

Environment and Behaviour: Implications of the Environment on Gendered Lives in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated the effects of Sex Role Orientation on Sexist Ideologies. Using a sample of two hundred and sixteen participants, the Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) were used and results indicated that Sex Role Orientation is a significant factor of sexist ideologies and a resultant gendered lives ($X^2(7) = 186.05; p > .01$). However, no significant difference in sexist ideologies was found among males and females owing to their Sex Role Orientations.

Key words: Environment, behaviour, gendered lives, political emancipations

INTRODUCTION

Organisms thrive within an environment. The environment, forming the bedrock of society, impacts on the psychological and physical functionings of organisms.

Lewin^[1], in his field theory, derived a mathematical formulation [$B = f(P, E)$] to express his views on the vital relationships between an organism, the environment and behaviour. According to him, an organism's behaviour (B) is a function of both the organism (person, P) and its environment (E). Brunswik^[2] also wrote that both organisms and environment will have to be seen as systems, each with properties of its own, yet both hewn from basically the same block. He went further to argue that the system has the essential characteristic of coming-to-terms. The coming-to-terms is a matter of the mutual boundary as well as rapport between the central, covert layers of the two systems. Brunswik's assertions attest to the Man-Environment interactionism perspectives in organismic behaviour. Kelly^[3] also expanded on Lewin's postulations by submitting that our needs, thoughts and motives, in our relationship with others, is mediated upon by our environment.

Within our environments, we form groups and make rules. On the basis of the rules made, norms are enacted. Also, as members of a group, we classify non members as out groups and often hold stereotyped beliefs about out group members. Stern and Karafer^[4] argued that the classifications is, essentially, a social construct. The classifications impacts on how people view and respond to one another. Similar classifications in the world of births, from genital anatomy, results in categorizations as males or females and a resultant gendered lives, wherein social statuses and roles are culturally assigned to

different sexes. The gendered lives exemplify sexism (discriminations based on sex). And sexism; ranging from ignoring, distancing in face-to-face situations, to discriminations of all sorts; prejudice and even genocide in some situations impinges on mutual co-existence, socio-economic advancements and political emancipations of peoples in a given society^[5,6]. Sexism, around the world, primarily focuses on the prejudice (negative attitudes) and discrimination (negative actions) that males direct at females. This is because virtually all the societies in the world are 'patriarchal' (i.e the social organization is such that males dominates females)^[7]. Corroborating Harris' submission, United Nations Reports^[8] posit that men typically rule, dominating the highest status roles in government and businesses, across the globe.

In Nigeria, Roseberg and Alaya^[9] reported that Mrs. Horace Tremlitt, who accompanied her husband to Nigeria during the colonial era remarked that sexism is so prevalent in Nigeria. According to them, Mrs. Tremlitt said:

I found myself reflecting rather bitterly on the insignificant position of a woman in what is practically a man's country... if there is one spot on earth where a woman feels no importance whatsoever, it is in Nigeria.

Scholars have differentiated between hostile and benevolent sexism (two forms of sexism) e.g Glicks^[10,11]. Whereas benevolent sexism is said to be a subtle form of prejudice, yet it is argued that the ideology it represents may be far from trivial in promoting gender inequality. Hypothesized that hostile and benevolent sexism are predictable products of structural relations between men

and women that are common to human societies. According to them, three basic factors: patriarchy (i.e. the accord of more status and power to men than women), gender differentiation (i.e. differentiation of men and women in terms of social roles and trait assumption) and sexual reproduction (i.e. male-female relations conditioning based on sexual reproduction, a biological constant that creates dependencies and intimacy between the sexes)-together create both hostile and benevolent attitudes towards the other sex. For example, that men often depend on women to bear and nurture children and provide domestic labour; and to fulfill sexual and intimacy needs makes women valuable resources and foster benevolent sexism that counter-balances sexist hostility. Patriarchy and gender differentiation, on the other hand has been identified as creating and reinforcing hostile sexism. Jost and Banaji^[12] for example argued that because dominant groups seek to justify their privileges through exaggeration of perceived differences with other groups, as noted by Tajfel^[13], there seen to be an inclination for sexist hostility and expressed inequality.

It is pertinent to note that be it hostile or benevolent, gendered lives is predominant in most nations of the world and they often hamper freedom, free-will and policy formulations. Enemu^[14] for example, observed that contemporary societies of the world harbour beliefs, mores and practices which objectively permits and promotes the social and economic exploitations of women and their political marginalization when such mores and beliefs are internalized. Oloaoye^[15] remarked that females' participation in Nigeria politics at the gladiatorial level in the modern era has been somewhat negligible in terms of decision making.

He observed that the bulk of their political participations are at the spectatorial and apathetic levels and blamed these on value-related and social structural levels.

That behaviours are learnt in terms of observational learning, identification and internalization has been explained in the social learning theory of Albert Bandura^[16] and other psychologists like Hull and Skinner. Hilton and Hippe^[17], for example, posit that social beliefs, norms and rules about personal attribute and appropriate behaviour for men and women are learnt from the society through socialization. Does it then follow that sexism and gendered lives, despite its attendant consequences, is also learnt from the society through socialization.

This study is thus designed to investigate whether sex role orientation will be a factor of sexism and a resultant gendered lives.

These hypotheses were therefore tested:

- Sex role orientation will have significant effect on sexist ideologies of males and females
- Males and Females will be significantly different in their sexist ideologies

METHODS

Participants: Two hundred and sixteen participants drawn from Ado-Ekiti metropolis were used for the study. Of these participants, 122 (56.5%) were males and 94 (43.5%) were females. About 25% (N = 54) of participants are feminine in their sex role orientations while 12.5% (N = 27) are masculine, 46.6% (N = 92) are androgynous while 19.9% (N = 43) are undifferentiated. The age range of participants is 18-62 years with a mean age of 26.09.

Measures: A scale to measure sex role orientation (Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) developed by Sandra L. Bem^[18] and the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) developed by Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske^[11] were used.

Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) is a 40 items inventory designed to measure an individual's acquired/learnt sex typed behaviour in inter-personal relationships. The scale is comprised of a list of adjectives to which a participant indicates the degree to which each one of the adjectives describe him/her. Participants' responses are rated on a five points score ranging from 'Never' "through 'sometimes", "Yes or No" to "Always".

Makinde^[19] provided the psychometric properties of the scale for Nigerian samples. The cronbach apha internal consistency coefficient of .87 and .75 for males are, respectively reported for masculinity and femininity.

Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI) is a 22 items measure designed to assess sexist ideologies endorsed by people. ASI measures two forms of sexist ideologies (Hostile and Benevolent Sexism). Items on the scale are each rated on a six point score ranging from 'Disagree Strongly' (0), through 'Disagree Slightly' (2) to 'Agree Strongly' (5) Cronbach alpha of .84 was found for the scale.

Procedure: Questionnaires consisting of Ambivalent Sexism Inventory together with Bem's Sex Role Inventory were incidentally administered on participants in Ado Ekiti metropolis. Participants who indicated their desire to participate in the study were given the questionnaires to complete. However, some questionnaires were not completely filled and were thus rendered invalid for analyses of data.

RESULTS

Table 1: Showing the distribution of participants on sex role orientation, sex ideology and chi square analysis

Sex role orientation	Sex ideology
Masculine 27	Hostile 21
Feminine 54	Benevolent 36
Androgynous 92	Both high 154
Undifferentiated 43	Both low 05

$\chi^2 = 186.05, p < 0.01; df = 7$ (Significant)

Table 2: t-test Table showing the effects of sex on sexist ideologies

Variables	N	X	SD	df	t	p
Male	122	65.31	9.36			
Female	94	64.33	8.83	214	0.78	>05

t(214) = 0.78; p>.05 (Not significant)

DISCUSSION

Results of data analyses showed that Sex Role Orientation is a significant factor of sexist ideologies and subsequent gendered lives. These authors found a positive correlation between sex role orientation and sexist ideologies of males and females.

The hypotheses that males and females will be significantly different in their sexist ideologies is however rejected because of its insignificant difference.

From these results, it follows that an individual's sex role orientations; acquired through socializations within an environment, impacts on his/her social beliefs, norms and rules about personal attributes and appropriate behaviour for men and women. These culminates in gendered lives.

Since gendered lives reflects behavioural patterns, since behaviour lies at the core of current social problems, changing society towards more sustainability, therefore, requires behaviour modifications by various actors and in many domains through a clear understanding of the characteristics of target groups and of the mechanism and motives that underlay behaviours. Thus, the elimination of the political marginalization of women and their involvement in policy formulations is dependent on the appreciation as equals with men of women by the society.

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