

Gender role attitudes among Nigerian students: Traditional or Egalitarian?

Victoria Ifechukwu (1431580), Supervisor: Shakeel Siddiqui

Abstract

Expanding research acknowledged that men and women are shaped by society in that their perceptions of whom they are and how they behave is not solely because of an individual. This study looks at how society influences the process of our gender identity and how it dictates the role we are expected to play according to our gender. This research was conducted for the purpose of developing a scaling tool to determine the attitudes of Nigerian college students towards gender roles. College student's attitudes should first be determined in order to change this traditional view to gender and to achieve a more egalitarian view. Quasi-experimental design was used for this study; the research sample was comprised of one college's students chosen using size-proportional stratified random sampling method. A total of 100 students (44 males and 56 females) were included in the sample. Data collected was via self-administered questionnaires. The Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) contains eight items (Traditional gender roles) which was used to gather results filled in by the participants. Statistical significant differences were determined among all survey items.

Introduction

This thesis is investigating the attitudes towards traditional gender roles among Nigerian men and women students in a college in Ireland. This traditional gender roles for women includes tasks such as solely being responsible for rearing the kids, being a 'stay at home mum', overseeing the smooth running of the house and leaving the head of the house (A man) to financial matters and work outside the home. Many of the research that has been carried out on gender roles focuses on the formation of gender identity and gender role and the differences between how men and women see themselves in the family.

Method

This study was a quantitative research design that used questionnaires to collect data with a quasi-experimental approach in which the independent variables were the sex of participants i.e. male and female and the dependent variables were attitudes towards gender roles. This survey research is appropriate for this survey as it is associated with asking questions of 'What?' and not 'Why?' in describing a large population such as 100 college students. Furthermore, this design will suit the research as it is about collecting general findings. The quantitative approach had to be used as it was related to the hypothesis that the study was aiming for.

A total of 100 participants took part in this study, 60 were females and 40 were males. Participants were college students aged 18-55 from different faculties and were randomly chosen from the college premises. The questionnaire was handed out in classes, library and within the college were Nigerian students were found. The purpose of the research as well as ethical issues including participants rights were relayed to each participant before they answered questions based on gender roles that took five minutes to complete.

All participants completed a questionnaire containing their demographic and the Development and Psychometric properties Gender roles Attitude Scale (Frize et al, 2003; Khalid 2004; Tougas 1995; Uji et al. 2006). Studies of gender role in several countries were used to develop this scale and experts from different disciplines contributed to the analyses of the scale and the final instrument used for it's validity and reliability (Zeyneloglu, 2011). The first page of the survey consists of 6 items. These items provide information on several demographic variables such as gender (male or female), age, and marital status, number of children and hours of work. The second page contained an 8-item scale that was developed to determine university students' attitudes towards gender roles in a 5-point Likert type scale.

Results

The result show that there is a significant difference between the mean scores for men and mean scores for women. This means that mean scores for women is significantly higher than that of men. T-test, therefore confirms that women hold more egalitarian gender role views than men. The result of the t-test also showed that there was no significant difference between the number of men and women who work. Mean scores for men are not significantly higher than women's score; the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

Although a large number of students hold egalitarian gender role belief in all items, more traditional gender role attitudes are imbibed within ideologies that are related to core gender roles attached to norms and traditions of Nigerian students. The overall result of the quantitative research indicate that a bigger number of the entire participant still believe that women should come second place for opportunities outside the home; the division of labour has been naturally placed where they belong. Equality is possible and achievable as long as the women and men have stable control of over their individual domain.

References

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