

MEN V WOMEN FEELINGS TOWARDS THE GENDER DIVISION IN HOUSEHOLD CHORES

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Abstract

The aim of this research project is to find out how men and women feel about the divide in the household work. A qualitative study was carried out with semi structured interviews conducted with six couples who were living together. A thematic analysis was used to investigate the data that emerged from the interviews. Four themes emerged from the data collected. 1) Gender, the work in the home is still gendered. Women felt that they wanted their partners to do more of the 'women's work' but still keep doing the men's work. 2) Communication or lack of caused stress and arguments between the couples interviewed. 3) Feelings; this is the theme that answers the research question by detailing how the men and women felt by the divide in the household work 4) Changes; there is currently a change taking place within the households and this is due to the current economic recession in Ireland.

Introduction

The main aim of the research is to find out 'How men and women feel about the divide in household work?' Also another key point that the researcher would like to focus on is why each gender feel obliged to do their chosen amount of house work. In the traditional role the wife stayed home to be the caregiver. It was only in 1973 that the civil service lifted the marriage bar, so that women could still retain their jobs after getting married. Family life is changing; more women are going out to work. But with both spouses working who looks after the domestic responsibility? A lot of families are dual earners meaning that both the man and woman go out to work now. A number of studies have provided us with research results that men have increased their unpaid housework and childcare but there still is a big divide between the amount of paid and unpaid work a woman does in comparison to the amount a man does.



Method

The research method used was qualitative. Information was gathered by semi-structured interviews. Six couples were interviewed for this project. The sample group were couples who lived together. The sample were gathered by snowball effect. Finding one couple and have them pass on my details to anyone else they know who would be interested. Participants were informed that it was voluntary and asked to fill out consent forms. They were aware that they could stop the interview at anytime. They were also informed that everything was confidential and that names would be changed to protect identities. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Results/ Discussion

Four important themes emerged from the data collected. They were gender, communication, feelings and changes.

Gender: A reoccurring themes was the fact that women expected their partners to do more of the women's chores in the home but wanted them to continue in doing the men's chores. The men didn't 'gender associate' the chores but the women did.

Communication: The lack of communication between the couples caused arguments. Women felt they were not being heard or it would be easier to just do the task themselves. One couple found that the arguing helped them and that they were in a better place now with frequent communication.

Feelings: This is the theme that answered the research question. Both sexes had different feelings towards the housework. The men were happy with how things were but the women were angry and frustrated. This caused the women stress and affected their well being.

Changes: The recent changes that were discussed in the interviews was the result of the recession in Ireland. This theme would benefit from further research.

References

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