

# Ideology of the Gender Role and Emotional Well-being: The Moderating Impact of Gender

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## ABSTRACT

**Aim of the Study:** This study aimed to examine the impact of gender on the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being of married couples.

**Methodology:** Data from 225 individuals was collected in person and online by using purposive sampling technique. The self-report questionnaire of Gender Role Belief Scale Short Version (GRBS-SV) (Kerr & Holden, 1996) and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) by Tennant et al. (2007) were used.

**Findings:** The results of study indicated that males having traditional gender role ideology have higher emotional well-being than males having egalitarian gender role ideology. Results also indicated that females having egalitarian gender role ideology have higher emotional well-being.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that there is significant gender difference in emotional well-being. Gender significantly moderates the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being.

**Keywords:** Gender Role Ideology, Traditional Gender Role, Egalitarian Gender Role, Emotional Well-Being.

## Introduction

Marriage is the essential practice among people all over the world. People share different aspects of life with each other. The aspects of marriage are full of joy, sadness, trust, love, care, compassion, confidence and much more. With the passage of time as phase of marriage proceed more things start building up in married people, they become closer to each other, they share same beliefs to some extent and can understand one another.

Apart from all the goodness that couples share; at times they share opposite perspectives that collides with viewpoint of one another and causes disturbance in their marital life. At times wife wants her husband to make her laugh or make things right when she's upset or vice versa. Their everyday goals whether both are earners or wife is a house wife and husband is the only earner or due to some disability/medical issue husband is unable to earn then wife is the sole earner all of these facets build up the idea of gender

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principles among them. Having everything in place among married individual(s) help them maintaining positive well-being in them in this way they lead their married life happily. Under the umbrella of gender role ideology comes the concept of gender role belief and attitudes that both men and women follow.

In Pakistan, most people think out of the box but still there is backwardness to some extent in some people with the role of each sex. The phenomenon that differentiated men and women were physical features and differences (Arnold, 2017). The assembly of practices, mental, physical characteristic and social interactions, based on physical differences between men and women is called Gender (Díaz & Diaz, 2019). The standards of behavior, attitude and ideas set by the traditional values of society are defined as the gender role ideology (Korabik et al., 2008).

A multifactorial framework is established in a society by the two genders due to fulfilling the spaces such as their physical attributes, attitudes and personality traits given to them by the society (Majid et al., 2023). More instrumentality in men and expressiveness in women considered as normal personality traits (Wu et al., 2023).

To have a stable married life gender role expectations and attitudes play an important role. The attitudes between the two spouses towards their gender roles count for most of the success in married life (Kalmijn, 2005). Research found that gender ideology is not related to the evaluation or activity of gender role meaning. The people with higher traditional values were more conservative towards feminism and gender equality than liberals.

Traditionalism and egalitarianism are the two main models in gender role ideology. Traditionalism states men are supposed to work for the basic necessities and monetarily supply of the house while women as to look after the house and children. Egalitarian ideology provides both genders with equal duties in the upbringing of a home Traditionalism provides that both genders have complementary roles in the society where male roles are more dominant outside the house whereas female are responsible for taking care of the domestic responsibilities. Earlier researchers also supported the idea that the head of all the household is husband (Edgell & Docka, 2007).

Research has recognized an association among marital satisfaction and traditionalism in women (Hiekel & Ivanova, 2023). Fan and Qian, (2022) suggested that traditional couple's overall marital satisfaction is high. They also found females who are contented with gender roles and share common ideas with their husbands are happier. It is obvious now that traditional gender role ideology is more strongly accepted by men than women. This is because it puts more focus on career goals and dominancy of males over the females (Brewster & Padavic, 2000).

Whereas egalitarianism states equal rights and power to both the spouse in the marriage (Botkins et al., 2000). Research also argued it is equity-based idea where both genders share common interests and experiences. egalitarian philosophy is taking over the traditional philosophy. Gottman et al., (1994) theorized that egalitarian idea shares the physical and mental responsibilities of the spouses equally and increase in marital satisfaction. Giving the women power of speech and opinion.

The gender role which both genders play in society, defined their gender role attitude. Traditional Gender role ideologies have a negative influence on mental wellbeing (Ward & Grower, 2020). It causes mental distress, depression and anxiety, and suicidal ideation. As a result of marriage evolution, marital contentment is now the best indicator of personal happiness (Li et al., 2022). Emotional health is a feature of individual well-being and physical health, and it also adds to better marital life (Wren-Lewis & Alexandrova, 2021). Mixed effects have been noticed in females by these traditional gender role studies, some revealed satisfactory marriages while others show distress on the spouses (Alonso-Ferres et al., 2019).

Good mental and emotional health is known as well-being. It is the state of absence of disorder and disease as well as psychological functioning and experience at optimal level. Well-being can be defined in many ways but generally it is prime psychological function and health (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Well-being

can be defined on the basis of the research being conducted whether it can be hedonic vs. eudemonic, or it can be subjective vs. objective (Diener et al., 2002).

Well-being on an individual level is highly influenced by the different relationships the person is involved in. Through factual evidence in literature, it is proved that people who have efficiently operative social life have a more satisfied mental and physical health. The balance between positive and negative experiences with the effect of their frequencies and intensities is emotional well-being.

Emotional well-being includes satisfaction with general life, this is accordance to the hedonic tradition and research, which comprises of happy and pleasant experiences of life (Lamers et al., 2012). Emotional and psychological well-being are two different terms. Emotional well-being includes hedonic traditions while psychological well-being comes from eudemonic background (Han et al., 2022). Psychological well-being includes environmental, personal growth, and social factors in one's life (Matud et al., 2019).

Upward spirals toward emotional well-being are initiated by positive emotions, incremental processes related to extended thinking, improved emotional well-being and coping arsenal for control of future difficulties are achieved by these Individuals.

### ***Rationale of the Study***

Ever since the mankind existed, there's always a difference among men and women. Regarding biological differences, dissimilarities even existed among their cognition, well-being construction, emotionality and their standing in society. There is variation around the world how people assume gender role ideology and rehearse it on daily basis. Many factors anonymously impact the variations in gender roles such as ethnicity, socio economic background and religion and race (Tripp & Munson, 2022).

Few studies on gender role have shown that males that follow traditional gender role belief, are having decreased levels of well-being (Casad et al., 2015; Hideg & Ferris, 2016). Different roles of men and women in a society are described by gender role ideology. The equality and non-gender biased roles are appreciated by feminist whereas traditional roles argue that both genders have their own specific roles. Traditional gender roles suppress the female gender in the society.

The current research designed to fulfill the necessity of this emerging topic in such a challenging environment with a partial evidence of research on these variables. Though little indigenous research has already been done with reference to gender role ideology and wellbeing. The present study can be a contribution to existing literature and may help in creating awareness about gender role preferences by both male and female, it can also provide changing impression of Pakistani society where mostly women have faced gender-based discrimination.

Investigating the moderating effect of gender on the association between gender role ideology and emotional well-being was one of the study's main goals in addition to determining the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being. With these goals in mind, the following hypotheses were developed:

1. There is correlation between gender role ideology and emotional well-being.
2. Females score high on emotional well-being as compared to males
3. Gender moderates the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being
  - 3.a Males holding traditional gender role ideology have higher emotional well-being than males holding egalitarian/feminine gender role ideology
  - 3.b Females holding egalitarian/ gender role ideology has higher emotional well-being

## **Method**

### ***Research Design***

The present study is a correlational study. Data was gathered by using self-report measures. The psychometric properties of the instruments were explored, and proposed objectives and hypotheses were tested empirically.

### ***Sample***

The sample consisted of 225 married individuals. The data was collected from Wah, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Multan and Lahore by utilizing of purposive sampling technique. Demographic details included age ranging from 23-70 and education level of participants ranging from 10 years of education to PhD/MBBS.

### ***Instruments***

***Gender Role Belief Scale Short Version (GRBS-S).*** The Gender Role Beliefs Scale Short version was developed by Kerr and Holden (1996). GRBS-S is a 10-items self-reported measure and item statements are responded on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with choices ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 7 (Strongly Disagree). Item number 3 is reversed scored. High scores indicate egalitarian/feminine ideology, and lower scores indicate traditional ideology.

***Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS).*** A 14-item mental health scale called the WEMWBS was created by Tennant et al. in 2007. Each response to an item on the scale, from "none of the time" to "all the time," is added up to determine the score. Low ratings signify poor well-being, whereas high scores show great well-being.

### ***Procedure***

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of University of Wah. Sample was approached by using personal contacts. After providing all the necessary information to the respondents, the questionnaires were distributed (personally and online). Informed consent was taken from participants prior to data collection. Participants were requested not to skip any item. There was no time limit associated with the completion of questionnaires. Later, on completion, questionnaires were inspected for the missing data. The SPSS (Statistical Program for Social Science) was used for data entry and data analysis.

## **Results**

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being and to investigate the moderating role of gender in the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being. Descriptive statistics comprising of standard deviation, means and alpha coefficient were computed. Skewness and kurtosis were measured to check normality. Additionally, correlation was also computed to elucidate the association among variables; t-test was conducted for mean differences between males and females. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to test the role of gender on the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being.

Table 1: *Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha and Correlation Coefficient for the Scales of Gender Role Ideology and Emotional Well-Being (N=225).*

Variables	K	$\alpha$	M	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis	Range		1	2
							Actual	Potential		
1.Gender Role Ideology	10	.89	50.27	17.29	-.69	-1.26	18	70	---	-.30**
2.Emotional Well-Being	14	.90	52.89	12.13	-1.00	-.34	23	69	---	---

\*\* $p < .01$

Table 1 illustrates the descriptive. Good reliability values are the sign of internal consistency of the scales. The values of skewness and kurtosis were between -1.5 to +1.5 which suggests normality of data. Table shows that there is a highly significant association among "gender role ideology" and emotional well-being. Participants having traditional gender role ideology demonstrate low level of emotional well-being. While participants having egalitarian gender role ideology demonstrates high level of emotional well-being.

**Table 2: Gender Differences on the scale of Emotional Well-Being (N=225).**

Variables	Male (n=115)		Female (n=110)		t	p	CI		Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			Upper	Lower	
WBS	48.35	14.15	57.64	6.96	-6.20***	.000	-12.24	-6.33	0.83

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3 reveals the result of independent sample t-test for computing gender differences on scale of emotional well-being. The results indicate that female have significantly higher emotional well-being ( $M = 57.64$ ,  $SD = 6.96$ ) as compared to male ( $M = 48.35$ ,  $SD = 14.15$ ).

Table 3: *Regression Analysis predicting the Moderating Impact of Gender on the relationship between Gender Role Ideology and Emotional Well-Being (N=225).*

Outcome: Emotional Well-Being						
Predictors		$\beta$	SE	B	t	$\Delta R^2$
Model 1						.66
(constant)		-2.91***	.15		-18.78	219.65***
Gender Role Ideology		-.93***	.05	-.93	-18.49	
Gender		1.95***	.10	.98	19.39	
Model 2						.037
(constant)		2.38***	.17		-13.46	173.32***
Gender Role Ideology		-2.00***	.20	-2.00	-9.60	
Gender		-1.52**	.66	-.76	-2.28	
Gender Role Ideology x Gender		.058***	.01	2.57	5.26	

\*\*\* $p < .001$

Table 3 displays the results of a moderated multiple regression analysis that takes gender into account as a moderator of the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional well-being. The values of  $F(3, 221) = 173.32***$  and  $R^2 = .702$ , predicts 70.2% of variance in the outcome variable. The predictor gender role ideology showed a significant relationship with the moderating effect of gender ( $B = .058$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

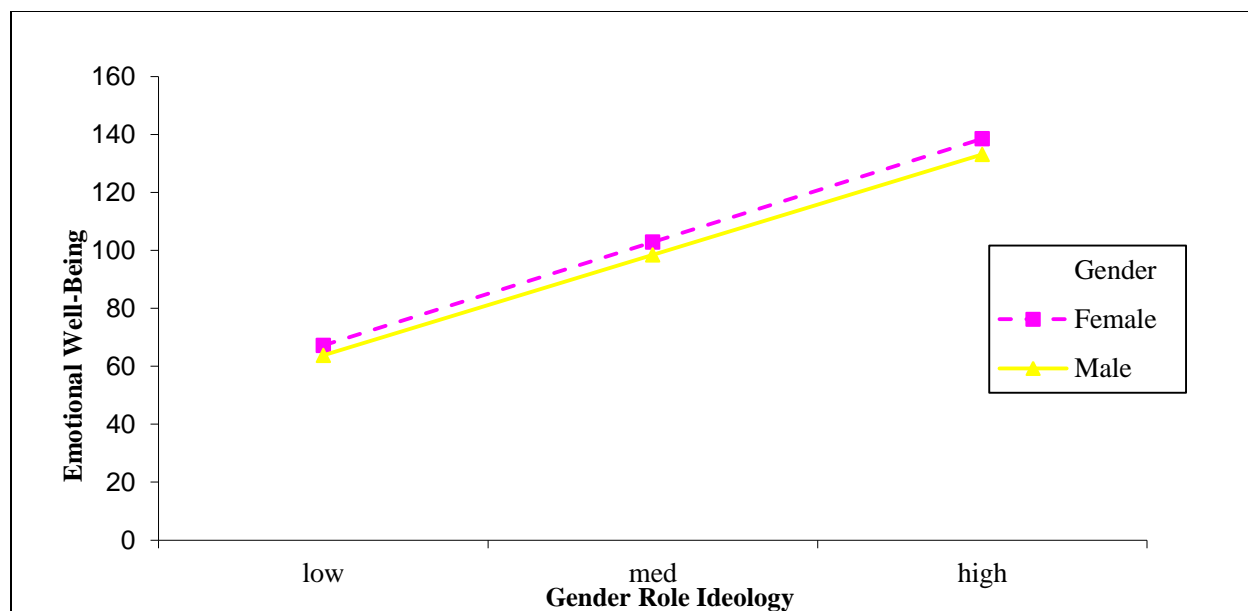


Figure 1 revealed that females having egalitarian gender role ideology have high emotional well-being as compared to males.

## Discussion

The present study is a valuable addition to the literature assessing gender role ideology and emotional well-being. Present study consisted of married individuals with the age range of 23 to 70 years. The following section will highlight the findings and backing from existing literature.

According to the correlational results, gender role ideology and emotional wellbeing have a very strong negative association. As a result, those who believe in traditional gender roles have high emotional well-being, whereas those who believe in egalitarian gender roles have lower emotional well-being.

The discussion about gender roles has persisted since the turn of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, and the conservative perspective is giving way to the liberal perspective (Crompton & Lyonette, 2008). Egalitarianism and sharing of responsibilities are supported by both men and women. Because women are taking on more domestic duties like childrearing, men's roles in the home are also altering. They encourage women to work and encourage them to help with household expenses rather than staying at home. Along with men, women support the family financially. In homes when the males take the conservative roles and the wives the liberal ones, men are more likely to feel psychological stress (Pervaiz & Malik, 2021).

The second hypothesis of the study was that females score high on emotional well-being as compared to males. Previous literature suggests that men tend to be more stressed about different things which would make them weaker in external work whereas women tend to internalize the stress and know their coping strategies, keeping their well-being high (Riepenhausen et al., 2022). Another study stated that women are more mindful and likely to be able to improve their emotional condition by keeping themselves busy in different work (Katz & Toner, 2013).

According to the third hypothesis, gender modifies the association between the ideology of gender roles and emotional health. According to prior research (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004), gender moderates the association between sex roles and subjective well-being. In previous studies the relationship between emotional well-being and gender roles remained significant to gender differences (Heath et al., 2017). The findings of earlier study (Vogel et al., 2006) concluded that the gender have effect on gender roles (including masculinity and femininity) and psychological well-being.

Women had modern roles and great psychological wellbeing in terms of gender differences. The results were in line with the literature. Women in contemporary and shifting roles had little psychological disturbance. Traditional gender roles were linked to significant psychological anguish among men (Sweeting et al., 2014). The current study has confirmed the result in relation to the research of Matud et al., (2019). Women are better able to manage their lives and have greater influence over their circumstances than men. Additionally, recent improvements in the education sector and liberalism among women may have significant effects on women's lives.

The hypothesis (3 a) of the study was that males holding traditional gender role ideology have higher emotional well-being than males holding egalitarian/feminine gender role ideology. The findings of the current study are consistent with those of earlier investigations. For example, Iwamoto et al., (2014) found that men who prioritize values that put them in a position of power and make them dominant over women are significantly more likely to report high levels of well-being than men who don't view women as their rivals. According to another similar study, males who reported having gender norms that are more equitable are less happy and had limited emotional expressiveness. Result of their lack of early exposure to identity development (Arnett, 2000). According to earlier research (Saunders & Kashubeck-West, 2006), traditional and masculine gender role ideology is linked to greater levels of well-being. This is supported by the findings of the current study. According to another study (Sweeting, 2014), males who hold traditional gender role ideas exhibit greater increases in well-being and mental health.

The hypothesis (3 b) of the study was that females holding egalitarian/ gender role ideology has higher emotional well-being. Previous literature available, supports our finding that females having more feminine roles in society have greater psychological well-being (Wittig, 1998). Another study supported that female breaking more stereotypes of basic cultural values and getting more independent are more optimistic and satisfied in their life which points to valuable emotional well-being (Einat & Chen, 2012). In respect to Pakistani culture, women are supposed to drive more homely stuff rather than being more open to work outside, but things are swiftly changing and women are moving forward with open mindedness. Even in workplace environment, males consider threat to their identity where women are equally successful (Van Laar et al., 2019). Previous literature also indicated that females breaking more stereotypes of basic cultural values and getting more independent are more optimistic and satisfied in their life which points to valuable emotional well-being (Einat & Chen, 2012).

### ***Limitations and Suggestions***

The sample was confined with mostly middle upper class individuals, it could be a comparative study paralleling formation of emotional well-being in lower class and upper class married people. So data was not compared to other results available on somehow related topics.

Future studies can research to break the stereotypical concept of hierarchy on biological bases of gender which is not a source of good emotional well-being

### ***Implications***

Considering Pakistan as developing and less liberal country it was essential to conduct research and collect data on such topic to find the true picture of gender ideology concept in Pakistan an mostly available literature on the topic explored in current study is mostly from liberal, developed, advanced and open- minded countries.

The findings will help married people to develop gender roles according to their partner which will lead to happy marriage.

This research is useful to couple therapist to identify the nature of married people and how they form balance in their life.

Research is also beneficial to counselors who deal with different type of individuals facing marriage problem.

## Conclusion

The current study examined the relationship between gender role ideology and emotional health. Additionally, it demonstrated how gender itself and gender role ideology had an impact on mental wellbeing. The current study will have an impact on married people's lives since it will help society understand gender role ideology and emotional well-being in married life.

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## Conflict of Interest


Authors have no conflict of interest.


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