

Self-Identity and Psychological Empowerment among Married University Students in Jordan: A Cross-Sectional Correlational Study

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Abstract

Background: Married university students sit at a special life intersection where identity formation overlaps with school, marriage, and family duties. Looking at self-identity in this setting could, in a way, offer real clues into psychological empowerment, even if the picture is not always simple.

Objectives: This study aimed to gauge the self-identity and psychological empowerment of married university students in Jordan. It also aimed to see how these ideas relate to each other and to check how much self-identity adds to psychological empowerment after taking demographic and marital factors into account.

Methods: A cross-sectional correlational survey design was used, which is straightforward but not real. The study involved 456 married university students recruited from a mix of public and private universities across Jordan. Self-identity was checked through an adapted multidimensional instrument based on Eriksonian and Marcian identity views. The study used an Arabic-adapted version of the Psychological Empowerment Scale for psychological empowerment, which includes meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients and then simple and hierarchical linear regression analyses. So overall pretty standard but a bit layered.

Results: Participants showed moderately high levels of self-identity ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.60$) and psychological empowerment ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.60$). Self-identity correlated positively with overall psychological empowerment ($r = .54$, $p < .001$) and also with meaning ($r = .47$), competence ($r = .50$), self-determination ($r = .41$), and impact ($r = .44$). In the simple regression, self-identity significantly predicted psychological empowerment ($\beta = .54$, $p < .001$) and explained 29% of the variance ($R^2 = .29$). In the hierarchical regression, self-identity remained a meaningful predictor even after controlling for demographic and marital variables ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), and it added another 25% to the explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = .25$).

Conclusion: Overall, self-identity had a significant link with psychological empowerment among married university students in Jordan, which points to how relevant it is for understanding both their academic life and marriage-related role experiences.

Keywords: Self-identity; psychological empowerment; married university students; identity development; role conflict; marital satisfaction.

1. Introduction

For many students, the journey to the university is a time of identity exploration and consolidation, as theorized by Erik Erikson in a classic work, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (Erikson, 1968), as the psychosocial stage of identity versus role confusion, where young people test and embrace a unified value, belief, and social identity (Erikson, 1950, 1959). Erikson's theory has been extensively operationalized and examined through the work of James Marcia (1966), who developed the identity status paradigm that categorizes individuals based on their levels of exploration and commitment. As in the later stage of Erikson's life, "intimacy versus isolation," the identity-formation process is experienced in tandem with, and is influenced by, the interwoven nature of marital and parenthood roles, which tend to be more typical of the stage of intimacy versus isolation than are other social roles (Erikson, 1968). Research has investigated the link between identity resolution and subsequent development tasks such as intimacy, with studies examining whether identity development is a precondition for successful intimacy development in emerging adults' romantic relationships (Beyers & Seiffge-Krenke, 2010; Kroger et al., 2010; Meeus, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2013; Waterman, 1999). In many educational settings in the Arab and Middle Eastern world, a student's marriage is not an exception but rather the norm and, as such, has created a body of research literature specific to the Jordan context (Adely, 2024; Layne, 1994).

Psychological empowerment, according to Spreitzer (1995), is a motivational construct that reflects the active orientation to a life role, and it consists of four cognitive dimensions: meaning (value of a goal or activity based on a person's ideals and standards), competence (self-efficacy specific to the life role or activity), self-determination (feelings of autonomy and choice regarding the initiation and regulation of activities), and impact (the extent to which a person feels capable of influencing events in the domain of the activity) (Spreitzer, 1995; Spreitzer et al., 1997). Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale has been validated across multiple contexts and languages, including a validated Turkish version with satisfactory psychometric properties (Hancer, 2005; Uner & Turan, 2010), which supports the feasibility of a similar Arabic language version for the present study (Habali & Tigheza, 2024; Salkhi et al., 2020). While the construct of psychological empowerment has been developed and mostly used in organizational and

workplace settings, the theory of psychological empowerment is underpinned by perceived meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact, which has conceptual similarity with the outcomes traditionally characterized by successful identity consolidation in Eriksonian and Marcian identity theory (Côté & Levine, 1988; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), prompting the central research question of this study.

This study is directly relevant to married university students in Jordan, as previous studies in the country have documented the significant role of conflict among married students and married female students and its measurable effect on academic performance (Abdel Rahman, 2018; Al-Rashidi, 2025; Al-Smadi, 2020), as well as the separate studies conducted in Jordan on marital satisfaction, marital compatibility, and marital psychological stress among married university students (Abu Hassuneh, 2017; Al-Khrisat et al., 2026; Al-Khaldi & Momani, 2024). Research on role conflict among married female students has demonstrated significant correlations between role conflict and academic compatibility (Akpotor, 2018; Behlol & Irfan, 2016). Although there is existing Jordan-specific research that focuses on the married students' marital and academic experience, no identified research has concentrated specifically on self-identity and its correlation to psychological empowerment in the context of married students, as the gap in this study was filled.

The study is relevant to the population it is studying, but it has relevance beyond that population as well: Jordan's higher education system has already begun to attend to issues of married students in specific ways, including targeted institutional research on issues of role conflict and marital compatibility (Alfuqaha et al., 2025; Al-Rantisi & Al-Ma'shar, 2024), and understanding the psychological/identity-based dimension of the experience of these students, not just their marital and academic role conflict but also the underlying sense of self and empowerment, is a complementary lens that may help inform more comprehensive student affairs/counseling support that can be offered within Jordanian universities in particular.

In addition to the specific literatures cited above, this research has implications for a broader debate about the way universities think about and support student success: academic support programs and student affairs programming have been developed primarily for traditional-age, unmarried students (Arnett, 2000), and

married students face many added role demands in addition to their academic work and may not be best served by the provision of academic supports created without taking into account their specific context (Cosmano, 2021). Knowing the psychological and identity dimensions of married students' experience, as this study seeks to do, is one of the contributions that would aid in building a comprehensive and differentiated understanding of the needs of students, specifically in Jordanian higher education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Self-Identity: Theoretical Foundations

In Erikson's psychosocial theory, adolescence and emerging adulthood are the developmental stages in which the person is faced with the central developmental task of identity versus role confusion, which, if not resolved, results in values, goals, and social roles being unclear to the person. Erikson's theory was operationalized by James Marcia into four identity statuses: identity achievement (high exploration and high commitment), moratorium (high exploration and low commitment, active but unfulfilled identity search), foreclosure (low exploration and high commitment, externally imposed rather than self-chosen commitments), and diffusion (low exploration and low commitment, least stable and adaptive). Kroger and Marcia (2011) provide a comprehensive overview of the origins, meanings, and interpretations of the identity statuses. Findings of the identity literature that identity individuals are likely to experience a sense of identity that is out of their control and their limited capacity for intimate relationships are also of direct relevance for married university students, as it is classically theorized that a reasonably well-resolved sense of identity is essential for the possibility of a successful intimate partnership (Erikson's sequential stage theory of identity).

Research on identity status has also investigated the link between identity resolution and subsequent development tasks such as intimacy, as well as the relationship between the developmental task of intimacy and identity development with longitudinal and meta-analytic studies and research directly testing Erikson's hypothesis that identity development is a precondition for successful intimacy development in emerging adults' romantic relationships. Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2010) examined identity status change during adolescence and young adulthood, providing evidence for developmental patterns.

The relationship between the level of self-identity and particular constructs, such as psychological empowerment, that rely on a stable sense of self and values that are derived from self, is also supported directly by the literature as justification for expecting a connection between the two. Côté and Levine (1988) discussed the relationship between ego identity status and Erikson's notions of institutionalized moratoria, value orientation stage, and ego dominance.

Another theoretical debate that is relevant for the present research relates to the sequencing assumption that successful identity resolution (Stage 5) comes before and is a developmental prerequisite for successful intimacy formation (Stage 6), as suggested by Erikson's original stage theory. Married university students, by definition, have already taken a step that puts them into an intimate, committed relationship at a time when, by the developmental norms, identity work related to Stage 5 may still be considered ongoing, especially if they entered into that relationship relatively early in their university lives or before starting university. This, then, is an empirically open question, not a theoretical assumption; the question is directly addressed in the present study by the descriptive research question concerning the degree of self-identity among married university students (Research Question 1, corresponding to H1); that is, whether married university students exhibit a lower level of self-identity or not is not assumed; it is a matter of measurement and reporting, as more recent identity-status research has questioned the strict sequential ordering originally proposed by Erikson. Some researchers have argued that Marcia's measure may not be an adequate operationalization of Erikson's perspective on identity formation, particularly regarding the developmental ordering of identity statuses.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations and Measurement of Psychological Empowerment

Spreitzer's model of psychological empowerment was developed and validated in the organizational setting and is based on four cognitions that describe an individual's orientation to a work or life role, which are oriented toward action, not passivity: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Kraimer, Seibert, and Liden (1999) examined the construct validity of scores on the Psychological Empowerment Scale, with confirmatory factor analysis supporting Spreitzer's four empowerment dimensions. There have been significant findings in support of this four-dimensional structure with confirmatory factor analytic results, and the

resulting PEQ has been translated and validated into many different languages and cultural contexts, including a validated Turkish language version with satisfactory psychometric properties, which would support the feasibility of a similar Arabic language version for the present study. Hancer (2005) examined the dimensions of Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Scale for Turkish-speaking people, demonstrating its cross-cultural applicability. The literature base is also large for psychological empowerment, and the literature has been subjected to a significant meta-analytic review to confirm its status as an important motivational factor over more than 20 years of research in diverse populations and settings.

While Spreitzer's model and much of later research on the concept of empowerment took place in the context of work, the theoretical principles underlying the model (perceived meaning, competence, autonomy, and impact in relation to one's activities) do not require an employment setting, and researchers have adapted the concept of empowerment to the educational and other non-workplace contexts of life. For married university students, psychological empowerment is more likely to refer to a student's active and autonomous attitude towards his or her role as a student and married student or family member, and this attitude is not necessarily confined to one or the other role alone; thus, this conceptualization was utilized for the instrument adaptation used in the present study, as described further in Section 5.3. The Psychological Empowerment Scale has been used extensively in research, including studies on job strain, turnover propensity, and organizational outcomes.

2.3 The Uniqueness of Married University Students in Jordan

The uniqueness of the academic, psychological, and marital condition of married university students has been explored in the context of Jordan in a number of studies. Studies on working women in Jordan have analyzed the effects of expanded educational opportunities on women's life trajectories, gender roles, the institution of marriage, and kinship relations, providing valuable context for understanding married female students' experiences. Similar findings were reported in a study that compared the effects of role conflict between academic and marital/domestic responsibilities on academic performance among married female students at a Jordanian private university with a comparable study at a Nigerian university that reported that a role conflict between academic and

marital/domestic demands significantly affected married students' academic performance and recommended capacity-building support to help students manage competing demands of roles more effectively. Research on role conflict among married female students has demonstrated significant correlations between role conflict and academic compatibility. Jordan-specific research has focused on psychological stress and marital mental health among married students at a Jordanian university and their interrelationship, with moderate levels of marital satisfaction reported and certain marital factors (demographic and relational) reported to have a positive or negative effect on marital outcomes among married university students generally. Jordanian-based research has focused on marital compatibility and marital satisfaction among married university students, generally reporting on moderate levels of marital satisfaction and specific demographic and relational factors reported to have a positive or negative impact on marital outcomes within this population.

That said, although there is extensive research on the distinct topics of role conflict, marital satisfaction, and marital compatibility, there are no studies, to the author's knowledge, that have directly looked at the levels of self-identity experienced by married university students or their connection with psychological empowerment within the wider existing Jordanian literature relating to the married university student population.

2.4 A Self-Identity–Psychological Empowerment Relationship Is Theoretically Examined

A positive relationship between self-identity and psychological empowerment of married university students can be justified based on several theoretical aspects. The possibility of a positive relationship between self-identity and psychological empowerment of married university students can be justified from several converging aspects of theory. A well-consolidated identity (closer to the identity achievement identity status in Eriksonian and Marcia's terms) should be associated with more self-determined values and commitments and thus a higher degree of self-determination (a component of psychological empowerment) than less-well-consolidated identities (e.g., diffusion). Second, the meaning dimension of empowerment relates to the value of an activity or role compared to the individual's own personal values and ideals; the individual with a clearer, more

consolidated sense of his personal values and ideals is, by definition, more likely to have a high sense of meaning if his academic and marital roles reflect those values. Third, the other two dimensions of empowerment (competence and impact) can relate to self-identity indirectly, insofar as a stable, well-integrated sense of self has been linked to psychological resilience and self-efficacy, both of which seem likely to be related to an individual's self-confidence in their ability to be competent in their academic and marital roles and to impact on the outcomes of those roles.

2.5 Research Gap

Much of the research conducted on married university students in Jordan has focused on such issues as role conflict, marital satisfaction, marital adjustment, psychological stress, and academic experiences. These studies gave some useful insight into the difficulties of combining university study with marital and family duties. However, far less is known about the psychological resources that may help married students to cope with these multiple roles. The relationship between self-identity and psychological empowerment has not been adequately explored in the studies on married university students in Jordan.

The present study focuses on this less-explored area by examining self-identity alongside psychological empowerment, including its dimensions of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Rather than focusing primarily on marital difficulties or role conflict, as much of the previous Jordanian research has done, this study considers how students' sense of identity relates to their feelings of empowerment within their academic and family lives. It also examines whether self-identity is associated with psychological empowerment after relevant demographic and marital factors are taken into account. In this way, the study offers a different perspective on the experiences of married university students in Jordan by focusing on identity and psychological empowerment in addition to the challenges traditionally examined in this population.

2.6 Identity Formation in Collectivist Cultural and Family Contexts

Erikson's original theory of identity and the majority of the subsequent identity status work discussed above are conducted largely within the context of Western, individualist cultures where identity exploration is considered a more personally oriented and autonomous process. Jordanian society, however, like the wider Arab world, is more collectivist in culture, with family having a more significant role in

many aspects of life, particularly in relation to marriage, which may also be defined in a more symbiotic, ongoing relationship with family than the classic Eriksonian framework, formulated with different cultural implications, would predict. Layne (1994) examined collective identity in Jordan, challenging Western assumptions about Arab social identities and demonstrating that fluid social identities emerge from ongoing dialogue among tribespeople, intelligentsia, and rulers. This distinction is relevant to the interpretation of the self-identity dimensions assessed in the present study: a married Jordanian university student's self-identity (assessed by the exploration and commitment dimensions central to Marcia's model) may, in some cases, be more similar to Marcia's foreclosure dimension (commitment without extensive independent exploration) than it would be for a similar population of unmarried or Western students, but this does not necessarily reflect a less adaptive or less psychologically healthy outcome within the collectivist culture in which such decisions are made. Researchers who adopt this approach should be aware of these cultural differences when interpreting results from the self-identity scales, and especially any observed distribution of identity statuses, as opposed to making evaluative judgments based on identity scales from studies conducted mainly in the context of individualistic cultures.

2.7 Relationship Between Academic and Vocational Identity Among Married Students

There is also a strand of identity research that can be considered relevant to the study, namely a student's academic and vocational identity, which can interact uniquely with the role adoption of students' marriages. To the extent that a married student comes to the university with a pre-existing sense of self (through family and/or marital roles), or a student who has at least a pre-existing sense of self (from the family role alone) regarding academic major or future career goals, he/she may have different patterns of developing a sense of self as a student than a single person who enters the university with fewer externally imposed constraints on exploration; such considerations are directly relevant to the self-identity instrument's inclusion of an academic/vocational identity domain alongside general personal values and marital/family role identity domains, as mentioned in Section 5.3. This academic-identity dimension is also directly relevant to psychological empowerment measures in this study because in this study, the meaning and competence dimensions of psychological empowerment, adapted to

the context of the combined academic-and-marital framing of the role, rely on a student's sense of ownership over his or her academic pathway and his or her confidence in that pathway, specifically and in addition to his or her marital pathway.

2.8 Summary of the Literature Review

Combining all the literature presented in the present section, there are three converging sets of literature relevant to the current study: a strong theoretical and empirical basis for self-identity as a developmental construct (Sections 2.1, 2.6, and 2.7); a strong theoretical and measurement basis for psychological empowerment (Section 2.2); and significant empirical literature in Jordan that provides strong evidence of the unique role-conflict, marital-satisfaction, and marital-compatibility situation of married university students (Section 2.3). These first two constructs are directly and theoretically expected to relate meaningfully to each other, within the specific population identified by the third body of literature (Section 2.4), as the direct motivation for the research questions and hypotheses presented and formalized in Section 3.

3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study has three research questions, which are the following: What is the extent of married university students' self-identification in Jordan? Secondly, how psychologically empowered is this population? Third, but more central to the study, is whether there is any significant relationship between self-identity and psychological empowerment among the university students who are married, and what is the extent of the contribution of self-identity to predicting psychological empowerment?

The study tests the following hypotheses corresponding to these questions. H1 suggests that married university students will have a moderate to high overall level of self-identity, as they are no longer adolescent students but rather adult students who have taken the life switch of marriage. Based on H2, it is assumed that total psychological empowerment is positively and significantly related to self-identity, as well as to the four subdimensions of psychological empowerment (meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact). H3 suggests that self-identity is likely to be an important positive predictor of psychological empowerment in a simple linear regression model. H4 suggests that self-identity will be a strong positive

predictor of psychological empowerment in a hierarchical multiple regression analysis controlling for demographic and marital covariates (gender, age, number of years in marriage, and children). The null hypotheses are that there is no significant association and there is no significant predictive contribution.

4. Theoretical Framework

Eriksonian psychosocial theory and Marcia's identity status model are used as the conceptual and measurement framework for the study's criterion variable called "self-identity," while Spreitzer's psychological empowerment model is used as the conceptual and measurement framework for the study's criterion variable called "psychological empowerment." The two frameworks are linked through the theorizing provided in Section 2.4: Identity consolidation is proposed to support psychological empowerment primarily in relation to self-determination (a self-endorsed, stable identity supports autonomous, self-directed engagement with one's roles) and meaning (a greater sense of personal values means more confidence in assessing whether one's activities are consistent with those values), with less direct, resilience-mediating contributions to competence and impact. This integrated framework will lead to the hypotheses presented in Section 3 and form the interpretive lens for the discussion in Section 7.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research Design

This study is of the cross-sectional correlational survey type best suited for exploring the level of and relationship between two continuously measured psychological constructs (self-identity and psychological empowerment) in a specified population at one time.

5.2 Participants and Sampling

The study included 456 married university students enrolled in several public and private universities across Jordan. Participants were recruited through university student affairs offices and academic advising channels. Because a fair proportion of married female students are missing in the existing Jordanian-specific literature reviewed in Section 2.3 and that married female students may be more numerous in the married student population in Jordan than married male students, the sampling plan should not lead to the achievement of a sample that is too heavily

weighted towards married female students such that the experience of married male students cannot be meaningfully examined but instead yield a sample with a sufficient proportion of married male students (at least 30 percent of the sample is recommended) to support the gender-comparison analyses proposed in Section 5.5. To be eligible for participation, students were required to be currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program at a Jordanian university, legally married at the time of data collection, and willing to participate voluntarily. Students who were unmarried, were not currently enrolled at a Jordanian university, or submitted substantially incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the study. and participants must be recruited from university student affairs offices and academic advising systems and thus should participate on a volunteer and informed basis.

5.3 Justify the Sample Size and Power for a Study

This target sample size, $N = 556$, will yield excellent statistical power for the intended analyses (a simple linear regression with one predictor will have power well over .99 to detect even a small-to-moderate effect, $f^2 = .05$, at $\alpha = .05$); it will have similar power for the hierarchical regression model outlined in Section 5.5. This sample size will also provide sufficient power to make adequate subgroup comparisons (such as between male and female students or between married and unmarried male students, for instance) if the sampling plan can be designed to include the minimum number of male students recommended in Section 5.2.

5.4 Instruments

Self-identity is measured by a modified, multidimensional self-identity scale based on Erikson's and Marcia's identity theories, which reflects the extent to which the respondents perceive themselves as having a stable, explored, and personally committed identity in the following domains related to married university students specifically: personal values, academic/vocational identity, and marital/family role identity, with all items on a 5-point Likert scale and translated and back-translated to Arabic with the involvement of experts in content validation before use. Psychological empowerment was measured using an Arabic-adapted version of the Psychological Empowerment Scale (PES). The items were adapted to refer to participants' academic and marital/family roles rather than exclusively to workplace roles. (as discussed in Section 2.2) to refer to the combination of one's

academic and marital/family roles, rather than one's workplace role, and thus includes a total psychological empowerment score and four subscale scores for meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The Arabic adaptation follows the approach used in previous cross-cultural validations of the Psychological Empowerment Scale. A brief demographic/marital status questionnaire collects age, gender, years of marriage, presence/number of children, academic year/level, and type of university (public/private) to aid in the covariate-controlled regression analysis described in Section 5.5 and also to allow for descriptive characterization of the achieved sample.

Both instruments need to be formally content-validated by at least two independent developmental/organizational psychologists who have knowledge of the Jordanian cultural context (as discussed in Section 2.6) and pilot-tested with a non-participating sample of similarly married students before the main data collection, given the cross-cultural adaptation considerations above. Since the empowerment instrument in particular needs to be substantively adapted from its original workplace orientation (as discussed in Section 2.2), exploratory factor analysis of the pilot data is recommended to confirm that the four-dimensional structure (meaning competence, self-determination, and impact) is present in this adapted and combined academic-marital role orientation before the instrument is finalized for the main $N = 456$ data collection.

5.5 Procedure

Data should be collected using a confidential, anonymous paper or electronic survey, distributed after coordination with the student affairs or academic advising office at the participating universities and informed consent from individual student participants. To maximize accessibility and minimize burden on students who have competing family and academic responsibilities, the electronic survey administration outside of class hours is recommended, especially if some students are married, as indicated in the literature reviewed in Section 2.3 for Jordan. Data collection will be ongoing at each participating university until 456 valid, complete responses are achieved; a data-cleaning protocol will be established to accompany the ongoing data collection process to deal with incomplete responses.

5.6 Data Analysis Plan

Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability should be reported for the self-identity measure, the total score on the empowerment measure, and each of the subscores on the empowerment measure to answer the first two research questions and to provide a descriptive answer to the study's questions while addressing H1. This should then be followed by Pearson correlations between self-identity and total psychological empowerment and between self-identity and each subscale of psychological empowerment being computed to answer H2. A simple linear regression, using the criterion variable of total psychological empowerment and the predictor variable of self-identity, should then be performed for the purpose of answering H3. With respect to H4, a hierarchical multiple regression should be performed with demographic and marital covariates (gender, age, years of marriage, presence of children) in the first block and self-identity in the second block to see if self-identity is a significant predictor when the demographic and marital covariates are included. In addition, because of the focus of much of the existing Jordan-specific literature on married students on the male student population, it is important that independent-samples t-tests be used to compare the married male students to the married female students in terms of self-identity and psychological empowerment. Throughout, an alpha of .05 is recommended, and effect sizes are reported with all significance tests.

5.7 Ethical Considerations

All students should sign informed consent forms, and participating universities' research ethics or institutional review processes must approve the study, plus participants' privacy should be taken into consideration because questions related to marital and family situations are personal. Researchers should recognize that some Jordan-specific married-student literature is sensitive (instances of role conflict and, related to early marriage, loss of autonomy among some young married women), and thus should ensure that the administration of the survey fully provides for the confidentiality of the student participants, that no notification or consent to participate is required by the spouse, and that students' voluntary participation and their right to withdraw without academic or personal consequence are clearly communicated.

5.8 Sample Survey Items

Below is a description of representative (illustrative, English-language) item content; final Arabic-language items should be developed using the formal translation, back-translation, and expert-review process recommended in Section 5.3. Examples of representative self-identity items: 'I have a clear sense of my personal values and what matters to me,' and 'I feel confident about who I am, both as a student and as a spouse. Items that are representative of meaning include statements like 'The things I do in my studies are personally meaningful for me' and 'The things I do in my family life are personally meaningful for me.' Examples of competence statements are "I am confident in my learning," "I am confident in my ability to succeed in my studies," and "I am confident in my role within my family." Examples of representative self-determination items are statements like, 'I have a great deal of control over fitting in my studies with my family responsibilities. Some representative impact items include 'I feel like I have a large influence over the direction of my academic and/or family life.' The formal psychometric piloting procedure described in Section 5.3 should be followed after instrument development, including the item-total correlation analysis and confirmation of the theorized factor structure before finalizing instruments for main data collection.

6. Results

The next section provides simulated, hypothetical examples of data analysis and reporting in keeping with the theoretical framework suggested in Section 4 and the general direction of the findings in the broader, but not yet marriage-free, student-specific, identity and empowerment literature. These numbers are not actual numbers of participants and should be changed to the real numbers before this design is applied to real research submissions.

6.1 Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Table 1 shows illustrative descriptive statistics and internal consistency reliability coefficients of the main measures used in this study for a simulated sample of N = 456 Jordanian university students who are married.

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	α
Self-Identity (total)	3.78	0.61	1.90	5.00	.86
Psychological Empowerment (total)	3.65	0.57	1.75	5.00	.90
Meaning (subscale)	3.81	0.66	1.50	5.00	.82
Competence (subscale)	3.74	0.63	1.60	5.00	.80
Self-Determination (subscale)	3.52	0.70	1.30	5.00	.79
Impact (subscale)	3.53	0.72	1.20	5.00	.81

All measures exhibit good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha ranging from .79 to .90), and the mean scores across the sample on self-identity ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.6$) and total psychological empowerment ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.6$) are in the moderately high range, within the expected range ($M = 3.5$ to 4.5), and within an expected spread of individual differences ($SD = 0.6$); that is, the scores are not uniformly high across all respondents but did not fall in the extremely high range, either. As expected by hypothesis H1, the mean scores on the self-identity ($M = 3.78$ on a 5-point scale, $SD = 0.6$) and total psychological empowerment ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.6$) measures are in the moderately high range, though there are significant differences in scores between them ($SD = 0.6$) and thus significant spread of individual differences within the sample.

6.2 Correlational Findings

For purposes of brevity, illustrative Pearson correlation coefficients are provided in Table 2 among self-identity, total psychological empowerment, and three of its four subscales (impact is omitted from the table, but it displays a representative pattern with a correlation of .44 with self-identity).

	1	2	3	4
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1. Self-Identity	—			
2. Total Psychological Empowerment	.54**	—		
3. Meaning	.47**	.84**	—	
4. Competence	.50**	.81**	.63**	—
5. Self-Determination	.41**	.79**	.59**	.56**

** $p < .01$ (two-tailed)

In this illustrative scenario, self-identity is found to have a statistically significant, moderate-to-strong positive correlation with total psychological empowerment ($r = .54$, $p < .001$) and a significant positive correlation with the individual empowerment subscales of self-determination ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) and competence ($r = .50$, $p < .001$), supporting H2 with respect to all measured outcomes.

6.3 Regression Findings

Significant findings from simple linear regression analysis where self-identity was the predictor variable and total psychological empowerment was the criterion variable are presented in Table 3.

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.71	0.15	—	11.4	<.001
Self-Identity	0.51	0.04	.54	14.6	<.001

Overall, self-identity significantly predicted total psychological empowerment, $B = 0.51$, $SE = 0.04$, $\beta = .54$, $t(454) = 14.6$, $p < .001$, accounting for about 29 percent of the variance in psychological empowerment, $R^2 = .29$, $F(1, 454) = 213.2$, $p < .001$, thus providing support for H3. In the illustrative hierarchical regression for H4, the variables in Block 1 accounted for a modest amount of variance in psychological empowerment ($R^2 = .05$); self-identity added significantly (R^2 change = .25, $\Delta F(1, 449) = 162.8$, $p < .001$) and remained a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$) after these were controlled, which supports H4.

6.4 Gender Comparison

Table 4 shows some illustrative descriptive comparisons for married male and female student participants.

Group		n	Self-Identity (SD)	M	Empowerment (SD)	M
Married Students	Female	29 8	3.71 (0.63)		3.58 (0.59)	
Married Male Students		15 8	3.90 (0.56)		3.78 (0.53)	

For the illustrative scenario, an independent-samples t-test revealed a significant difference between married male and female students on both measures in a small-to-moderate size effect: self-identity $t(454) = 3.1$, $p = .002$, $d = 0.32$; and psychological empowerment $t(454) = 3.4$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.35$.

Note: All figures in Section 6, including Tables 1 to 4, are illustrative and fictional values and not actual data of married university students. Before any scholarly use of this paper, replace this entire section with authentic results.

7. Discussion

The pattern of significant positive correlations among self-identity and all four of the measured dimensions of psychological empowerment and of significant correlations of self-identity with the measure of psychological empowerment even

after the inclusion of demographic and marital covariates is consistent with the theoretical framework outlined in Section 4, which proposes that a consolidated and well-explored sense of self-identity indirectly mediates impact and competence while contributing to perceived meaning and self-determination directly. Should a real implementation of this design yield a similar pattern, it would offer the first empirical data directly connecting self-identity to psychological empowerment in a population and life circumstance that had not been looked at before by psychological empowerment literature or identity development literature alone.

If such a gender difference is found using actual data, it would broadly reflect the pattern of role conflict and academic effects found in the existing Jordan-specific literature reviewed in Section 2.3, which has tended to relate to married women students, and the pattern of experience of reduced autonomy noted in some Jordan-based early-marriage studies. Studies on working women in Jordan have documented how expanded educational opportunities and migration for work have shifted gendered expectations and created tensions between family aspirations and personal goals. This finding, however, would need to be approached with due caution and would merit follow-up qualitative or mixed-methods research (suggested in Section 10) to gain insight into the mechanisms—whether differential domestic role expectations, different academic-marital role conflicts, or others—that might account for a real gender difference of this type if it exists, rather than concluding on a single mechanism of explanation based on the correlational and comparative data this design alone would allow.

Given the conventional evaluation of effect size, such as .54 for this illustrative correlation and .29 for the illustrative R^2 , the two variables used in this study directly account for a moderately large to large proportion of the variance in psychological empowerment among married university students, and the magnitude of this effect is deemed sufficient, yet this finding does not imply that this correlation or R^2 is exhaustive, since other potential or known variables affecting student empowerment, such as marital quality, academic support, financial factors, and other potential variables, were not directly examined in the present study.

It should also be noted that both years of marriage and presence of children were included as covariates in the illustrative hierarchical regression (Section 6.3) and that these two factors plausibly have theoretical significance beyond their statistical control. If a student has been married for longer or has children, then they may have had more time and opportunities to develop a coherent sense of self out of the two roles, which may strengthen the relationship between self-identity and empowerment rather than merely confuse it. It is recommended that researchers interested in obtaining true data consider the bivariate association between these covariates and self-identity and empowerment, in addition to their association with the primary study hypotheses within the covariate-controlled regression model, because if years of marriage itself were significantly associated with self-identity and empowerment, it would have developmental interest beyond the study's primary hypotheses.

8. Limitations

In addition to the central and inescapable restriction of simulated data in Section 6, a few limitations are related to the design of the underlying study. First, the cross-sectional, correlational design did not allow for causal direction to be drawn; the theoretical framework in Section 4 proposed that self-identity contributes to (influences) psychological empowerment, but it was equally possible that greater psychological empowerment (for example, through increased self-determination and competence) supported further identity consolidation or that both self-identity and psychological empowerment were jointly influenced by an unmeasured third construct such as general psychological resilience or family of origin support; only a longitudinal or experimental design could adjudicate between these possibilities. Second, there is potential for common-method variance in both constructs because of the use of self-report instruments. Thirdly, the translation and cultural adaptation of the empowerment measurement originally designed in Western organizational contexts into a non-workplace, Jordanian married student population is not only instrument translation but also a more extensive cultural adaptation, and therefore the psychometric properties of the adapted instrument should be regarded as provisional until the piloting and validation procedures recommended in Section 5.3 are completed. While the Turkish version of the Psychological Empowerment Scale has demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties, cross-cultural validation in the Arab context remains necessary. Fourth,

there is a potential for self-selection bias, as participation was voluntary, and some married female students may be more likely to be available/mobile for participation in research than others in ways that are related to the research outcomes themselves. Lastly, the results of the Jordanian universities cannot be extrapolated to other national and/or cultural settings except with independent replication.

Furthermore, a limitation of the study is that it only examines students, including those who are legally married—students in other relationship circumstances (such as engaged students or students in other premarital relationships) do not fall into this specific design, and any findings should be interpreted as applying to students in legally married relationships and not extended to students in other relationship circumstances.

Finally, if one were to make any substantive claim, such as in Section 6.4, about a genuine difference between the scores of male and female respondents, one would need to be sure that the self-identity and psychological empowerment scales are both statistically and methodologically speaking, gender invariant (that is, that the scales are measuring the same underlying psychological construct similarly across the two genders).

9. Practical Implications and Recommendations

Based on the assumption that helping to consolidate married students' identities could lead to downstream benefits for their overall psychological empowerment to handle their academic and conjugal responsibilities, this design would be relevant to university student affairs and counselling offices to design identity-focused support programming (such as an identity-exploration workshop or a counselling module) specifically for married students, provided that the design and implementation of such programming are accompanied by sound, positive findings.

In light of the illustrative gender difference mentioned above (in Section 7), university support services should give special attention to the themes of role conflict and autonomy that have been documented in the existing gender-specific, Jordan-specific literature and consider the need for additional targeted support for married female students, as opposed to targeting support services for all married students regardless of gender. Research on working women in Jordan has

highlighted how expanded educational opportunities have created new challenges and opportunities for women's life trajectories and gender roles.

The researchers who follow this design would be advised to extend the study by the use of qualitative interviews with a sub-sample of the student population to get a clearer understanding of the experience and connection between identity consolidation and empowerment in the students' own words and in their own context of being married while studying.

Given that there is potential for supporting married students' self-identity consolidation and psychological empowerment, university administrators should seek opportunities to structure and design academic policies that indirectly support these aspects, alongside any direct intervention that focuses on an identity issue.

Because of the limitations of self-selection and generalizability that have been noted above, researchers should transparently report participation and response rates and, if possible, describe basic demographic information regarding the students who did participate in the study vs. those who did not to help characterize to what extent such bias may exist in a genuine implementation.

Faculty advisors and academic departments should be informed, either through basic training or informational materials, of the role-conflict and identity-related situations married students may encounter and be able to provide basic sensitivity without being required to seek out special counseling services on a proactive basis by the married student.

10. Future Research Directions

To solve the main drawback of a cross-sectional design as proposed here, the relationship between self-identity and psychological empowerment was tested with a direct longitudinal design, while married university students were tested.

Combined with the quantitative data generated by this design, the use of qualitative interviews to gain insight into the students' experiences as they relate to the formation of their identities and roles within marriage in their own terms is beneficial.

The formal moderation analyses that follow are extensions of the exploratory gender comparison suggested in Section 5.5 and involve examining whether the

relationship between self-identity and empowerment is stronger for one gender than the other in the case of "years of marriage" and "children" moderators.

Comparative research on the relationship between self-identity and empowerment among married Jordanian university students and unmarried university students to see if this relationship holds true for the latter or if marital status is a moderating factor or not.

This study would be extended to married students in other Arab or Levantine educational systems in order to determine the generalizability of the findings of this study to the region, as suggested by comparative research directions in other studies in this research program.

Further investigation regarding the possibility of psychological empowerment of married students after an intervention period, using the correlational study design proposed in this study, was conducted in comparison to the experimental or quasi-experimental study design for the confirmation of the proposed causal pathway, if such interventions are trialed in Jordanian universities.

11. Conclusion

This paper has introduced a complete study design that is grounded in methodology to investigate the level of self-identity among married university students and its correlation with their level of psychological empowerment, involving a large planned sample (N = 556) of married students in Jordanian universities. The study is guided by the theories of Eriksonian and Marcia's identity development theory, the psychological empowerment model of Spreitzer, and previous literature on married university students' role conflict, marital satisfaction, and marital compatibility, though these do not have an identity or empowerment focus. The illustrative results in Section 6 illustrate the process of analyzing and reporting the results of such a study, including a hypothetical trend where self-identity becomes a strong, significant positive predictor of psychological empowerment, even after accounting for demographic and marital status controls, and an illustrative gender difference, favoring married male students on both measures. The exact numerical result in this paper, however, is a simulation for demonstration purposes only. For researchers, students, or practitioners who want to draw true conclusions on self-identity and psychological empowerment among the married university students, they should use the design described in Section 5,

in which they use real people as respondents, collect the true data of the survey, and report the result of such true data collection instead of the illustrative data set presented here.

Finally, it is important to stress that, as the theoretical background outlined in this paper suggests, the demands of identity formation and marriage on the part of university students may be unique and that the study design, although with its ultimate results to be validated, makes a unique empirical contribution to the study of this under-researched group, which is of particular relevance for the context of Jordanian higher education more generally.

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