

المساواة الجندرية لدى الأزواج اللبنانيين أسطورة أم واقع في عصر النسوية؟ Gender equality in Lebanese couples myth or reality in the era of feminism?

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ملخص الدراسة:

تستند هذه المقالة إلى دراسة أوسع حول التوقعات والرضا الزوجي لدى الأزواج اللبنانيين، وتفحص كيف يستجيب الشريكان للتوقعات الجندرية وكيف تشكل هذه الاستجابات ديناميات العلاقة وإحساسهما بالمساواة المتبادلة. أجريت دراسة مقطعية شملت 72 زوجًا (144 مشاركًا) في بيروت وجبل لبنان باستخدام المعايير غير الاحتمالية، واعتمدت استبانة منظّمة بثلاثة أقسام: (1) البيانات الاجتماعية-الديموغرافية، (2) التوقعات والمعتقدات بشأن الزواج عبر نسخ مُكيّفة من «مقياس معتقدات العلاقة (RBS)» و«قائمة معتقدات العلاقة (RBI)»، و(3) التوافق الثنائي عبر «مقياس التوافق الزوجي» (DAS-30).

تُظهر النتائج استمرارًا قويًا للمعايير التقليدية: 81% يتوقعون أن يكون الرجل ميسور الحال ماليًا، و79% يرون أن المرأة ينبغي أن تتولى أعمال المنزل، و99% يؤيدون اتخاذ القرار المشترك. ومع ذلك، لا تتسق أنماط الرضا مع هذه المثل؛ إذ تبدو القرارات المالية والمهنية أكثر توازنًا، فيما تظل الأعمال

المنزلية مصدرًا متكررًا للصراع وتراجع الرضا، ولا سيما لدى النساء. وتناقش الدراسة كيف تُسهم الضغوط الاقتصادية والعبء الذهني في هذه الفجوة، وتعرض خطوات عملية نحو ممارسات منزلية أكثر عدلًا.

خلاصةً، تشير النتائج إلى تحوّل جزئي نحو المساواة الزوجية. وتبدو المساواة في الزواج اللبناني «أسطورة وواقعة» معًا: أسطورة في الخطاب المثالي حول تقاسم القرار، وواقعة في التحولات التدريجية اليومية نحو أدوار أكثر توازنًا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التوقعات الجندرية، الرضا الزوجي، التوافق الثنائي، الأزواج اللبنانيون، النظام الأبوي، المساواة بين الجنسين.

Abstract

This article, drawn from a larger study on expectations and marital satisfaction among Lebanese couples, examines how partners respond to gendered expectations and how these responses shape relationship dynamics and perceived equality. Using non-probability sampling, a cross-sectional survey of 72 couples (144 participants) in Beirut and Mount Lebanon employed a structured, three-part questionnaire: (1) sociodemographic data; (2) expectations and beliefs about marriage, via adapted versions of the Relationship Belief Scale (RBS) and Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI); and (3) dyadic adjustment measured with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-30).

Findings show strong persistence of traditional norms: 81% expect the man to be financially well off, 79% believe the woman should handle housework, and 99% express support for joint decision-making. Yet satisfaction patterns are inconsistent with these ideals: finances and career decisions appear more balanced, while housework remains a frequent source of conflict and reduced satisfaction—particularly for women. The study discusses how economic pressure and the mental load contribute to this gap and outlines practical steps for more equitable household routines.

Overall, the results point to a partial shift toward conjugal equality. Equality in Lebanese marriages emerges as both myth and reality: a myth in the idealized discourse of shared decisions, but a reality in gradual, everyday moves toward more balanced roles.

Keywords: gendered expectations, marital satisfaction, dyadic adjustment, Lebanese couples, patriarchy, gender equality.

Introduction:

Between patriarchal traditions and feminist aspirations

In the Lebanese context, conjugal relations are situated in an intricate dynamic where religious tradition, cultural norms, and modern ambitions intersect. Religious marriage, being at once a spiritual and social institution, is central to the composition of couples in Lebanon. However, this institution finds its roots in patriarchal norms that assign asymmetrical roles to men and women, particularly with regard to money, raising children, and domestic responsibilities (El-Kak, 2020; Shehadeh, 2010).

In recent decades, modern feminism has served as a counter-movement to such traditional structures by undermining gender roles and promoting the principles of gender equality. However, this pursuit of equality comes up against cultural, political, and social resistance that complicates its implementation (Naufal, 2019). These resistances are strongest in Lebanese personal status

laws, which codify patriarchal and religious assumptions at the expense of women's rights, situating them in inferior roles within the family (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

The intersection of modernist ambitions and deeply rooted traditions generates intense tensions between couples, shaping the distribution of conjugal roles and partners' satisfaction. For example, although Lebanese women are increasingly present in the job market, their economic input is often perceived as secondary to their spouses, limiting their decision-making independence (Zaatari, 2018; International Labour Organization, 2015). This issue, marked by a conflict between aspirations for equality and resistance to feminist ideals, raises fundamental questions: to what extent are Lebanese couples able to balance tradition and modernity? And to what extent do such conflicts influence marital satisfaction?

Recent empirical findings reinforce these tensions in Lebanon's socio-cultural landscape. A qualitative study by Basma and Rubie-Davies (2025) revealed that, despite increased support for gender equality, deep-seated stereotypes about men's authority persist in family and educational settings. Gender norms influence not only how individuals behave but also how they speak, interact, and form expectations of one another (Ridgeway, 2011) what can foster bias and hinder the creation of a genuinely inclusive and egalitarian social environment (Heilman & Caleo, 2015).

These findings contextualize how cultural and structural forces continue to shape conjugal roles and satisfaction in Lebanese marriages.

Religious Marriage in Lebanon: Between Normative Tradition and Egalitarian Aspirations

Not only is religious marriage a sacred or private one in Lebanon; religious marriage is the sole legally sanctioned type of union that is approved by the state. This reality makes religious marriage a powerful normative instrument that defines conjugal life as well as men's and women's social status. Actually, the personal status law, governed by 15 religious' authorities, reflects patriarchal standards in which men are imagined as authority and economic providers, while women are reduced to the role of caretakers of home and children (Shehadeh, 2010; Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Lebanese personal status laws add to this asymmetrical dynamic by giving significant legal benefits to men. For example, in Muslim jurisdictions, the unilateral talaq right allows men to divorce without initial reason, whereas women must undertake involved processes to obtain a legal separation (International Commission of Jurists, 2019). Within Christianity, divorce is generally forbidden except for very limited situations such as adultery or proven incapacity, further limiting women's rights (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Moreover, child custody legislation frequently transfers legal responsibility to the father when the child is old enough, regardless of the mother's primary role in their upbringing (Shehadeh, 2010).

Tensions Between Traditional Norms and Modern Aspirations

Religious marriage reflects a growing tension between deeply rooted traditions and contemporary aspirations towards equality. On one hand, men are socially encouraged to become economic providers in the midst of chronic economic crises. Pressure from this direction can produce tension and marital conflicts, especially when resources are limited (International Labour Organization,

2015). On the other hand, women, despite being more engaged in working and life in public spaces, maintain a double burden in seeking domestic responsibilities along with career aspirations (Zaatari, 2018).

These paradoxes point towards a cultural and legal setting that does not naturally support equality between partners. For example, the limited access of women to money-making decisions in the couple reflects a power-oriented gender dynamic that reduces their autonomy and involvement in the most significant aspects of married life (UNDP in the Arab States, 2018). This imbalance between traditional and modern lifestyles is what generates frustration and causes marital conflict and highlights the challenges of Lebanese couples

Recent Lebanese studies have started to look more closely at how gender roles and ideas about feminism shape the quality of relationships and marital satisfaction. Research shows that when partners share similar views about gender roles and divide parenting in a fair way, their relationships tend to be more stable and satisfying (Ibrahim, 2023). Other findings highlight that what matters most for Lebanese couples is not whether tasks are split equally, but how they communicate and handle problems together (Al-Mechleb, 2023). Emotional connection and mental well-being also play a big role, secure attachment and good emotional awareness are both linked to happier, more balanced marriages (El Frenn et al., 2022). Together, these studies reflect how couples in Lebanon are gradually moving between traditional expectations and more modern, equal ways of relating to each other .

The issue of Equality: An aspiration Between Myth and Reality

Although gender equality is increasingly promoted in public discourse, its realization within the marriage world is limited. Social and cultural norms, grounded deeply on gendered perceptions of roles, still limit real progress toward equality. Defying feminist principles, typically through anti-feminist rhetoric within political and social spheres, operates to maintain the status quo about the division of marital labor.

These resistances manifest themselves as ambivalences in the relationships of couples. For example, even though women are currently encouraged to pursue professional careers, they still bear the majority of domestic and family responsibilities, showing an uneven type of equality. This double burden of professional and domestic responsibilities is the challenge for women as they balance between personal aspiration and societal expectation.

Over the past few decades, there has emerged a modern feminism as a counterpoise to such traditional arrangements, challenging gender roles and promoting values of equality between men and women. But this pursuit of equality is met with cultural, political, and social resistance that prevents it from being put into practice. The contrast between modern ideals and long-rooted tradition gives rise to tremendous tensions between couples, affecting division of roles and satisfaction in the relationship

This dilemma, defined by a conflict between aspirations for equalness and resistance to feminist standards, raises fundamental questions: To what extent can Lebanese couples balance tradition and modernity? And how do these conflicts influence marital satisfaction?

Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

Through this analysis, we explore how contemporary Lebanese couples perceive and manage marital roles in a context where aspirations for equality coexist with anti-feminist attitudes. We hypothesize that, although efforts toward a more equitable distribution of marital roles are visible, these efforts are hindered by traditional norms and persistent gendered perceptions. These tensions, in turn, directly influence marital satisfaction by creating conflicting expectations between partners.

Our study, gathered with 72 couples residing in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, evaluates the impact of expectations on marital satisfaction, and more importantly, taking into account traditional roles enforced by society. Using a quantitative approach, the study highlights the contrast between modern aspirations for equality and culturally rooted practices in Lebanese society

Methodology

Marital satisfaction, though subjective, can be measured by standard instruments such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) (Olson et al., 2008) that assess multiple dimensions of the relationship (communication, intimacy, compatibility, conflict resolution). Along with these subjective perceptions come objective factors such as financial stability, health, and age that influence satisfaction levels (Rauer et al., 2008; Proulx & Helms, 2007).

In this research, two forms of marital satisfaction are described;

- **Expected satisfaction:** based on partners expectations and ideals
- **Achieved satisfaction:** grounded in the couple's actual experience, often lower than expected satisfaction due to necessary compromises and adjustments.

The approach adopted is mixed-method:

1. **Quantitative:** The study involved 72 married Lebanese couples (N = 144 individuals), aged between 26 and 74 years (M = 43.2; SD = 10.7). The average length of marriage was 15.6 years (SD = 9.3), and the average age gap between partners was 5.8 years (SD = 2.9). Most participants lived in Beirut and Mount Lebanon, representing a mix of social and religious backgrounds (82% Christian, 17% Muslim, 1% undeclared). Eighty-five percent of respondents held a university degree, 64% identified as middle class, and 68% had children (M = 2.1). Couples were recruited electronically through a semi-representative contact list of 200 households. Recruitment followed an accidental, non-probabilistic method, based on availability and willingness to participate. Although this method limits statistical generalization, it ensured diversity and realism in portraying Lebanese marital life.

Instruments

The research tools were administered in French or Lebanese Arabic, depending on each participant's preference. The questionnaire was translated and back-translated to ensure both

linguistic and conceptual accuracy.

A pilot test ($N = 10$) was conducted to check for clarity and surface validity of the questions.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS-30): Used to measure marital satisfaction across four dimensions; consensus, cohesion, contentment, and affective expression. Internal reliability was high ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Questionnaire on marital expectations and beliefs, adapted from the Relationship Belief Scale (RBS) and Relationship Belief Inventory (RBI), included five main dimensions: intimacy, passion, individuality, external influences, and general attitude. Reliability coefficients ranged between $\alpha = 0.71$ and 0.84 depending on the subscale.

Procedure and Data Quality

Participants completed the survey individually online through KoboToolbox. Each couple received a unique ID number, which allowed accurate pairing and comparison between partners' responses. Data files were regularly checked for completeness and logical consistency, and callbacks were made when responses were missing or unclear. This helped maintain high data integrity throughout the collection process.

2. **Qualitative:** Two case studies conducted through face-to-face interviews following a specialized guide

All participants gave informed consent before completing the questionnaire, following ethical research standards in psychology. The study received approval from the Ethics Committee of Saint Joseph University of Beirut (Ref.USJ. 2022-171). De-identified data are available from the author upon reasonable request.

The article particularly emphasizes the analysis of responses to questions regarding role allocation between the couple, decision-making, and marital expectations in such a way that a complete and multi-dimensional description of marital satisfaction.

First, we analyze gendered expectations within the couple, as outlined in Table 1, derived from the marital expectations and beliefs questionnaire. This step highlights partners attitudes regarding financial security, division of household work, and participation in decision-making.

Second, we analyzed experienced gender roles, as shown in Table 2, using the marital satisfaction questionnaire. Through this approach, This approach lets us compare desired versus actual practices and how the actual division of financial, household labor, decision-making, and professional responsibilities impacts marital satisfaction. Having this two-way perspective

provides the complete picture of differences between expected ideals and everyday life for Lebanese couples

Note: Scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). Higher means indicate greater agreement with the statement.

I. Analysis and interpretation of the results concerning gendered expectations within the couple

Table 1.

Items	Statements	Sub-dimensions and traits	Mean scores ($\sum_{i=1}^9 \bar{s}_{D1i}$)		
			Couples, N=144	Husbands N=72	Wives, N=72
QB1-22	"D_1,2: The wife (the woman) expects her husband (spouse) to ensure financial security."	Gendered expectations (conservatism), financial security (pragmatism), financial contribution (equity)	4.07	4.19	3.94
QB1-23	"D_1,3: The man (husband) expects his wife (spouse) to take care of household tasks."	Division of responsibilities (customary distribution), cultural expectations (normativity), domestic partnership (cooperation)	4.08	4.08	4.04
QB1-25	"D_1,4: Both partners should be involved in decision-making."	Power sharing (parity), communication (openness), collaboration (synergy)	4.57	4.35	4.79
QB1-10	"D2,3: Spouses should share household (family) tasks."	Répartition équitable des tâches (égalité, parité), coopération domestique (collaboration)	3.67	3.49	3.86

I.1 The expectation that the husband brings financial security

(QB1-22 — "D1,2: The wife expects her husband to assure financial security.")

We asked the participants whether they believed that the husband should be responsible for providing financial security within the couple. A strong majority (81%) agreed, with a mean score of 4.07. This response shows that traditional gender roles remain deeply anchored in Lebanese society. Men placed slightly more importance

on this expectation (4.19) than women (3.94), revealing an asymmetrical perception of financial roles.

Cultural norms position the man as the “economic pillar” of the family, reflecting a dominant patriarchal model. Even with the growing participation of women in the labor market, their economic contribution is still often seen as complementary or secondary. In a country where economic instability is frequent, this expectation may also reflect collective anxiety about financial insecurity, which reinforces these traditional patterns.

This norm creates an emotional and psychological burden for men, who may feel pressured to remain the sole breadwinners, while at the same time limiting women’s financial autonomy. The outcome is a paradox: public discourse increasingly promotes financial equality, yet daily practices remain firmly tied to traditional interpretations.

I.2 The expectation that the wife assumes responsibility of household tasks

(QB1-23 — "D1,3: The man (husband) anticipates his wife (his spouse) to perform household tasks.")

We asked the participants whether the wife should be primarily responsible for household tasks. A large majority (79%) agreed, with a mean score of 4.08, indicating that the division of household labor remains largely unequal. Men (4.13) appeared more attached to this norm than women (4.04), suggesting greater reluctance to adopt more egalitarian models.

These results confirm the persistence of a gender-based division of labor, where, despite women’s paid employment, household responsibilities continue to fall mainly on them. This inequality contradicts feminist advances advocating for a fairer and more balanced model.

In Lebanon, this pattern persists because of both cultural and structural factors. For instance, hiring domestic workers—common among middle- and upper-class families—often conceals men’s limited participation in household labor without changing gendered expectations. Moreover, the widespread idea that domestic work is a “female duty” continues to generate frustration when women attempt to renegotiate this balance within marriage.

This imbalance increases the mental load on women, who juggle professional and family roles while often remaining undervalued. Such pressures generate tension, conflict, and slower progress toward an equal partnership.

I.3 The expectation of equal involvement of both partners in making decisions

(QB1-25 — "D1,4: Both partners should be involved in decision-making.")

We asked participants if they believed both partners should take part in important decision-making.

We asked the participants whether both partners should be equally involved in making important decisions.

Almost all of them (99%) agreed, with an extremely high mean score of 4.57. This consensus illustrates the importance participants attach to equality in decision-making, a domain where relational evolution seems more advanced.

However, the difference between men (4.35) and women (4.79) reveals distinct perceptions. Women value shared decision-making more, likely because many have experienced exclusion from it in the past. In patriarchal cultures such as Lebanon, major decisions—especially those concerning finances or children's education, have traditionally been reserved for men.

Women's stronger attachment to this value reflects the influence of feminist and women's rights movements that have challenged patriarchal norms. Yet, even if couples endorse egalitarian ideals, it remains important to examine how far they are actually practiced. In many cases, egalitarian rhetoric masks power imbalances that still shape daily life.

I.4 The expectation of sharing household tasks

(QB1-10 — "D2,3: Spouses should share household (family) tasks.")

We asked the participants if both partners should share household responsibilities equally.

With a 68% level of agreement and an aggregate mean score of 3.67, this finding indicates movement towards the egalitarian partnership model but not completed yet. Women (3.86) are more agreeable to this sharing than men (3.49), suggesting greater female interest in correcting the household drudgery and relieving the unequal load that still rests on them in daily life.

This is a sign that men too, are catching on about the importance of sharing domestic responsibilities. However, the difference in perception between the two sexes is evidence that women remain the primary agents of change, most probably because they are more immediately affected by the mental load.

Despite this progress, there still is cultural resistance: percentage of agreement is noticeably lower than that of shared decision-making (QB1-25: 99%), proving that the home setting is still one of the most difficult to rebalance. Patriarchal values and intergenerational customs still limit the integration of task-sharing into practices, lengthening the lag for the achievement of genuine equality among Lebanese couples.

Dynamics of transformation and implications

Comparison of QB1-10 with the rest of the questions indicates a transformation dynamic of continuous transformation of gender roles within the home. The transition towards more equality in the performance of domestic duties can be regarded as an indicator of social progress under pressure from feminist storytelling and broader cultural transformation.

- Impact on marital dynamics:

A more equitable distribution of household work not only lightens the mental burden of women but also strengthens partnership and emotional relationships in the couple. Couples who adopt such practices create more balanced and rewarding relationships.

- Cultural and structural factors:

However, progress continues to be hindered by persistent social norms and gendered expectations. In Lebanon, for example, women's role in the household is often valued as a central aspect of their social identity, which can slow the widespread adoption of this sharing responsibilities.

- Generational evolutions:

Younger generations under the influence of new ideals of equality and Western patterns, are more open to change. This would mean that equality in household work is a dynamic process, but one that still requires the passage of time to get strongly established in the lifestyles.

Conclusion:

Household labor division between the couple, as articulated in QB1-10, indicates a trend towards more equitable relational processes. This advancement, however, is partial, marked by differential gaps between men's and women's aspirations and by cultural resistance. In synthesis with the previous analyses, these results highlight that equality within Lebanese couples is a progressive process and up to now is a state oscillating between myth and reality. Greater involvement of men in household chores is one significant step toward more equal relations, but it must undergo constant cultural and structural transformations to develop into the standard.

II. Analysis and interpretation of the results focusing on gender roles as experienced and presented, drawn from the marital satisfaction questionnaire.

Items-13	Statements	Sub-dimensions and traits	Mean scores ($\sum_{i=1}^{13} \bar{s}_{SAT1i}$)		
			Couples, N=144	Husbands, N=72	wives, N=72
QC1-1	"SAT1,1: The family budget."	Budget planning, equality in financial decision-making, mutual trust regarding expenses	3.85	3.76	3.93
QC1-12	"SAT1,10: Making important decisions."	Participation in decisions (finances, children, moving and residence, leisure and vacations); equality in decision-making, mutual communication and consultation, perceived influence on decisions.	3.33	3.71	2.96
QC1-13	"SAT1,11: Household tasks and/or other household chores."	Division of tasks including childcare responsibilities, management of household finances, house maintenance and distributions; perceived fairness in the division of	2.76	2.61	2.90

		<i>tasks, satisfaction with domestic cooperation</i>			
QC1-15	<i>"SAT1,13: Professional decisions."</i>	<i>Support for career decisions, negotiation and compromise; work-life balance, communication about professional aspirations, satisfaction with the support provided (received)</i>	3.57	3.60	3.54

Table 2.

The data in Table 2, drawn from the marital satisfaction questionnaire, enable us to quantify how distant people report being from being satisfied with the actual balance of role and decision-making in the relationship. They provide a glimpse of lived experience, complementing the stated expectations in Table 1.

II.1 Management of family finances

(QC1-1 — "SAT1,1: The family budget")

We asked participants about their satisfaction with how family finances are managed within the couple.

Average score of couples is 3.85, which shows a relatively high level of satisfaction with family money management. Women (3.93) tend to be slightly happier than men (3.76), something that may result from the fact that they would like to be included in a domain historically seen as part of the male role.).

This satisfaction complements a trend toward more mutual management of finances and resonates with the result of QB1-22 in Table 1, where expectations still focused on the man as economic provider. The contrast between this gendered expectation and the satisfaction of more mutual management shows that couples value more shared effort and recognize it as movement toward increased equity and partnership.

II.2 Making important decisions

(QC1-12 — "SAT1,10: Making important decisions")

We asked participants how satisfied they were with the way important family decisions are made.

The overall mean score of 3.33, with high difference between men (3.71) and women (2.96), records a moderate satisfaction and indicates a difference between expectation and experience. While Table 1 (QB1-25) had reported virtual unanimity (99%) both for partners being involved in decision-making, the data from Table 2 reveal that it is still far from being entirely achieved on the ground.

Women, in particular, indicate a sense of exclusion when it comes to significant decisions (shelter, finances, children's education), which may cause frustration and relational tension. This gap demonstrates the unfinished nature of the process of decision-making equality among Lebanese couples.

II.3 Division of household chores

(QC1-13 — "SAT1,11: Household work and/or other domestic duties")

We asked participants about their satisfaction with how household chores are divided.

With a low mean score of 2.76 and a low agreement rate of 24%, this factor is accorded the lowest satisfaction. Women (2.90) are more dissatisfied than men (2.61), as is to be expected, as the home burden still lags on them disproportionately).

The results replicate those of QB1-23 in Table 1, where high agreement (79%) with the belief that wives are to do housework showed once more strongly gendered expectations. The disparity between what the couple reports as expectations and the low satisfaction reported in practice suggests that the actual division of labor is a major source of strain, and one hopefully guaranteed to produce stress, mental overload, and resentment for wives.

II.4 Professional decisions

(QC1-15 — "SAT1,13: Professional decisions")

We asked participants how satisfied they were with the way professional decisions are made within the couple.

The mean score of 3.57 is a realm where satisfaction is relatively high and where men (3.60) and women (3.54) differ very little. The fact that there is similarity signifies that expectations (QB1-25 on mutual decision-making) and lived reality are more in tune here than elsewhere. Partners appear to agree on professional decisions and how professional matters are managed, producing a working climate of collaboration and reducing tensions.

Overall interpretation

The comparison of expectations (Table 1) with experiences (Table 2) places in relief a central paradox: expectations remain still highly gendered — man as sole breadwinner, woman as homemaking responsibility — but practice increasingly diverges from this model. Thus, as finances and job selection show movement towards cooperation and communication, household responsibility allocations and some major decisions remain in a patriarchal framework, creating high levels of discontent for women.

This disconnect is an ongoing process of accommodation, where egalitarian aspirations coexist with still-potent cultural scripts. This produces a dissonance that can affect global marital happiness: women on the one hand value their increased involvement in certain spheres; women on the other hand experience persisting inequalities in the home. This dissonance between progress and resistance can be one source of unlocking marital conflicts and nascent identity crises for Lebanese couples today.

Conclusion:

The study of expectations and marital satisfaction in Lebanese marriages identifies a complicated dynamic in which thoroughly embedded traditional norms meet increasing aspirations for equality amid changing cultural currents and modern feminist discourse. Our results identify a paradox: professional decision-making and money management tend toward increasingly shared roles, yet domestic labor and some key decisions are still strongly gendered. This struggle between tradition and modernity directly affects marital satisfaction, particularly that of women, who bear a greater mental burden and feel more injustice.

These findings imply an imperfect transition to marital equality and invite examination of the identity-related and subjective consequences of such dissonance. The intrapsychic tension, stress, and feelings of inadequacy that can result from the dissonance between aspired identity (more egalitarian) and the one proscribed by sociocultural norms can be a risk for women's well-being. Further, perpetuation of these expectations may mediate the egalitarian behavior-marital well-being link by lowering the perception of partnership and elevating frustrations.

These observations open up promising lines of research, in particular regarding mental load, gender attitude congruence, attachment styles, and economic traits on marital satisfaction and partner identity. Longitudinal data and comparative analysis with other Arab or Mediterranean societies would permit a refinement of these dynamics and placing the Lebanese case within a comparative view.

Lastly, as descriptive as this study is, it underlines the necessity of maintaining collective action educational, cultural, and legislative in the direction of creating an enabling environment for gender equality. Marital equality in Lebanon thus remains a work in progress a slow but essential journey requiring both structural reform and shifts in mindset to achieve a more balanced and fulfilling partnership between spouses.

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