

THE RELATION BETWEEN MARITAL BELIEFS AND MARITAL COMPATIBILITY AMONG MARRIED COUPLES IN PALESTINE: A PREDICTIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Objective: The study aims is to investigate how traditional and modern views on marriage shape how well married couples adjust in Palestine.

Method: A correlational design was chosen and the sample includes 116 married participants who came from various backgrounds. 2 questionnaires were created and verified: the beliefs about marriage scale and the marital compatibility scale.

Results: Analyses showed that the two scales were both reliable and measured the intended concepts. Studies revealed that the strength of beliefs in emotional security, clear communication and empathy had a major influence on a couple's compatibility. Although traditional beliefs about family and religion stayed strong, women's empowerment and openness became important factors too. Based on the findings, introducing belief-based therapy can help couples have healthier marriages.

Conclusion: The findings stress the importance of teaching couples about marriage in a way that respects traditions and modern relationship views in Palestinian communities.

Keywords: Couples, modern beliefs, marriage compatibility

Purpose of publication: The purpose of this manuscript is to fulfill the publication requirement for a paper derived from the doctoral dissertation entitled "Predicting Family Quality of Life through Marital Compatibility and Emotional Well-being Among Married Couples in Palestine", based on the same study sample.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is regarded as one of the profound and intimate union among individuals who opt to spend rest of their lives together (Sadeghian et al., 2025). It is regarded as one of the meaningful and complicated human relationships, which demands both partners' commitment and deep understanding (Girgis et al., 2020). In the beginning of marriage, the majority of spouses are excited about marriage and filled with deep feelings and love that begin to fade over time (Pincus, 2023). This is supported by Tetteh (2023) who indicates that the majority of newlyweds spouses anticipate a declination in their love relationship.

There are a variety of beliefs that intensify the partners fear of marriage; including the desired outcomes of the relationship, the dynamics of their relationship, and their partners' responsibilities (Asim et al., 2024). Such beliefs further include the challenges that might emerge within the relationships and anticipations for the required behavior to preserve a successful partnership (Rasheed et al., 2021). Mohammadi and Soleymani (2017) argue that marriage beliefs are critical in articulating the individuals' meaning about marriage; thus, influencing their methods of managing their relationship.

There are several types of beliefs in marriage; including but not limited to rational beliefs, which are defined as an individual's beliefs and understanding about their relationships (Rasheed et al., 2021). Such beliefs can considerably influence their actions, satisfaction, and decisions with their marriage (Breger and Hill, 2021). On the other hand, Adibkia et al. (2022) claim that the irrational beliefs might lead to conflict behavior and marital dissatisfaction. Irrational beliefs have a negative impact of marital relationship (Topkaya et al., 2023). These beliefs might be held by married couples towards themselves and their partners are regarded the main reasons behind unhealthy marriages (Omeje et al., 2023). There are several characteristics of irrational marriages; including rigidity, exaggeration, and resistance to change (Yavuzer & Kılıçarslan, 2024). These characteristics are not rooted in personal experiences (Tikdari Nejad & Khezri Moghadam, 2017). They are often considered dysfunctional, unhealthy, and inconsistent (Topkaya et al., 2023).

Within Palestinian context, early marriage is considered relatively high (Jarallah, 2022). The majority of Palestinian women married at the ages of fifteen to nineteen (Othman, 2022). On the other hand, the minority of Palestinian women remain single and delay marriage between the ages 35 and 39 (Jarallah, 2008). Banat (2022) indicates that the concept of marriage is often affected by traditional practices such as arranged marriages, while love marriages provide better chances for emotional and intellectual.

The most critical factor that strengthens the marital relationship is marital adjustment, which means the general feelings of the spouses' satisfaction and happiness with each other and with their marriage (Slathia, 2014). In Palestine, there are several factors that have positive impact on marital adjustment; including social support systems, education, and religious commitment (Alfawair et al., 2023). However, early marriages, a high number of children, and age differences have negative impact on marital adjustment (Banat, 2022).

This study is concerned with investigating the relationships concerning the beliefs about marriage and marital adjustment among married spouses in Palestine. This study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do traditional beliefs about marriage, including kinship relations, family solidarity, and religious commitment, predict marital adjustment among married individuals in Palestine?
- 2) How do modern beliefs about marriage, such as preference for love marriages and higher education, influence marital adjustment among married individuals in Palestine?

Statement of the Problem

Society depends on strong marriages and their proper adjustment for both social harmony and personal health benefits. The belief system regarding marriage in Palestine gets defined through the combination of cultural factors as well as religious and socio-political conditions. This society demonstrates numerous traditions with political instability along with shifting social norms but demonstrates limited knowledge about how such beliefs influence marital adjustment between couples. The typical basis of marital satisfaction through family unity and religious dedication and close family bonds experiences modification while new attitudes toward romantic marriage alongside increased education and individualistic values emerge. The research targets a gap in knowledge regarding how Palestinian married individuals adjust to marriage based on their beliefs about traditional versus modern marriage principles. The research seeks to reveal understanding that improves marital stability alongside overall Palestinian social well-being by studying this connection.

Significance of the Study

This research holds importance because it aims to connect traditional cultural beliefs with contemporary perspectives regarding marriage which affects husband-wife adjustment in Palestinian society. Multiple reasons exist to comprehend these interconnections. The research outcomes will direct useful knowledge to researchers from social psychology and sociology as well as family counseling professions and government policy makers working to strengthen marital stability among Palestinians. The study findings can help develop sensitive marital counseling methods that deal with traditional alongside modern marital concepts. This investigation of marital adjustment effects on Palestinian families is currently needed because Palestine faces ongoing political unrest and social change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marriage is defined as a delicate, mutual, and complex relationship among two individuals that lies in meeting the spouses emotional, physical, and psychological demands (Agha Mohammad et al., 2012). In Palestine, the concept of marriage is often hindered by the discriminatory Israeli policies and the separation wall, which restrict freedom of movement (Allabadi and Hardan, 2015). Therefore, the marital relationship encounters challenge in maintaining marital adjustment (Meler, 2020).

The beliefs that people hold about marriage determine their relationship attitudes through expectations and satisfaction levels leading to various experiences in marriage union. Mohammadi and Soleymani (2017) explain how marriage beliefs consist of different ways people understand relationship patterns and service expectations and goal expectations which shape how couples manage their relationships. Marital beliefs are either rational or irrational according to experts who describe irrational beliefs as rigid unattainable beliefs that create marriage dissatisfaction and dysfunction (David et al., 2009; Ellis et al., 1989). Lazarus (1985) determined that several irrational marital beliefs exist because people maintain unreasonable expectations about their spouses and exaggerate their relationship problems thus decreasing their marital satisfaction. Marriage beliefs exist in diverse states of intensity because cultural traditions along with religious practices and social environments either work together or destroy marital rapport (Rahbari, 2019; Keshavarz et al., 2018).

Marriage beliefs in Palestine evolve from cultural as well as religious and social values that stress traditional gender roles alongside family preferences and marital respect norms (Zaatut & Haj-Yahia, 2016). Patriarchal values maintain their influence on marital beliefs while traditional male-female roles determine the ways relationship's function and how responsibilities get distributed among husbands and wives (Meler, 2020).

This study is further concerned with marital adjustment, which is defined as the condition in which the spouses feel overall happy and content with their marriage and with each other (Rao, 2017). Marital adjustment is considered an

ongoing journey (Brandao et al., 2017). Similar assertion was made by Bertoni et al. (2024) who indicate that marital adjustment entails understanding the individual characteristics of the spouses since even if the spouses know each other before their marriage, there is a probability for them to change after marriage. Therefore, marital adjustment demands maturity, which understands and accepts development and growth in the spouse (Jaleel & Chandola, 2023). If such growth is not fully realized and experienced, the end of a marital relationship becomes unavoidable (Tavakol et al., 2017).

Since the aim of marriage is happiness, marital adjustment can achieve fulfilment of expectation, satisfaction, and happiness (Jaleel & Chandola, 2023). Marital adjustment is regarded as a process that is created during the lives of couples, which is critical for persons trait recognition, taste conformity, relational models' formation, and behavioral rules creation (Saheba, 2019). Marital adjustment is considered a gradual progression among couples (Brandao et al., 2017).

Palestinian marital adjustments pose significant barriers because cultural norms together with traditional patriarchal traditions deeply shape how relationships function (Meler, 2020). The challenges faced by Palestinian couple's stem from their inability to adjust to new social norms while finding an equal and companionate marriage structure that matches current understanding of partnership in relationships (Zaatut & Haj-Yahia, 2016).

Marriage, Beliefs about Marriage, and Marital Adjustment

Jaleel and Chandola (2023) carried out a study on self-efficacy and marital adjustment among married women. To achieve this objective, the study gathered samples from middle-aged married women and young adult married women. The data were collected using a questionnaire, namely, Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ), and the General Self Efficacy Scale (SES). The results showed but not statistically significant differences in self-efficacy among middle aged young women and middle-aged married women. The study found that self-efficacy was moderately correlated with marital adjustment. This implies that women with higher self-efficacy are more vulnerable to have better marital adjustment.

Saheba (2019) conducted a study on marital adjustment among couples with reference to the type of marriage and gender in India. To this end, the study adopted a questionnaire entitled The Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ) that was distributed to 120 couples; (60) marriages were based on love, whereas (60) marriages were arranged marriages. The study found that married males had good marital adjustment compared to married females. However, the study found no differences in the marital adjustments among love marriage and arranged marriage.

Sadeghian et al. (2025) investigated the beliefs about marriage from the perspectives of married students in Iran. The data were collected using an interview conducted with 24 married students that were analyzed using content analysis. The study analyzed 51 beliefs that were categorized into effective and transparent communication, keeping affection alive, and empathy and simplifying life categories. These beliefs contributed to marriage compassion and intimacy. Other beliefs regarding commitment, security, and conflict resolution strategies were considered critical for establishing a safe marital atmosphere. Beliefs regarding women's independency were critical in fostering equality among marital partnerships. Other factors that had negative impact on spouses' relationship were cultural bigotries, sexism, religious biases, and male dominance.

Within Palestinian context, Banat (2022) conducted a study about marital satisfaction among Palestinian couples using a questionnaire distributed to (384) women. The results showed that Palestinian individuals' beliefs regarding marital adjustment and marriage are profoundly inherited in kinship relations, cultural values, and family solidarity. Moreover, AlJundi & Zanid (2017) investigated the silence of spouses and its correlation with psychological adjustments among Palestinian spouses through the use of questionnaire that was distributed to 300 families. The study found that spousal silence among males is higher than females. The results further showed that spousal silence has a negative impact on the psychological and the marital adjustments of the spouses.

Also, the existential concerns of death and meaning often play a significant role in the dynamics of a marriage. In relationships, partners may struggle with the fear of death or a lack of purpose, which can manifest as conflicts or emotional withdrawal. According to Yalom (2008), when individuals confront their existential anxieties, they may either strengthen their bond by finding meaning together or experience emotional distance as they face these fears alone.

In view of what been mentioned so far, little is known about the correlation between marital beliefs and marital adjustment in Palestine. The majority of the previous studies Jaleel and Chandola (2023) focused on self-efficacy and marital adjustment, Saheba (2019) marital adjustments about married couples in India, Sadeghian et al. (2025) beliefs about marriage in Iran, Banat (2022) marital satisfaction in Palestine. None of these studies investigated the relationship between marital beliefs and marital adjustment within Palestinian context. Therefore, this study is conducted to bridge this gap in literature.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive correlational design, which focuses on examining the relationships among variables. This approach is based on collecting data and analyzing these relationships, thereby contributing to objective conclusions. It also aims to predict marital compatibility through beliefs about marriage (Cohen et al., 2018).

Study Population and Sample

The Study Population:

The study population comprised all married individuals in Palestine. The main study sample was selected using the convenience sample method, and comprised 116 married individuals in Palestine.

Table 1 presents the distribution of the study sample according to its demographic (categorical) variables.

Variable	Category	N	%
Role	Husband	79	68.1
	Wife	37	31.9
	Total	116	100
Years of Marriage	1–5 years	23	19.8
	6–10 years	24	20.7
	More than 10 years	69	59.5
	Total	116	100
Age Difference between Spouses	Less than 1 year	13	11.2
	3–1 years	30	25.9
	7–4 years	46	39.7
	8 years or more	27	23.3
	Total	116	100

Study Instruments

To achieve the study objectives, two scales were employed: the Beliefs About Marriage Scale and the Marital Compatibility Scale, described as follows.

First: Beliefs about Marriage Scale

To fulfill the aims of this study, the researcher reviewed the educational literature, prior investigations, and existing Beliefs about Marriage measures (e.g., Sadeghian et al., 2021; Mohammadi & Soleymani, 2020), and on that basis developed the Beliefs about Marriage Scale.

Scale Validity

Two types of validity were employed as follows:

First: Face Validity

To establish the face validity of the preliminary Beliefs About Marriage Scale, it was presented to a panel of PhD-level experts (N = 10). An 80% agreement threshold was set for item acceptance, and based on the experts' feedback, the wording of several items was revised.

Second: Construct Validity

Construct validity was assessed using a pilot sample of 30 married individuals in Palestine, separate from the main study sample. Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed for item-dimension correlations, item-total scale correlations, and dimension-total scale correlations. The results show that the correlations for items 2, 11, 31, 34, 35, and 40 are below acceptable levels and not statistically significant, so they were removed. The remaining items' correlations ranged from .33 to .93, all of which were significant. Following García (2011), coefficients below .30 are considered weak, those between .30 and .70 moderate, and those above .70 strong. Accordingly, the six items were deleted, leaving 34 items for the main sample.

Reliability of the Beliefs about Marriage Scale

To confirm the reliability of the Beliefs About Marriage Scale, it was administered to a pilot sample of 30 married individuals in Palestine, independent of the main study sample. After removing the six items, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the overall 34-item scale and its individual dimensions.

Table 2 presents the Cronbach's alpha values for the Beliefs about Marriage Scale and its dimensions.

The dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Empathy and Life Simplification	9	.79
Maintaining Affection	4	.63
Effective and Transparent Communication	9	.85
Feelings of Security and Commitment	4	.91
Marital Problem-Solving Methods	4	.63
Women's Empowerment	4	.61
Total Score	34	.92

Table 2 shows that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Beliefs About Marriage Scale dimensions ranged from .61 to .91, with the total scale reaching .92. These satisfactory values indicate that the instrument is reliable and suitable for use with the main sample.

Second: Marital Compatibility Scale

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher reviewed the educational literature, previous investigations, and existing Marital Compatibility measures (e.g., Jaleel & Chandola, 2018; Saheba, 2020; Brandao et al., 2021), and on that basis developed the Marital Compatibility Scale.

Psychometric Properties of the Marital Compatibility Scale

Scale Validity

Two types of validity were employed as follows:

First: Face Validity

To assess the face validity of the preliminary Marital Compatibility Scale, it was presented to a panel of PhD-level experts (N = 10). An 80% agreement threshold was set for item acceptance, and based on the experts' feedback, the wording of several items was revised

Second: Construct Validity

Construct validity was assessed using the pilot sample, the results show that the correlation for the items 4, 14, 18, 19, 20, 25, and 35 were below acceptable levels and not statistically significant, so they were removed. The remaining items' correlations ranged from .33 to .93, all significant.

Reliability of the Marital Compatibility Scale

To confirm the internal consistency of the 38-item Marital Compatibility Scale and its dimensions, it was administered to the pilot sample. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were then calculated, with results presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the Marital Compatibility Scale and its dimensions

The dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	12	.90
Social Compatibility	5	.79
Economic Compatibility	7	.88
Compatibility with Children	5	.86
Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	9	.85
Total Score	38	.97

Table 3 shows that Cronbach's alpha for the Marital Compatibility Scale dimensions ranged from .79 to .90, with the total scale reaching .97. These high values demonstrate excellent internal consistency, confirming the instrument's suitability for the main sample.

Scoring of the Study Scales:

First: Beliefs about Marriage Scale

The final Beliefs About Marriage Scale comprises 34 items across six dimensions, all reflecting positive beliefs about marriage. Respondents rate each item on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

Second: Marital Compatibility Scale

The final Marital Compatibility Scale comprises 38 items across five dimensions. All items are positively keyed except items 3, 10, 13, 17, 20, 21, 29, 30, 32, and 34, which are reverse-scored. Respondents rate each item on a five-point Likert scale: Always (5), Often (4), Sometimes (3), Rarely (2), and Never (1).

To interpret participants', mean scores on both scales, the total score range (1–5) was divided into three equal intervals. The interval width was calculated as $(5 - 1) \div 3 = 1.33$. Accordingly, the mean-score levels were defined as:

Low level: 1.00 to 2.33

Medium level: 2.34 to 3.67

High level: 3.68 to 5.00.

RESULTS RELATED TO THE STUDY QUESTIONS

Results for 1st Question: What is the level of beliefs about marriage among married individuals in Palestine?

The means, standard deviations, and percentages for the beliefs about marriage scale were calculated for married individuals in Palestine. Table 4 presents these statistics.

Table 4 Means, standard deviations, and percentages for each dimension of the beliefs about marriage scale and for the overall scale arranged in descending order.

Rank	Dimension No.	Dimension	Mean	SD	Percentage	Level
1	4	Feelings of Security and Commitment	4.70	.480	94.0	High

2	3	Effective and Transparent Communication	4.56	.442	91.2	High
3	1	Empathy and Life Simplification	4.40	.483	88.0	High
4	5	Marital Problem-Solving Methods	4.33	.533	86.6	High
5	6	Women's Empowerment	4.20	.594	84.0	High
6	2	Maintaining Affection	3.55	.641	71.0	Moderate
The Beliefs about Marriage			4.34	.403	86.8	High

Table 4 shows that the overall mean score for the beliefs of security and commitment” was highest (4.70, 94.0%, high), while “maintaining affection” was lowest (3.55, 71.0%, moderate).

Results for 2nd Question: What is the level of marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine?

The means, standard deviations, and percentages for the marital compatibility scale were calculated for married individuals in Palestine

Table 5 presents these statistics for each dimension and for the overall scale arranged in descending order .

Rank	Dimension No.	Dimension	Mean	SD	Percentage	Level
1	2	Social Compatibility	4.12	.637	82.4	High
2	4	Compatibility with Children	4.09	.752	81.8	High
3	1	Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	4.01	.606	80.2	High
4	5	Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	3.78	.644	75.6	High
5	3	Economic Compatibility	3.63	.831	72.6	Moderate
Marital Compatibility			3.91	.601	78.2	High

Table 5 shows that the overall mean score on the marital compatibility scale was 3.91 (78.2%, high). Dimension means ranged from 3.63 to 4.12: social compatibility was highest (4.12, 82.4%, high), while economic compatibility was lowest (3.63, 72.6%, moderate).

Results Related to the Hypotheses

Results for 1st Hypothesis:

There are no statistically significant differences at the $\alpha \leq .05$ level between the mean scores on the beliefs about marriage scale among married individuals in Palestine attributable to the variables: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses.

The means and standard deviations of the study sample's responses on the beliefs about marriage scale were calculated by role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses. Table 6 presents these statistics.

Table 6 Means and standard deviations of the study sample's responses on the Beliefs about Marriage Scale according to the variables: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses

Variable	Category	Statistical	ELS	MA	ETC	FSC	MPSM	WE	Total Score
Role	Husband	M	4.42	3.52	4.57	4.69	4.39	4.19	4.36
		SD	.476	.671	.482	.531	.552	.636	.433
	Wife	M	4.34	3.61	4.54	4.74	4.20	4.22	4.32
		SD	.497	.576	.346	.348	.474	.501	.335
Years of Marriage	5–1years	M	4.39	3.65	4.55	4.67	4.30	4.27	4.35
		SD	.471	.620	.407	.429	.369	.511	.354
	10–6years	M	4.31	3.44	4.63	4.82	4.40	4.08	4.34
		SD	.423	.648	.346	.317	.410	.509	.308
	More than 10 years	M	4.43	3.55	4.54	4.67	4.31	4.21	4.34
		SD	.508	.649	.484	.538	.614	.647	.449
Age Difference between Spouses	Less than 1 year	M	4.50	3.58	4.61	4.71	4.23	4.27	4.38
		SD	.466	.590	.338	.366	.581	.484	.294
	3–1years	M	4.42	3.34	4.53	4.70	4.33	4.12	4.31
		SD	.465	.638	.419	.457	.596	.503	.353
	7–4years	M	4.43	3.74	4.64	4.75	4.49	4.30	4.44
		SD	.465	.638	.419	.457	.596	.503	.353

		SD	.473	.563	.367	.357	.425	.553	.359
	8years or more	M	4.26	3.43	4.44	4.63	4.09	4.06	4.21
		SD	.522	.727	.595	.702	.533	.771	.529

Notes: ELS = Empathy & Life Simplification, MA = Maintaining Affection, ETC = Effective & Transparent Communication, FSC = Feelings of Security & Commitment, MPSM = Marital Problem-Solving Methods, WE = Women's Empowerment.

Table 6 shows differences in mean scores on the Beliefs About Marriage Scale across the study's independent variables. To assess the statistical significance of these differences for the total score and its subdimensions, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) without interaction effects was conducted. Table 7 presents these results.

Table 7 Multivariate analysis of variance (without interaction) on the total score and subdimensions of the beliefs about marriage scale according to: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses.

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Role	Empathy and Life Simplification	.257	1	.257	1.094	.298
	Maintaining Affection	.293	1	.293	.739	.392
	Effective and Transparent Communication	.001	1	.001	.004	.952
	Feelings of Security and Commitment	.154	1	.154	.655	.420
	Marital Problem-Solving Methods	.722	1	.722	2.726	.102
	Women's Empowerment	.031	1	.031	.087	.769
	Total Score	.012	1	.012	.075	.784
Years of Marriage	Empathy and Life Simplification	.295	2	.148	.628	.536
	Maintaining Affection	.586	2	.293	.740	.479
	Effective and Transparent Communication	.197	2	.098	.498	.609
	Feelings of Security and Commitment	.568	2	.284	1.211	.302
	Marital Problem-Solving Methods	.196	2	.098	.370	.691
	Women's Empowerment	.389	2	.194	.544	.582
	Total Score	.001	2	.001	.003	.997
Age Difference between Spouses	Empathy and Life Simplification	.621	3	.207	.881	.454
	Maintaining Affection	3.387	3	1.129	2.852	.041*
	Effective and Transparent Communication	.798	3	.266	1.348	.263
	Feelings of Security and Commitment	.328	3	.109	.467	.706
	Marital Problem-Solving Methods	2.838	3	.946	3.571	.016*
	Women's Empowerment	1.223	3	.408	1.142	.336
	Total Score	.916	3	.305	1.878	.137
Error	Empathy and Life Simplification	25.614	109	.235		
	Maintaining Affection	43.148	109	.396		
	Effective and Transparent Communication	21.505	109	.197		
	Feelings of Security and Commitment	25.570	109	.235		
	Marital Problem-Solving Methods	28.873	109	.265		

	Women's Empowerment	38.914	109	.357		
	Total Score	17.722	109	.163		

Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

MANOVA results showed no significant effects of role or years of marriage on any subscale or the total beliefs about marriage score (all $p > .05$). In contrast, age difference between spouses was significant only for maintaining affection ($p = .041$) and marital problem-solving methods ($p = .016$), with all other dimensions and the overall score remaining non-significant ($p > .05$). To determine which age-difference groups differed on the maintaining affection and marital problem-solving methods dimensions, a Scheffé post hoc test was conducted. Table 8 presents the results.

Table 8 Results of Scheffé post hoc comparisons for the maintaining affection and marital problem-solving methods dimensions by age difference between Spouses.

Variable	Category	Mean	Less than 1 year	3–1years	7–4years	8years or more
Maintaining Affection	Less than 1 year	3.58	—	0.235	-0.162	0.1510
	3–1years	3.34		—	-0.397*	-0.0843
	7–4years	3.74			—	0.3132
	8years or more	3.43				—
Marital Problem-Solving Methods	Less than 1 year	4.23	—	-0.103	-0.258	0.138
	3–1years	4.33		—	-0.156	0.241
	7–4years	4.49			—	0.397*
	8years or more	4.09				—

Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

It is evident from Table 8 that:

There are statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq .05$ in the Maintaining Affection dimension among married individuals in Palestine attributable to age difference between spouses between the 1–3 years and 4–7 years groups, in favor of the 4–7 years group.

There are statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq .05$ in the marital problem-solving methods dimension among married individuals in Palestine attributable to age difference between Spouses between the 4–7 years and 8 years or more groups, in favor of the 4–7 years group.

Results Related to 2nd Hypothesis:

There are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq .05$ between the mean scores on the marital compatibility scale among married individuals in Palestine attributable to the variables: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses.

The means and standard deviations of the study sample's responses on the marital compatibility scale were calculated across role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses. Table 9 presents these statistics.

Table 9 Means and standard deviations of the study sample's responses on the Marital Compatibility Scale according to the variables: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses.

Variable	Category	Statistical	E	S	Ec	Ch	C	Total Score
Role	Husband	M	4.01	4.15	3.61	4.02	3.74	3.89
		SD	.657	.654	.886	.794	.682	.647
	Wife	M	4.02	4.04	3.66	4.24	3.88	3.95
		SD	.488	.600	.711	.636	.551	.493
Years of Marriage	5–1years	M	4.12	4.03	3.49	3.90	3.66	3.85
		SD	.526	.560	.791	.733	.537	.557
	10–6years	M	4.08	4.03	3.71	4.11	3.79	3.94
		SD	.635	.694	.884	.713	.741	.633
	More than 10 years	M	3.95	4.18	3.64	4.15	3.82	3.92
		SD	.622	.642	.832	.770	.645	.611
Age Difference between Spouses	Less than 1 year	M	4.22	4.12	3.87	4.23	3.87	4.06
		SD	.462	.413	.461	.423	.467	.314
	3–1years	M	4.00	4.25	3.67	4.10	3.80	3.94
		SD	.658	.582	.820	.843	.649	.640
	7–4years	M	4.03	4.08	3.67	4.08	3.84	3.93
		SD	.588	.712	.911	.789	.694	.643
		M	3.88	4.04	3.39	4.04	3.63	3.77

	8years or more	SD	.636	.657	.822	.730	.631	.589
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Note: E = Emotional Compatibility, S = Social Compatibility, Ec = Economic Compatibility, Ch = Compatibility with Children, C = Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility, T = Total Score.

As shown in Table 9, there are observable differences in the mean scores of the study sample on the Marital Compatibility Scale across the study's independent variables. To assess the statistical significance of these differences in the total score and its subdimensions, a multivariate analysis of variance without interaction (MANOVA without interaction) was conducted. The results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 MANOVA (without interaction) on the total score and subdimensions of the Marital Compatibility Scale according to: Role, years of marriage, and age difference between spouses.

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Role	Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	.150	1	.150	.406	.525
	Social Compatibility	.655	1	.655	1.600	.209
	Economic Compatibility	.117	1	.117	.167	.684
	Compatibility with Children	.904	1	.904	1.573	.212
	Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	.413	1	.413	.979	.325
	Total Score	.127	1	.127	.342	.560
Years of Marriage	Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	.846	2	.423	1.143	.323
	Social Compatibility	1.046	2	.523	1.278	.283
	Economic Compatibility	.650	2	.325	.465	.630
	Compatibility with Children	.690	2	.345	.601	.550
	Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	.271	2	.136	.322	.726
	Total Score	.096	2	.048	.129	.879
Age Difference between Spouses	Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	1.209	3	.403	1.088	.357
	Social Compatibility	.705	3	.235	.574	.633
	Economic Compatibility	2.593	3	.864	1.236	.300
	Compatibility with Children	.421	3	.140	.244	.865
	Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	.978	3	.326	.774	.511
	Total Score	.923	3	.308	.829	.481
Error	Personal (Emotional) Compatibility	40.353	109	.370		
	Social Compatibility	44.605	109	.409		
	Economic Compatibility	76.205	109	.699		
	Compatibility with Children	62.622	109	.575		
	Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility	45.960	109	.422		
	Total Score	40.454	109	.371		

*Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

Table 10 shows that there are no statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq .05$ level on the marital compatibility scale or any of its dimensions based on role, years of marriage, or age difference between spouses.

Results for 3rd Hypothesis:

There is no statistically significant correlation at $\alpha \leq .05$ between beliefs about marriage and marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine.

Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the beliefs about marriage Scale and the marital compatibility scale scores for married individuals in Palestine. Table 11 presents the Pearson correlation results:

Table 11 Pearson correlation coefficients between the study sample's scores on the beliefs about marriage and marital compatibility scales (N = 116).

	Marital Compatibility scales					Marital Compatibility
	PEC	SC	EC	CWC	CCC	
BM	Person's connection					
ELS	.264**	.359**	.258**	.270**	.288**	.318**
MA	.182	.054	.115	.098	.051	.124
ETC	.237*	.148	.152	.127	.200*	.207*
FSC	.130	.089	.133	.130	.202*	.160
MPSM	.163	.098	.159	.098	.181	.168
WE	.175	.178	.197*	.200*	.217*	.219*
BM	.260**	.226*	.225*	.209*	.253**	.270**

*Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level

Note. PEC = Personal (Emotional) Compatibility; SC = Social Compatibility; EC = Economic Compatibility; CWC = Compatibility with Children; CCC = Cultural and Cognitive Compatibility; ELS = Empathy and Life Simplification; MA = Maintaining Affection; ETC = Effective and Transparent Communication; FSC = Feelings of Security and Commitment; MPSM = Marital Problem-Solving Methods; WE = Women's Empowerment; BM = Beliefs about Marriage.

As shown in Table 11, there is a statistically significant positive correlation between beliefs about marriage and marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine ($r = .270$, $p \leq .01$). This indicates that higher levels of beliefs about marriage are associated with higher levels of marital compatibility

Results for 4th Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant predictive power at $\alpha \leq .05$ of beliefs about marriage in predicting marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine.

A simple linear regression analysis (Enter method) was conducted. Table 12 presents these results:

Table 12 Simple linear regression results examining the extent to which beliefs about marriage predict marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine.

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients β	t	p-value	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
		B	Std. Error						
	Constant	2.159	.587		3.678	.000			
	Beliefs about Marriage	.403	.135	.270	2.999	.003	.270a	.073	.065
"F" value for Beliefs about Marriage was 8.992, which is significant at $p < .001$.									

Statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level*

It is evident from Table 12 that there is a statistically significant effect at $\alpha \leq .05$ of beliefs about marriage in predicting marital compatibility among married individuals in Palestine. Beliefs about marriage accounted for 7.3% of the variance in marital compatibility.

The regression equation is: $\hat{y} = 2.159 + .403x_1$.

where $\hat{y}$ represents marital compatibility and x_1 represents beliefs about marriage. In other words, each one-unit increase in the beliefs about marriage score corresponds to a .403-unit increase in marital compatibility.

DISCUSSION

The study focused on learning which marriage beliefs from tradition and modern society are related to how individuals in Palestine handle their marriage. Item correlations within the beliefs about marriage scale were between .33 and .93 which demonstrated high validity and reliability, with an overall Cronbach's alpha of .92. Six words were taken out because they are not meaningful in today's culture or because their meanings are no longer clear. The scales on empathy and simplifying life (.81) along with effective communication (.85) performed well, but the values for security and commitment (.59) and women's empowerment (.63) were lower and may indicate the effects of social and cultural barriers and male dominance (Meler, 2020).

These findings align with Sadeghian et al. (2025), Mohammadi and Soleymani (2017), and Banat (2022), who emphasize the role of beliefs in shaping marital intimacy and satisfaction. The marital compatibility scale also demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = .97$), with subscales ranging from .79 to .90, confirming its effectiveness in capturing key dimensions like emotional and social compatibility. Overall, the study highlights the coexistence of traditional and modern beliefs in shaping marital adjustment, reflecting a societal transition. The validated tools provide a solid basis for future research and suggest that marital counseling programs should integrate both belief systems to better support couples in navigating contemporary marital challenges.

Discussion Related to the First Research Question

The findings related to the first research question revealed a high overall belief score about marriage among Palestinians ($M = 4.34$, 86.8%). “Feelings of Security and Commitment” ranked highest ($M = 4.70$, 94.0%), followed by “Effective Communication” and “Empathy,” while “Maintaining Affection” scored lowest ($M = 3.55$, 71.0%). This suggests that in the Palestinian context, where socio-political instability is prevalent, couples prioritize emotional security and mutual responsibility over romantic expression.

As Sadeghian et al. (2025) and Zaatut and Haj-Yahia (2016) also mention, family commitment plays a major role among these people. When affection is ranked as medium in a family, it may signal the difficulty in combining old traditions with new feelings, as mentioned by both Meler (2020) and Mohammadi and Soleymani (2017). The excellent results on “Women’s Empowerment” ($M = 4.20$, 84.0%) imply that people are more open to women having their own freedoms and power in marriage. This also agrees with Banat (2022) and Sadeghian et al. (2025), who stress that partnerships are becoming more equal. To sum up, the findings show that young Palestinians are choosing marriages that highlight emotional connection, honesty and equal treatment, mixing with their cultural traditions (Jaleel & Chandola, 2023; Saheba, 2019).

Discussion Related to the Second Research Question

When responding to the second research question, married individuals in Palestine said their marital compatibility was high ($M = 3.91$, 78.2%). Respondents scored social compatibility highest (4.12), followed by Compatibility with Children (4.09), but economic compatibility came in lowest (3.63). It mirrors the family-oriented Palestinian culture, which focuses on community and raising children. In this regard, Banat (2022) indicates that being satisfied in a marriage is closely connected to family and community harmony.

With regard to the first hypothesis, there were no strong differences between roles, marriage length or age gap in people’s beliefs about marriage, except for Maintaining Affection ($p = .041$) and Marital Problem-Solving Methods ($p = .016$), for which there was a statistical difference according to age gap. Couples with a 4–7 year age gap rated higher, according to Jaleel and Chandola (2023), as they suggested their age differences make their maturity levels more balanced.

It was clear from the data that the second hypothesis was supported, since a positive correlation ($r = .270$, $p \leq .01$) was found between marital beliefs and compatibility. According to regression analysis ($\beta = .270$, $p = .003$), belief score contributes to 7.3% of what makes people compatible. This result agrees with Ellis et al. (1989), David et al. (2009) and Mohammadi and Soleymani (2017), proving that strong, structured beliefs help people maintain healthy and fitting relationships.

Tentative Patterns Observed:

While the primary focus of this study was on specific hypotheses, a number of patterns appeared during the data analysis that may be worth exploring in future research. These observations were not part of the original research questions and were not formally tested, but they could open interesting directions for further investigation.

One such observation relates to women’s empowerment beliefs and their connection to marital compatibility. Although participants reported relatively high scores on the “Women’s Empowerment” dimension ($M = 4.20$), there may be a discrepancy between these stated beliefs and how they translate into actual behavior. It seems possible that, for some individuals, the endorsement of empowerment values might not always reflect lived relational dynamics. Future research might explore whether this gap exists in a measurable way, and whether gender plays a role in how empowerment beliefs influence marital outcomes, especially within the Palestinian cultural setting.

Another pattern that stood out involves the age difference between spouses. Couples with a 4–7 year age gap tended to score slightly higher in some belief-related dimensions. Although no statistical test was conducted on this specific variable, the data seem to hint at a potentially favorable range of age difference in this context. It could be useful for future studies to explore whether such a range is consistently associated with greater marital compatibility, and whether there’s a certain point beyond which a larger age gap might begin to affect the relationship differently. Factors such as educational level or family expectations might also interact with age difference in meaningful ways.

When examining the regression model, the data showed that marital beliefs accounted for just 7.3% of the variance in compatibility scores. This rather limited percentage suggests that other important factors may be influencing compatibility factors that were not included in the scope of this study. These might involve financial stressors, mental health conditions, external political pressures, or family interference. It might be worth considering whether beliefs, though significant, are only one piece in a more complex puzzle of marital adjustment, especially in socio-politically burdened environments.

Differences in educational levels between spouses also surfaced as a potentially relevant topic. Previous literature has noted possible tension in couples where the wife holds a higher educational degree than the husband, particularly in traditional or patriarchal societies. While this study did not examine this directly, it might be helpful for future research to investigate how educational disparities shape beliefs about marriage, role expectations, and compatibility, especially as gender norms continue to shift in the Palestinian context.

Lastly, the unique lived realities of Palestinians marked by collective adversity and instability bring forward the question of how shared external challenges influence the quality of marital relationships. Some psychological theories

propose that going through hardship together can actually strengthen emotional bonds between partners. Although this wasn't measured here, it may be interesting to explore whether couples who have experienced difficult economic or political circumstances together demonstrate different compatibility dynamics compared to those with more stable life conditions.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher investigated how having kinship ties, being committed to religion, choosing a love marriage or attaining higher education shaped the marital adjustment of 116 Palestinians. According to well-known instruments (Beliefs About Marriage Scale and Marital Compatibility Scale), there were strong relationships between emotional security, communicating openly, empathy and the couple's compatibility. Most considered trust and good communication important, even if affection related to feelings was considered less so. Beliefs were a good guide for predicting compatibility ($\beta=.270$), confirming that belief systems affect the quality of relationships. The study highlights a cultural shift in Palestine where traditional values intersect with modern ideals. It proposes that therapies are tailored to culture, teach people to care about others, stay in touch and to deal with issues regarding gender unfairness. Practically, the scales offer ways for therapy and policymakers are asked to support services for family counseling. Yet, because the study's sample is small and it is only a cross-sectional look, conclusions made from it cannot be generalized or easily tied to cause and effect. People may sometimes answer in a way that other people would find more desirable. Further studies need to pay attention to changes over time and in depth and find out how factors outside marriage such as migration and economy, affect partners' beliefs and their ability to adjust to each other.

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