

Gender and Ethnic Differences in Young Adults Perception of Appropriateness of Some Domestic Activities in Nigeria

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Abstract

The process of acquisition of appropriate gender role is both developmental and cultural. The study examined perception of appropriate gender role in the family and the actual participation in family work. The participants were 372 freshmen of a Federal university and a State University within Lagos, Nigeria with age range between 15 years to 32 years and mean age of 19.8years. 221 of the participants are of Yoruba origin, while 151 are of Igbo origin. The home activity scale designed for the study was administered to assess their perception of appropriateness of 30 family works and the frequency of performing the tasks. The result shows that twelve of the family tasks are perceived as appropriate for women while only four are considered as male appropriate only. Thirteen tasks were perceived as appropriate for the two sexes. However, most of the tasks including those considered as appropriate for both sexes are performed frequently by women. The result shows that traditional gender role still exists in the Nigerian society. It is important to note that most of the family chores are performed by the women. There were significant ethnic differences in the acquisition of appropriate gender role Nigeria. Specifically, more female Igbos cut grass around the house than their males, while both male and female Yoruba respondents cut the grass around the house. More male Yorubas fetch water than Igbo males, while both female Yoruba and Igbo fetch water. Moreover, more male Yorubas sweep and dust the house compared to Igbo males, while more female Igbos sweep and dust the house than Yoruba female.

Keywords; Gender, Ethnic differences, Young Adults, Domestic Activities

1. Introduction

The acquisition of an appropriate gender identity is a cultural process in human psychosocial development (Condon & Stern, 1993). As the child enters puberty, especially, he or she undergoes significant physical and hormonal changes leading to greater gender differentiation, hence, a reinforcement of a sense of self as being either male or female. This physical maturational process, universal to the human species, is complemented to changing social expectations exerted upon the individual by other members of the society (Benn, 1981; Condon & Stern, 1993). While the nature of these expectations may vary in form and content, the acquisition of an appropriate gender identity (and its associated roles) is undeniably a result of the interaction between both external (cultural) and internal (physical maturational) forces (Condon & Stern, 1993). Culture plays a significant role in determining what is considered as the appropriate task for men and women in the society. It is a people's way of life which is transmitted from one generation to another. It determines what we do and how we relate both with others and the environment (Nwakaeze-Ogugua, 2004). In most societies, women do more family work than men. On the other hand, decision making is usually seen as a man's domain. However, culture is dynamic because man is involved in the "evolutionary process of culture and cultural change". This is sometimes due to assimilation of other cultures. Like all other cultural phenomenon, attitude toward gender roles is changing. Scott (2006) wrote on surveys carried out on changes in attitude toward marriage, motherhood and morality of family behaviours in Europe and the United States. Gender role identity was assessed by asking respondents whether they agree or disagree that a man's job is to earn money and woman's job is to look after the home and family. The survey was carried out in 1988, 1994 and 2002. The results indicated "a trend towards increased rejection of traditional gender roles which is due to secularization and increased education" (Scott, 2006). However, it is not sure whether these changes will result in equitable division of labour between the two sexes. The author noted that there is little optimism that men will be involved in family chores and care in the future.

According to Wikipedia (2008), gender roles refer to the set of social and behavioural [norms](#) that are considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex in the context of a specific culture, which differ widely between cultures and over time. These roles are acquired through socially enforced rules and values. The process of acquisition of gender role is what is called socialisation. Through this process, wanted behaviours are encouraged while the unwanted ones are discouraged. Gender socialisation is a focused form of socialisation. It is how children of the two sexes are socialised into their gender roles and taught how to operate as male or female. This gender-role socialisation also provides gender schemas which are organized structures comprising an understanding of attributes and behaviours that are appropriate and expected of male and female (Benn, 1981). There are differences of opinion as to whether observed gender differences in behaviour and personality characteristics are, at least in part, due to cultural or social factors, and therefore, the product of socialisation experiences, or to what extent gender differences are due to biological and physiological differences. Gender schema informs us on how the typical man or woman should dress and behave within the cultural setting.

By implication "gender roles" refer to what rights, obligations, responsibilities, behaviours, society sets for the two sexes. Gender roles are "masculine" and "feminine". Gender roles are society's "expectations regarding the proper behaviour, attitudes, and activities of males and females." A child develops the sense of a "gender" (or sex) identity between the ages of 1.5 and 3 years old (Benn, 1981). Numerous societies have made deliberate efforts to reduce or eliminate gender roles that have traditionally served to distinguish "men's work" from "women's work." The results have been mixed. Block (1973) compared U.S. to Sweden and Denmark (democratic-socialist countries) and did find less gender role differences. But even in these countries, men have more power, independence, social respect, and wealth.

Gender identity and gender-role socialisation have been widely studied by psychologists, sociologists, and other students of human development. Generally, such investigations have concentrated on the context of Western, industrialised societies of the world. While contributing a great deal to our knowledge of gender, these studies have limited applicability to other societies. According to Wikipedia (2008), traditional gender roles are still found in Nigeria, Pakistan and India. As factual as this may seem, attitude to gender role in Nigeria is also changing due to exposure and education. These have brought along with them feminism, which is founded on the equality of sexes. The doctrine advocates that women should have the same rights as men. Furthermore, women are seen as capable of doing things that were considered as men's domain in the past. This view is opposed to the African culture of assigning different duties to each of the two sexes (Nwakaeze-Ogugua, 2007). A recent study on this issue shows home-related tasks are still considered as women's job among undergraduates in Nigeria (Ayenibiwo, 2010)

Exposure to this type of view varies from one group to another even within the same country like Nigeria. The extent to which a group of people accepts equality of the two sexes depends on the rate of assimilation of other cultures either through education or urbanisation. This varies from one part of the country to another because Nigeria is not a culturally homogenous entity. This study examined the perception of appropriateness of some home-related activities by two sexes and also the frequency of performance of these duties among people from the South Western and South Eastern part of the country.

2. Theoretical framework

Three theoretical positions were examined in our attempt to explain the development of appropriate gender role among Nigerian youths:

Social Learning Theory

This theory is based on the work of Bussy and Bandura (1992). According to them, children's behaviours "are reinforced or punished based on what parents and society deem appropriate for the child's gender". The theory inter-alia posited that children receive rewards for behaviour appropriate to their sex; and receive punishments for inappropriate behaviour. (Some of these are subtle-- an approving nod from the father for boy who wants to be a fireman-- a mild rebuke from the mother for the girl who wants to be computer programmer. Others are obvious-- spanking a boy who acts like a sissy, or sending a girl to her room for being a tom-boy). Consequently, the child develops a self-regulatory mechanism which is incorporated and applied to his or her behaviour. Modelling and observational learning are also involved as children observe people of the same sex within the home, on the television, among peers and in the larger society.

Social learning theory regards gender identity and role as a set of behaviours that are *learned* from the environment. The main way that gender behaviours are learned is through the process of *observational learning*. Children observe the people around them behaving in various ways, some of which relate to gender. They pay *attention* to some of these people (models) and *encode* their behaviour. At a later time they may *imitate* the behaviour they have observed. They may do this regardless of whether the behaviour is 'gender appropriate' or not but there are a number of processes that make it more likely that a child will reproduce the behaviour that the society deems appropriate for his or her sex. First, the child is more likely to attend to and imitate those people perceived as *similar* to himself. Consequently, he is more likely to imitate behaviour modelled by people the same sex as him\her. Second, the people around the child will respond to the behaviour he imitates with either *reinforcement* or punishment. It is likely that the child will be reinforced for acting in gender appropriate ways and punished or ignored for gender inappropriate behaviour. Third, the child will also have observed the consequences of other people's behaviour and will be motivated to imitate the behavior he has seen reinforced and avoid imitating the behavior he has seen punished (*vicarious reinforcement* and punishment).

Lawrence Kohlberg's Cognitive Development Theory

The theory proposes the interaction of mental schema and social experience in directing gender role behaviour. The cognitive approach focuses upon the child's "understanding". A child's understanding refers to the way he/she perceives and tackles a phenomenon. Information about gender is organised into sets of beliefs about the sexes, i.e. gender schema. Gender schema (plural schemata or schemas) is a mental framework that organises and guides a child's understanding of information relevant to gender. Example: information about which toys are for girls and which toys are for boys form schema that guides behaviour. For example, if a child has seen women being respected in his family, he will perceive women as respectable beings; and if he has seen women being battered and maltreated he will perceive them as some low grade creature.

Cognitive view of gender-role acquisition was proposed by Kohlberg (1966). This view suggests that a child's realisation of having a self comes before the understanding of being either a male or a female. The theory posited that children acquire gender roles through their awareness of their own sex and their perceptions of behaviour appropriate to their own sex. Two stages are involved:

Children become aware that their sex doesn't change. It stays constant over time.

Over time children seek out and categorise those behaviors appropriate to the sex they've identified with.

This cognitive realisation guides children to change their behaviours to match what the society considers as appropriate for the child's gender. This gender understanding appears from about the age of three.

Children understand gender just as they understand anything else. Children have experiences with people of both genders, they think about their experiences, having made mental notes of what males and females do, and adopt behaviours performed by people of their own sex. Children do their own gender typing themselves. They make classifications of themselves and of others as male or female, and organise their behaviours around that classification. The gender roles that children adopt are organised around this classification. Behaviours consistent with their own gender are adopted. This is reflected in their use of language, clothes, toys etc. According to Kohlberg, acquisition of gender roles results from gender constancy i.e., a child's understanding and awareness that his/ her sex is permanent, constant, and will never change. Gender constancy is also known as sex category constancy in modern literature. Gender appropriate behaviours are adopted after the realisation that sex is a permanent feature of personality. Gender constancy emerges somewhere between 3-7 years of age. Gender constancy is the key to gender typing, according to Kohlberg. Gender constancy is not a phenomenon that occurs at once, at one point in time. It takes place in three stages (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Szkrybalo & Ruble, 1998). *Gender Consistency* – this is the awareness that gender remains the same no matter what one wears, how one behaves, whatever hairstyle one has. Although Kohlberg put forth the concept of gender constancy as a significant theme, there is not much solid research evidence supporting it.

Different researches have yielded findings quite different from, and even contrary to, Kohlberg's hypothesis that gender constancy stage is the point where children actually learn gender roles and relevant appropriate behaviours. It has been seen that at 2 ½ years of age children begin to prefer the company of children of their own sex. Also, girls are more interested in dolls and boys in cars (Ruble & Martin, 1998). Long before attaining the stage of gender constancy, children exhibit gender-typed preferences (Bussey & Bandura, 1992; Ruble & Martin 1998). Children can categorise activities and objects by gender, know a lot about what males and females do, and often acquire gender appropriate behaviours (Levy & Carter, 1989; Leucke Aleksa, Anderson, Collins, & Schmitt,

1995). Five- year old boys having reached gender constancy, or almost there, pay more attention to male characters on TV and watch more sports and action programmes in comparison to other age mates (Leucke- Aleksa *et al.*, 1995). Children tend to develop more complex beliefs about gender later on; also they tend to become more flexible in their views about gender roles (Ruble & Martin, 1998; Taylor, 1996).

Gender Schema Theory

Gender schema theories intertwine the social learning and the cognitive theories. This theory, developed by Benn (1981), suggests that children integrate sex-typed behaviours that are acquired through observation, reinforcement and punishment. This shapes the child's attitudes and beliefs about sex roles. It also guides them in making their own decisions about what is sex-appropriate (Benn, 1981). This theory asserts that we adopt gender roles through identification with a role model. Boys have a more difficult time in developing gender identities because in early childhood they have more contact with women than with men. "A schema is a mentally organised network of gender- related information that influences behaviour" (Papalia, Wendkos & Duskin, 2001). Gender schema is a mental framework that organizes and guides a child's understanding of information relevant to gender. For example, information about which toys are for girls and which toys are for boys form schema that guides behaviour.

According to gender schema theory, children first develop a simplified concept of male – female distinctions and later on apply it universally (Bem, 1989, 1993). First of all, children learn what sex they are. Then they develop a concept of what it means to be male or female in their culture, and on the basis of the development of this concept, they begin to take on gender roles. Whatever observations they have of men and women, they organise those around the gender schema that they have formed as a result of their observation of how their society classifies behaviours as male and female including clothes and toys etc. For example, a child observes that it is always the mother who cooks, and the father is always the one who fixes electrical appliances and faults. Gradually he develops the concept that household chores are meant to be done by the mother (woman), and tougher tasks are handled by the father (man). This leads to the assimilation of other similar ideas and perceptions, a realisation that men are strong and women weak. If the father has to cook on a rare occasion, it doesn't match with the "all in control schema of the father" and the child notes this discrepancy. Gender schemata influence judgments about behaviour thus promoting gender stereotypes.

3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were derived and tested:

1. Male participants will perceive masculine domestic/home-related activities significantly appropriate for them, and also engage in them more than their female counterparts.
2. Female participants will perceive feminine domestic/home-related activities significantly appropriate for them, and also engage in them more than their male counterparts.
3. Both male and female will perceive unisex domestic/home-related activities significantly appropriate for them, and also engage in them more than their male counterparts.
4. The Igbo female young adults' respondents' perception of domestic/home-related activities will be significantly different from that of their Yoruba counterparts.

4 Research Method

4.1 Participants

The participants for the study were drawn from a Federal University and a State University in Lagos state Nigeria. Ethnic diversity was the major reason for choosing this group. Lagos is the commercial centre of the nation, as well as a cosmopolitan city, and so comprises people of most ethnic groups in the country. Participants were freshmen who had just left the custody of their families where they were engaged in household chores and related home-tasks, as part of training.

A total number of 545 respondents participated in the survey. The participants consist of two hundred and twelve (212) male and three hundred and thirty three (333) females. The sampled participants were drawn from faculties of social sciences, law, and business administration who were offering introduction to psychology courses. The participant's ages ranged between 15 years to 32 years with a mean age of 19.8.

4.2 Design

The study employed a survey design.

4.3 Instrument

The instrument is a revised version of the HA-scale earlier designed by Ayenibiowo (2010). It comprises 30 home-related activities in five categories namely:

- i. Feeding e.g. cooking for the family
- ii. House care/keeping/cleaning e.g. sweeping and dusting the living rooms
- iii. Child care and training e.g. bathing children
- iv. Electrical/carpentry/car care e.g. fixing electric bulb
- v. Provision of security e.g. buying shares as security

The respondents were asked to check how appropriate each activity is to them on one side and how often they do each of them on the other side. Appropriateness was measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, inappropriate to 5, most appropriate. Level of participation was gauged by a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1, never, to 5, very often. In addition, respondents were requested to write their names, sex, age, position in the family, number of siblings, level in the university and ethnic group.

4.4 Procedure

The HA-scale first administered to 160 young adults and foundation students who are offering introduction to psychology course. The students were simply requested to indicate against each of the domestic/home related domestic task as either male or female appropriate. This was conducted for the purpose of identifying perceived male appropriate tasks and perceived female appropriate tasks for the purpose of classification of tasks only. On the basis of this the HA-scale was categorised into three namely: male appropriate tasks, female appropriate tasks and male/female appropriate tasks.

The questionnaire was later distributed to the freshmen in the lecture rooms during lecture periods, after the permission of the lecturer was obtained. The respondent's cooperation was also sought and confidentiality of their response assured. Those who volunteered to participate in the study were given the instrument to fill in, after the instructions were read to them. No time limit was required for completion of the instrument. The instrument was collected promptly as each participant finished in less than 25 minutes

4.5 Scoring

The number of participants who gave each of the responses on the scale was noted. Those who shaded on the items on appropriateness of each task were counted. In a similar manner, those who shaded on each level of participation in each activity were also counted.

5. Results and Discussion

In order to test the first hypothesis frequencies, ratio and percentages of responses on appropriateness and actual practice of tasks were computed for those tasks that were identified as male appropriate. These frequencies were tabulated and compared statistically. Result of the cross-tabulation of the variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary Table of Significant Male Appropriate and Very Often Performed Tasks.

1. Male appropriate	Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice				N	df	X ²	
		often		Very often					
Fixing/care of electrical gadgets	Male	Least Appropriate	17	35.4%	0	0.0%	210	16	167.8*
		Most Appropriate	3	6.3%	23	63.9%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	40	43.5%	1	3.4%	326	16	236.6*
		Most Appropriate	10	8.9%	17	58.6%			
Polishing shoes	Male	Least Appropriate	4	8.0%	2	3.1%	211	16	161.9*
		Most Appropriate	14	28.0%	47	73.4%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.3%	4	8.0%	331	16	254.7*
		Most Appropriate	9	11.1%	26	52.0%			
Cutting grass around the house	Male	Least Appropriate	2	7.4%	0	0.0%	209	16	81.0*
		Most Appropriate	6	22.2%	16	61.5%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	4	10.8%	2	7.4%	333	16	125.0*
		Most Appropriate	7	18.9%	12	44.4%			
Taking Cars to Workshop for repairs	Male	Least Appropriate	2	6.9%	2	9.5%	209	16	75.8*
		Most Appropriate	11	37.9%	12	57.1%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2	9.5%	3	30.0%	333	16	90.5
		Most Appropriate	9	42.3%	5	50.0%			

Results in Table 1 above shows that fixing/care of electrical gadgets, polishing of shoes, cutting grasses around the house and taking cars to workshop for repairs are significant male appropriate tasks. Further, result revealed that 63.9% of the male participants compared to 58.6% of the female participants reported that fixing/care for electrical gadgets was not only male appropriate, but that they do this very often in their families ($X^2 = 167.8$; $p < 0.05$). Likewise, 73.4% and 61.5% of male respondents reported that polishing of shoes and cutting grasses around the house are significantly male appropriate, and they do this very often compared to their female counterparts ($X^2 = 161.9$; $p < 0.05$ and $X^2 = 81.0$; $p < 0.05$, respectively). Similarly, taking cars to workshop for repairs was a significantly “appropriate” and “very often” tasks for males ($X^2 = 90.5$; $p < 0.05$). Result shows that

57.1% of male participants reported that this task is appropriate and very often performed task in their family. However, 43.5% of the female participants who rated fixing electrical gadget as least appropriate often perform the task. Considering the total number of respondents, it seems only a small percentage of the male perceive the masculine tasks as most appropriate and also do them very frequently the highest being 47 out of 211 male participants, which is just 22.17% of the total. A critical look at the figures shows that only about half of the total female respondents consider the feminine tasks as most appropriate and also engage in them frequently. The highest is 188 out of 333, which is 56.4% for cooking followed by 177 out of 330 for making bed, which is 53.6%. however, these are far higher than the figures for male respondents.

In order to test the second hypothesis, respondent's rating of appropriateness of the tasks identified as feminine and also the frequency of their actual engagement in them were computed. These frequencies were tabulated and compared statistically. Result of the cross-tabulation of the variables is presented in Table 2 to Table 4.

Table 2: Summary Table of Significant Female Appropriate and Very Often Performed Tasks.

Female appropriate Tasks	Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice				N	Df	X ²	
		often		Very often					
Cleaning toilets/bathrooms	Male	Least Appropriate	2	3.9%	2	6.1%	212	16	89.0*
		Most Appropriate	13	25.5%	19	57.6%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	332	16	156.5*
		Most Appropriate	43	43.4%	98	81.7%			
Cleaning windows	Male	Least Appropriate	0	0.0%	3	12.0%	209	16	97.8*
		Most Appropriate	8	22.2%	12	48.0%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	3	3.4%	1	1.4%	333	16	245.0*
		Most Appropriate	33	37.5%	48	67.6%			
Cleaning Tables	Male	Least Appropriate	3	8.3%	2	5.1%	209	16	97.7*
		Most Appropriate	16	44.4%	9	23.1%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	4	4.5%	1	0.7%	333	16	147.3*
		Most Appropriate	30	33.7%	100	71.9%			
Cleaning kitchen	Male	Least Appropriate	1	2.6%	2	5.3%	211	16	82.9*
		Most Appropriate	13	33.3%	18	47.4%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.8%	7	3.6%	333	16	121.6*
		Most Appropriate	16	28.6%	156	80.8%			

Table 2 Continue: Summary Table of Significant Female Appropriate and Very Often Performed Tasks.

Female appropriate Tasks Contd.		Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice		N	Df	X ²
			often	Very often			
Cooking	Male	Least Appropriate	6 12.2%	1 1.8%	207	16	70.2*
		Most Appropriate	13 26.5%	31 54.4%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2 3.2%	3 1.4%	333	16	107.9*
		Most Appropriate	29 46.5%	188 88.3%			
Making bed	Male	Least Appropriate	2 3.6%	2 2.6%	211	16	112.2*
		Most Appropriate	14 25.5%	49 64.5%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	0 0.0%	1 4.3%	330	16	269.0*
		Most Appropriate	25 39.7%	177 86.3%			
Sweeping/dusting within the house	Male	Least Appropriate	5 10.2%	16 32.7%	208	16	93.4*
		Most Appropriate	16 32.7%	49 72.1%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2 2.1%	4 2.2%	333	16	85.4*
		Most Appropriate	53 54.6%	153 82.3%			
Washing Clothes	Male	Least Appropriate	3 5.1%	2 1.9%	210	16	78.7*
		Most Appropriate	27 45.8%	78 72.9%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	331	16	222.2*
		Most Appropriate	37 39.8%	165 84.6%			
Shopping for food stuff	Male	Least Appropriate	4 8.3%	2 6.7%	209	16	92.2*
		Most Appropriate	9 18.8%	14 46.7%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	0 0.0%	2 1.8%	330	16	154.3*
		Most Appropriate	22 25.9%	86 75.4%			

Table 2 Continue:

Female appropriate Tasks contd.		Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice		N	df	X ²		
			often	Very often					
Decorating the House	Male	Least Appropriate	1	2.7%	1	2.8%	209	16	80.9*
		Most Appropriate	6	16.2%	18	50.0%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	4	4.7%	1	1.5%	332	16	132.9*
		Most Appropriate	25	29.4%	45	67.2%			
Grinding Pepper	Male	Least Appropriate	3	10.3%	2	10.5%	209	16	68.7*
		Most Appropriate	5	17.2%	3	15.8%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	5	8.1%	2	3.1%	331	16	203.4*
		Most Appropriate	9	14.5%	45	70.3%			
Mending torn Clothes	Male	Least Appropriate	2	8.7%	0	0.0%	210	16	106.8*
		Most Appropriate	8	34.8%	7	58.3%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2	3.6%	3	6.3%	331	16	247.8*
		Most Appropriate	16	28.6%	35	72.9%			

Result in Table 2 above shows that cleaning toilets/bathrooms, windows and tables were significant female appropriate and very often performed tasks. Further, result revealed that 81.7%, 67.6% and 71.9% of the female respondents compared to 57.6%, 48.0% and 23.1% of the male respondents reported that they were not only female appropriate, but that female do these very often in their families ($X^2 = 156.5$, $p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 245.0$, $p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 147.3$, $p < 0.05$ respectively). Similarly, cleaning kitchen was a significantly “appropriate” and “very often” task for the female respondents ($X^2 = 121.6$, $p < 0.05$). Result shows that 80.8% of the female respondents reported that the task was an appropriate and very often performed task in their families.

Result also reveals that cooking, bed making sweeping/dusting within the house are significant and “very often” female appropriate tasks. Result revealed that 88.3%, 86.3% and 82.3% of females reported that cooking, bed making, sweeping/dusting within the house was not only female appropriate, but that they do this very often in their families compared to the male respondents ($X^2 = 107.9$, $p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 269.0$, $p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 93.4$, $p < 0.05$ respectively). Likewise, 84.6% of the female respondents reported that washing of clothes is female appropriate, and that it is a regular activity compared to their male counterparts ($X^2 = 222.2$; $p < 0.05$). Similarly, shopping for food stuff was a significant appropriate and very often tasks for females ($X^2 = 154.3$; $p < 0.05$). Result shows that 75.4% of the female respondents reported that this task was appropriate and very often performed task in their families. Finally, decorating the house, grinding pepper and mending torn clothes were rated as significant female appropriate tasks. From the result 67.2% of female compared to 50.0% of the males reported that decorating the house, grinding pepper and mending torn clothes was not only male appropriate, but that they do this very often in their families ($X^2 = 80.9$, $p < 0.05$; $X^2 = 203.4$, $p < 0.05$; and $X^2 = 247.8$; $p < 0.05$, respectively).

To test the third hypothesis, tasks identified as appropriate for both gender were used. Frequencies and percentages of respondents ratings of appropriateness and actual engagement in various tasks were computed. Result of the cross-tabulation is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary Table of Significant Male /Female Appropriate and Very Often Tasks.

3. M/F appropriate		Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice		N	df	X ²
			often	Very often			
Washing of cars	Male	Least Appropriate	2 4.7%	2 5.0%	210	16	119.5*
		Most Appropriate	12 27.9%	27 67.5%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	4 12.9%	1 2.5%	329	16	219.1*
		Most Appropriate	4 12.9%	22 55.0%			
Emptying dustbin	Male	Least Appropriate	3 5.4%	0 5.1%	209	16	127.4*
		Most Appropriate	25 44.6%	27 69.2%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	4 5.8%	3 2.2%	333	16	212.8*
		Most Appropriate	29 42.0%	102 73.4%			
Scrubbing/mopping of floor	Male	Least Appropriate	5 11.1%	3 9.7%	212	16	63.1*
		Most Appropriate	7 15.6%	16 51.6%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2 2.0%	2 1.9%	332	16	146.1*
		Most Appropriate	28 27.5%	71 68.3%			
Running Errands	Male	Least Appropriate	10 14.3%	3 5.2%	211	16	131.7*
		Most Appropriate	13 18.6%	38 65.5%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	7 7.4%	1 0.8%	332	16	204.3*
		Most Appropriate	16 17.0%	80 67.8%			
Doing minor carpentry works	Male	Least Appropriate	9 33.3%	1 7.7%	209	16	86.9*
		Most Appropriate	4 15.4%	2 15.4%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	5 21.7%	4 8.5%	333	16	114.4*
		Most Appropriate	1 4.3%	14 29.8%			

Table 3 Continue: Summary Table of Significant Male /Female Appropriate and Very Often Tasks.

3. M/F appropriate	Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice		N	df	X ²	
		often	Very often				
Ironing of Clothes	Male	Least Appropriate	4 8.0%	3 3.0%	210	16	87.1*
		Most Appropriate	14 22.4	68 44.8%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	7 6.5%	3 2.4%	182	16	182.7*
		Most Appropriate	30 28.0%	93 75.6%			
Fetching Water	Male	Least Appropriate	2 5.1%	1 3.6%	209	16	75.3*
		Most Appropriate	8 20.5%	15 53.6%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	3 4.4%	1 1.4%	332	16	264.3*
		Most Appropriate	8 11.8%	53 75.7%			
Pounding Yam	Male	Least Appropriate	3 13.6%	1 4.8%	209	16	77.6*
		Most Appropriate	4 18.2%	9 42.9%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	5 13.9	5 14.3%	333	16	171.6*
		Most Appropriate	5 13.9%	18 51.4%			
Taking care of visitors	Male	Least Appropriate	2 3.1%	1 2.1%	210	16	103.9*
		Most Appropriate	12 18.8%	30 62.5%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2 1.7%	6 5.8%	331	16	132.0*
		Most Appropriate	38 32.2%	76 73.8%			

Male and female appropriate and often practised tasks were assessed as presented in Table 3. Result shows generally that washing of cars, emptying dustbin, scrubbing/mopping of floor, running errands and doing minor carpentry works are significantly appropriate and most often practised tasks for both male and female. Result indicated however that more male wash cars than female (67.5% compared to 55.0%). Also, more females empty dustbin compared to males (73.4% to 69.2%). Similarly, more females scrub /mop run errands and do minor carpentry works than males. Surprisingly, it is expected that more males should report doing minor carpentry works as appropriate and most often performed task. This result does not confirm this expectation.

Finally, ironing of clothes, fetching water, pounding yam, and taking care of visitors are significantly appropriate and most often practised tasks for both male and female. Meanwhile, result indicated also that more females iron of clothes, fetch water, and take care of visitors and pound yam than their male counterparts. The result also shows that sweeping the compound and surrounding, serving of food/meal, taking care of younger ones and Washing plates/dishes are significantly appropriate and most often practised tasks for both male and female. Specifically, the results indicated that more females than males serve food/meal (84.5% female to 71.6% male), take care of younger ones (82.9% female to 77.1% male), and wash plates/dishes (80.5% female to 52.4%).

Table 3 Continue:

M/F appropriate		Appropriateness of Task.	Frequency of Tasks Actual Practice		N	Df	X ²		
			often	Very often					
Sweeping the Compound & Surrounding	Male	Least Appropriate	1	2.4%	2	5.9%	211	16	111.0*
		Most Appropriate	20	47.6%	24	70.6%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	2	2.6%	1	0.8%	331	16	239.3*
		Most Appropriate	28	36.8%	113	66.4%			
Serving of food/meal	Male	Least Appropriate	3	4.8%	2	2.3%	210	16	107.1*
		Most Appropriate	22	34.9%	63	71.6%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.8%	0	0.0%	332	16	175.8*
		Most Appropriate	20	23.8%	147	84.5%			
Taken care of younger ones	Male	Least Appropriate	3	6.1%	1	2.1%	211	16	150.8*
		Most Appropriate	21	42.9%	37	77.1%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.6%	1	0.7%	333	16	222.3*
		Most Appropriate	30	46.9%	121	82.9%			
Washing plates/dishes	Male	Least Appropriate	2	5.1%	3	4.8%	210	16	69.4*
		Most Appropriate	14	35.9%	33	52.4%			
	Female	Least Appropriate	1	1.4%	4	2.3%	333	16	187.4*
		Most Appropriate	36	48.6%	140	80.5%			

In order to examine the significant influence of gender and ethnic affiliations on perception of gender roles (i.e. appropriateness of some selected domestic/home related tasks) among some selected Nigerian young adult, a 2x2 contingency chi-square was computed on tasks that show ethnic and gender differences. The result of which is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Influence of gender and ethnic affiliation on domestic/home task appropriateness

Gender Roles	Ethnic	Gender	Pearson Chi-square		
			Value	df	Pv
Cutting grass around the house	Yoruba	Male	48.1	16	P<0.01
		Female	45.6	16	P<0.01
	Igbo	Male	17.1	16	P>0.01
		Female	66.5	16	P<0.01
Cleaning of windows	Yoruba	Male	59.2	16	P<0.01
		Female	90.8	16	P<0.01
	Igbo	Male	16.3	16	P>0.01
		Female	72.6	16	P<0.01
Sweeping/dusting within the house	Yoruba	Male	53.6	16	P<0.01
		Female	20.6	16	P>0.01
	Igbo	Male	21.2	16	P>0.01
		Female	71.8	16	P<0.01
Mending of torn clothes	Yoruba	Male	59.9	16	P<0.01
		Female	144.8	16	P<0.01
	Igbo	Male	24.1	16	P>0.01
		Female	60.8	16	P<0.01
Fetching water	Yoruba	Male	29.5	16	P<0.01
		Female	99.1	16	P<0.01
	Igbo	Male	21.1	16	P>0.01
		Female	103.7	16	P<0.01

Table 4 presents the results of cross tabulations of the main study variables: gender and ethnic affiliations, gender and ethnic difference were tested using chi-square contingency analysis. More female Igbo respondents rate cutting grass as appropriate task for their gender than their male counterparts. (65.5% to 17.1%), while both male and female Yoruba respondents consider the task as appropriate for their gender (48.1% and 45.6). More female Yoruba than the male perceived cleaning of windows as appropriate (90.8% vs 59.2%). Also, more female Igbo perceive the task as appropriate for their gender than the male (72.6% vs 16.3%). However, the figure for the Igbo male is extremely low compared to that of Yoruba male. More Yoruba male regard sweeping/dusting as appropriate than the female (53.6% vs 20.6%) the reverse was the case for the Igbo respondents (female 71.8% male 21.2%). More Yoruba female consider mending of torn clothes appropriate than the male (44.8% vs 59.9%). Similarly, more Igbo female perceive the task as appropriate is (60.8% vs 24.1%). More Yoruba female regard fetching of water as appropriate (99.1% vs 29.5%). Likewise, more Igbo female regard the task as appropriate for their gender (103.7 vs 21.1%).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this study shows that twelve of the family tasks are perceived as appropriate for women while only four are considered as male appropriate only. Thirteen tasks were perceived as appropriate for the two sexes. However, most of the tasks including those considered as appropriate for both sexes are performed frequently by women. The result clearly revealed that traditional gender role still exists in the Nigerian society. However, it is important to note that most of the family works are performed by the women. There were significant ethnic differences in the acquisition of appropriate gender role Nigeria. Specifically, more female Igbo cut grass around the house than their males, while both male and female Yoruba respondents cut the grass around the house. More male Yoruba respondents fetch water than Igbo males, while both female Yoruba and Igbo fetch water. Moreover, more male Yorubas sweep and dust the house compared to Igbo males, while more female Igbos sweep and dust the house than Yoruba female. Future studies using other methods than survey, or combining survey studies with, for example, experimental observational designs to investigate gender and ethnic differences in gender role acquisition are seriously needed to unravel the inequality between males' and females' performance of household chores within the various ethnic groups in Nigeria.

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