation between neighborhood quality and marital satisfaction. On the other hand, neighborhood factors such as such as lower levels of collective efficacy and neighborhood quality were associated with lower levels of family cohesion and higher levels of parent-child conflict (Deng et al., 2006). Despite the progress that has been made, there is still a scarcity of research concerning the role of neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction. Even those existing studies are mainly confined to Western cultures. It is therefore worth investigating the issue in Ethiopia, particularly in Addis Ababa, due to the unique culture and context of the country.

Theoretical Framework

The vulnerability-stress adaptation theory, which guided this study, discusses the role of individual characteristics and the availability of social support in dealing with stressors (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). In the marital context, individuals' response to stressors is influenced by their beliefs about gender role division, generosity, and support received from their neighbors. Gender role beliefs and generosity are unique characteristics that belong to individuals and may influence their responses to stressors within marriage. For example, stable characteristics such as similar gender role beliefs among couples influence the level of their marital satisfaction (Minnotte et al., 2010). Similarly, individuals who behave generously are likely to adapt to stressors in their marital relationships (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013). On the other hand, supportive neighborhood contexts provide individuals in a marital relationship with resources to ease the challenges they may encounter (Minnotte et al., 2008). Thus, the Variable Summaries Analysis (VSA) was utilized to guide our study on the relationship between generosity,

gender role beliefs, neighborhood cohesion, and marital satisfaction.

The Present Study

The current study aimed to examine the role of gender role beliefs, generosity, and neighborhood cohesion as predictors of marital satisfaction using a descriptive-correlational design. The study utilized a sample of married individuals from the public service in Addis Ababa. Our expectation is that egalitarian gender role beliefs, the virtue of generosity, and a supportive neighborhood could significantly predict marital satisfaction. Taking this into account, this study addressed the following research question: (a) To what extent do gender role beliefs, generosity, and neighborhood cohesion predict marital satisfaction? (b) Does the relationship between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction vary depending on neighborhood cohesion? (c) Does the relationship between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction vary depending on generosity? (d) Does the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction vary based on gender role beliefs?

METHODS

Data and Sample

This study used a descriptive-correlational design. In addition to assessment of the association between two or more variables, Correlational design also provides an opportunity for a researcher to predict scores and explain the relationship among variables (Creswell, 2012). The study population comprised married public servants of Addis Ababa city. A total of 187 participants were drawn from some selected Addis Ababa public service offices. Participants were recruited through multi-stage sampling techniques to obtain a representative sample. Individuals had to be married for at least one year and live together to be eligible for the study.

Study Area

Addis Ababa, where the study was conducted, is the capital city of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa was selected; for this study because of a high level of marital problems in the city. Thus, conducting this study in this area will provide rich information concerning the problem under study.

Measures

Marital satisfaction

Marital satisfaction was measured using 3-items adapted from Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale

(KMSS) (Schumm et al., 1986). Items of KMSS are globally worded and relatively homogeneous. According to Graham et al (2011), KMSS is one of the best measures of marital satisfaction. Its Cronbach's alpha was .95. Items asked how participants were satisfied with their relationships and partners. These items scored on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1= Extremely Dissatisfied to 7 = Extremely Satisfied. An example item is: "How satisfied are you with your marriage?" Scores could range from 3 to 21, with higher scores indicating higher marital satisfaction.

Neighborhood Cohesion

Neighborhood cohesion was measured using 11 items adapted from the Local Social Networks (LSN) scale (McGuire, 1997). Items assess participants' perception of their neighbors' support and social network. Participants are required to rate how they exchange information and support each other with people who live near their home, as in their neighborhood. The items are scored on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is: "As neighbors, we share information." The reported internal consistency reliability was 0.82, with high scores indicating a high level of neighborhood cohesion.

Gender Role Beliefs

A gender role belief was measured using a 6-item scale adapted from the Gender Attitudes Scales (GAS) (Hoffman & Kloska, 1995). Different studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of this scale, ensuring its suitability for this study. For instance, Adams et al (2007) found Cronbach's alphas of .82 for both sexes in their study on Mexican American and immigrant populations. This scale asked the participants to evaluate their beliefs regarding sharing marital role tasks with their partners. Participants were asked to rate their beliefs on marital role sharing on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). An example item is: "Wives should have a crucial role in decisions about housework and childcare." A higher score indicates egalitarian beliefs regarding gender roles, while a lower score indicates traditional beliefs about gender roles.

Generosity

Generosity was measured using a 6-items generosity subscale adapted from prior research (Fawcett et al., 2013). Study participants were requested to evaluate their level of generosity and forgiveness. Participants

responded on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 0=Never to 3= Always. An example item is: "I can forgive my partner's mistakes easily" The Cronbach alphas were 0.81 for wives and 0.71 for husbands. Higher scores correspond to higher generosity.

Control variables

Background characteristics such as; age, gender, age at marriage, duration of marriage, level of education, number of children, and monthly income level were anticipated to be related to marital satisfaction. Thus, these background variables were added as control variables.

Procedures

We translated the items originally written in English into the Amharic language using the translation and cross-cultural adaptation guidelines of Beaton et al (2000). After being informed about the study, participants gave their consent to participate. The participants were also assured that their responses would be kept confidential. The survey was administered individually to each participant in sealed envelopes. Participants were instructed to complete the survey independently and return it in a sealed envelope within a week. The study was approved by the Ethical Approval Committee of the School of Psychology at Addis Ababa University.

Analysis

Preliminary analyses were conducted to check the assumptions of normality, linearity, and

homoscedasticity. Pearson correlation was used to evaluate the intercorrelation between marital satisfaction and other variables. Besides, a hierarchical regression analysis was used to test how gender role beliefs, generosity, and neighborhood cohesion predict and interact to influence marital satisfaction. The statistical software SPSS 26 was used for data analysis.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Ethical Approval Committee of the researchers' university. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study any time without any consequence.

RESULT

Descriptive Analysis

As can be seen from Table 1, a total of 187 married Public servants of Addis Ababa city participated in the study. The majority were female (N =98; 52.4%) and B.A/Bsc degree holders (N = 96; 52.2%), followed by M.A and above degree holders (N = 36; 19.6%). The mean age of the participants was 33.76 years (SD =7.54). The participants' mean age at marriage was 26.08 years (SD= 4.301), and they were married for an average of 7.74 years (SD=7.043). In addition, the participants had an average of 1.63 children and a monthly mean income of 9512.03 ETB (SD=7956.032).

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=187)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	33.76	7.54
Age at marriage	26.08	4.301
Length of marriage	7.74	7.043
Number of children	1.63	1.156
Monthly Income	9512.03	7956.032
	Frequency	%
Sex		
Female	98	52.4
Male	89	47.6
Educational level		
Primary	2	1.1
Secondary	12	6.5
Certificate	4	2.2
Diploma	34	18.5
Degree	96	52.2
MA and above	36	19.6

Level of Marital Satisfaction

As presented in Table 2, participants rated their level of marital satisfaction. The results show that the majority of the participants, 163 (88.1%),

reported high levels of marital satisfaction; while a minority of 7 (3.7%) reported medium levels of marital satisfaction.

Table 2: Participants report of their marital satisfaction level

Level of marital satisfaction	N	%
Low	15	8.1
Medium	7	3.7
High	163	88.1

Correlations Analysis

Table 3 displays the means, standard deviations, and correlations of the study variables. As expected, marital satisfaction showed positive correlations with participants' reports of generosity ($r = .25, p < 0.01$) and gender role beliefs ($r = .2, p < 0.05$). Participants who held egalitarian views on gender roles were more likely to report higher levels of satisfaction in their

marriages. Moreover, gender role beliefs were positively correlated with generosity ($r = .20, p < 0.01$) and neighborhood cohesion ($r = .37, p < 0.01$). These findings show that participants with egalitarian gender role beliefs are more likely to behave generously and friendly with their neighbors. Furthermore, generosity was positively associated with neighborhood cohesion ($r = .17, p < 0.05$).

Table 3: Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables (N=187)

Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Generosity	-				18.36	3.99
2. Neighborhood cohesion	.17 [†]	-			42.16	8.99
3. Gender role beliefs	.20 ^{**}	.37 ^{**}	-		13.26	2.24
4. Marital satisfaction	.25 ^{**}	.12	.20 [*]	-	18.25	4.15

Note: For SD=Standard Deviation; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ (two-tailed).

Regression Analyses

The results from the hierarchical regression analyses are reported in Table 4. Model 1 examined the relationships between marital satisfaction and predictor variables. Model 2 assessed the moderation effect of predictor variables on marital satisfaction. The results of

Model 1 indicated that the predictor variables explained approximately 17% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2 = .17$), $F(12, 148) = 3.14, p < 0.05$). In the model, gender role beliefs ($\beta = .39, p < 0.001$) and generosity ($\beta = .24, p < 0.002$) were significant predictors of marital satisfaction (see Table 4 in Model 1).

Table 4: Generosity, Gender role beliefs, and Neighborhood cohesion as predictors of marital satisfaction

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	b	SE	β	B	SE	β
Generosity	.24*	.07	.26	.04	.53	.04
Neighborhood cohesion	-.001	.03	-.004	.39	.18	.91
Gender role beliefs	.39*	.14	.22	1.51	.56	.88
Generosity * Gender role Beliefs				-.05*	.02	.19
Neighborhood Cohesion * Gender role Beliefs				-.02*	.01	-1.29
Generosity * Neighborhood Cohesion				-.01*	.006	.01
R ²	.17			.21		
Change in R ²				.03		
F	3.14*			3.29*		
F for change in R ²				3.48*		

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Moreover, Model 2 showed that the addition of interaction variables results in a significant increment of variance in marital satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = .03$) (see Table 4 in Model 2). As shown in Model 2 of Table 4, gender role beliefs had significant moderating effects on the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction ($b = -.05$, $p < .05$) and between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction ($b = -.02$, $p < .05$). We also conducted simple slope analyses

for significant interactions based on Aiken et al (1991) procedure (see Figure 1-3). For instance, as indicated in Figure 1, when participants reported more traditional gender role beliefs, generosity was positively related to marital satisfaction (1 SD below the mean; $b = .35$, $p < .05$) than when they reported more egalitarian gender role beliefs (1 SD above the mean; $b = .08$, $p > .05$).

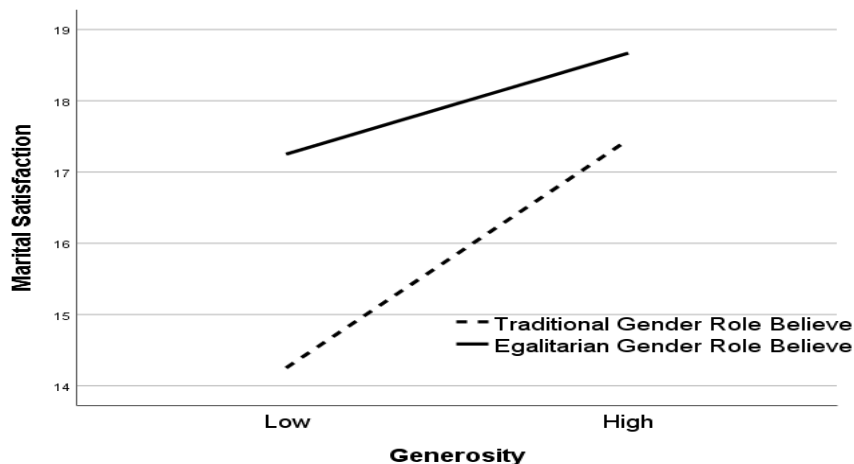


Figure 1. Plot of interaction between generosity and gender role beliefs predicting marital satisfaction

Moreover, as indicated in Figure 2, when participants reported more traditional gender role

beliefs, neighborhood cohesion was positively related to marital satisfaction (1 SD below the mean; $b = .07, p < .05$) than when they reported more egalitarian gender role beliefs (1 SD above the mean; $b = -.05, p > .05$).

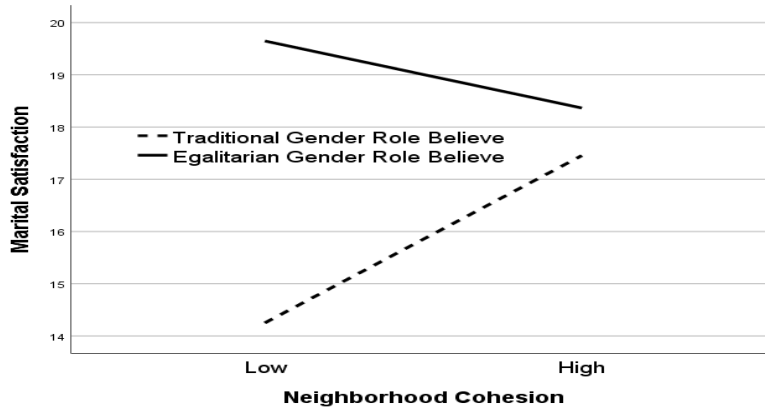


Figure 2. Plot of interaction between neighborhood cohesion and gender role beliefs predicting marital satisfaction

Furthermore, neighborhood cohesion had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction ($b = -.01, p < .05$) (see Model 2 in Table 4). As indicated in Figure 3, when participants reported

low neighborhood cohesion, generosity was positively related to marital satisfaction (1 SD below the mean; $b = .36, p < .05$) than when they reported high neighborhood cohesion (1 SD above the mean; $b = .09, p > .05$).

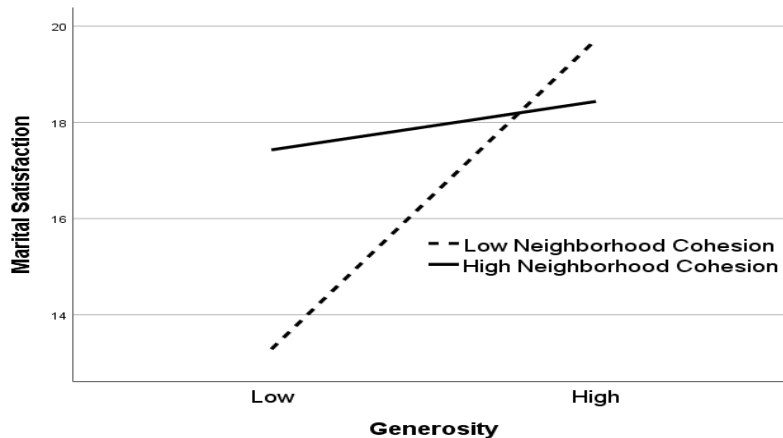


Figure 3. Plot of interaction between generosity and neighborhood cohesion predicting marital satisfaction

DISCUSSION

This study examined generosity, gender role beliefs, and neighborhood cohesion as predictors of marital satisfaction. Confirming the positive association between generosity and marital satisfaction in this study, scholars also found a positive association between generosity and relationship adjustment (Veldorale-Brogan et al., 2010). The quality of generosity is likely to promote kindness and gratitude. Generosity also creates a fertile condition that promotes positive interaction among partners. With regard to the relationship between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction, our findings showed a positive association between egalitarian gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction, regardless of gender differences. Likewise, some previous studies have linked the experience of similar gender role beliefs between partners to a higher level of marital satisfaction (Hohmann-Marriott, 2006; Minnotte et al., 2010). However, it was inconsistent with most prior studies (Faulkner et al., 2005; Kaufman, Gayle, Taniguchi, 2009; Stanik & Bryant, 2012; Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2014). According to these studies, the relationship between gender role beliefs and marital satisfaction varies between husbands and wives. This could be attributed to the high level of education and the employment of both genders outside of their homes. Moreover, the high egalitarian beliefs among participants in this study might also be attributed to their residence in a highly urbanized city. Our study found no significant relationship between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction. In contrast to our findings, scholars have identified a positive association between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction (Mannon & Brooks, 2006; Minnotte et al., 2008). Such inconsistency may be attributed to participants' lack of social connections with their neighbors. Due to the nature of their work, participants in this study may not have the time to establish social connections with their neighbors. They go to work early in the morning and return home late at night, leaving them with no time to develop relationships with their neighbors.

Our study also identified generosity and beliefs about gender roles as positive predictors of marital satisfaction. Consistent with this finding, Dew and Bradford Wilcox (2013) found that generosity contributes to marital satisfaction. The character of generosity equips individuals with positive qualities, such as a sense of solidarity and the ability to understand other perspectives from a positive point of view. The finding is also consistent with the assumptions of the VSA theory, which suggests that generosity, as an adaptive behavior, influences marital success (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013; Dew & Wilcox, 2011). The role of generosity in reducing marital conflict and the intention of divorce was also well-documented (Dew & Bradford Wilcox, 2013). Thus, it is possible to believe that by behaving generously towards each other; couples can enhance the satisfaction level of their marriage. Furthermore, holding egalitarian gender role beliefs predicted marital satisfaction positively. In contrast to this finding, previous research has suggested that the impact of gender role beliefs on marital satisfaction differs between wives and husbands (Faulkner et al., 2005; Hohmann-Marriott, 2006; Stanik & Bryant, 2012). On the other hand, research has linked marital satisfaction with partners who hold congruent beliefs about gender roles (Hohmann-Marriott, 2006). However, our findings support the VSA theory, which explains that egalitarian beliefs about marriage enhance marital satisfaction (Minnotte et al., 2010). This inconsistency may be due to the participants' high educational and employment status.

The impact of generosity and neighborhood cohesion on marital satisfaction varied with different gender role beliefs. Marital satisfaction positively related to generosity and neighborhood cohesion among participants who held traditional gender role beliefs, as opposed to those who held egalitarian gender role beliefs. These findings may suggest that individuals who believe in traditional gender roles are more likely to exhibit generosity and have better neighborhood cohesion. Moreover, neighborhood cohesion moderated the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction. As revealed in this study,

being generous was positively related to marital satisfaction when participants reported a low level of neighborhood cohesion rather than a high level of neighborhood cohesion. Despite these variables moderating the effect of marital satisfaction in this study, future research is needed to validate these findings.

Limitations and Future Direction

We are well aware of some of the limitations of this study to be mentioned. First, our sample consists of only married public servants, which may limit the generalizability of our findings to dyadic relationships. Therefore, we recommend that future research replicate this study using dyadic data. Second, the limitation of our study is the use of self-reported data. Due to the high social desirability nature of the study, participants may have pretended to be satisfied with their marriage. It would be more informative if these issues were studied using qualitative data.

CONCLUSION

In the present study, marital satisfaction was positively correlated with generosity and egalitarian gender role belief. Generosity and egalitarian gender role belief were the best predictors of marital satisfaction. Neighborhood cohesion moderated the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction. However, it was not directly influenced marital satisfaction. Moreover, in addition to the relationship between generosity and marital satisfaction, gender role beliefs moderated the relationship between neighborhood cohesion and marital satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Counselors and social workers should incorporate generosity into marriage counseling programs. Due to its positive contribution to marital satisfaction, it is advisable to improve the virtue of generosity. Therefore, counselors and social workers should develop programs in which couples share stories of generous behavior, discuss its benefits, and practice it.
- Forgiveness, which is a component of generosity, has positively contributed to marital satisfaction. Thus, couples' ability to forgive should be enhanced through education that helps them identify triggering factors that lead to resentment, manage their emotions, and focus on the positive aspects of their relationship.
- Given the positive impact of egalitarian gender role beliefs on marital satisfaction,

psychosocial practitioners should organize awareness-raising programs that promote gender equality. Counselors and social workers can assist couples in resisting gender stereotypes by educating them about the detrimental effects of these stereotypes on their marriage.

- Couples should receive training and education on how to share household responsibilities and childcare equally. Because this can help reduce the burdens on both partners and improve their marital satisfaction.
- Finally, neighbors play a crucial role in enhancing marital satisfaction. Thus, practitioners, such as community workers, should develop community-based programs that raise awareness about the benefits of neighborhood solidarity. Using various community events, couples can share their marital experiences and learn how to support each other with childcare and information sharing.

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