Assessing the Sex-Role Egalitarian Attitudes & Gender Role Socialization Experiences of African Americans

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Gender Role Research

- Literature review last 10 years
  - Several counseling journals contained articles regarding phenomena of the African American community and provided implications for counseling treatment
    - Examples: Bryant et al. (2005); Ojelade, McCray, Ashby, and Myers (2011); Talleyrand (2010)
- None of the articles cited provided empirically-based recommendations for the treatment of African American clients
- Smith and Millham (1979)
  - Assessed rated dimensions of reliability, trustworthiness, and responsibility of men and women within work and social contexts comparing Whites and Blacks
- Broman (1991)
  - Assessed the relationship between family and work roles to the psychological well-being of Blacks
- Harris (1996)
  - Assessed the extent to which income and educational level impacted gender identities comparing Anglo and African Americans meeting similar demographic criteria
Gender Role Research

  ☐ Assessed the relationship between gender role identity and stress among African American women

☐ Buckley and Carter (2005)
  ☐ Examined the degree of influence racial identity and gender roles have on the self-esteem of Black adolescent females

☐ Benefits of these studies
  ☐ Reinforced the broad contextual use of the Afrocentric perspective in assessing the gender role development of African Americans
  ☐ Educational attainment and socio-economic status may be variables of interest when exploring gender role within group differences
  ☐ Dispelled stereotypes of a matriarchal African American culture characterized by over-bearing women and passive men

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The Current Study: Purpose

- To explore the sex-role egalitarian attitudes and gender role socialization experiences of African American men and women
- Sex-role egalitarianism defined: “An attitude which causes one to respond to another individual independently of that other individual’s sex” (King, Beere, King, & Beere, 1981, p. 3)

Research Questions

- Overarching
  - How were self-reported sex-role egalitarian attitudes influenced by gender role socialization experiences?
- Quantitative
  - What are the extent of the differences in total score on the sex-role egalitarianism scale between African American men and women?
  - What are the extent of the differences in sex-role egalitarian attitudes between African American men and women on the employment, marital, and parental subscales?
The Current Study: Research Questions

- Research Questions con.
  - Qualitative
    - How do African American men and women describe their gender role socialization experiences?
    - How have the gender role socialization experiences of African American men and women influenced their current perceptions of gender roles for men and women?
    - What are the perceptions of African American men and women about gender role socialization practices of African Americans versus the dominant culture and other ethnic groups?
The Current Study: Methods

- Sequential mixed methods design

- Sample
  - Ages 20-65
  - African American defined
    - Refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa, but who were U.S. born, and who had U.S.-born parents

- Sample con.
  - Exclusion criteria
    - Individuals who were first generation Black Africans, meaning having at least one parent who was born in Africa
    - Individuals who were biracial and had at least one parent who was a member of another ethnic culture other than U.S. born African American
    - Individuals from nationalities (e.g. Jamaican, Cuban, Dominican) other than American but who had origins from the Black racial groups of Africa
The Current Study: Methods

- **G*Power Software**
  - Utilized to conduct an a priori power analysis
    - Type of Test (i.e. \( t \) test)
    - Level of power (i.e. .80)
    - Effect size (i.e. Medium effect size - Cohen’s \( d \) .5)
    - Alpha level (i.e. .01)

- **Analysis results**
  - A total sample size of 164 needed to detect statistical significance
    - 82 females
    - 82 males
The Current Study: Methods

- **Instrumentation**
  - **Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale-Short Form BB (SRES-BB)**
    - Created by Lynda and Daniel King (1981)
    - Age requirement
      - 20-65 years of age
    - Composed of 25 items
  - Measures sex-role egalitarianism across 5 domains
    - Marital, parental, employment, social-interpersonal/heterosexual, and educational roles
  - Answered using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree
  - Higher scores on the SRES-BB are representative of a more egalitarian attitude
  - Reliability coefficient of .94 on the SRES-BB.
  - Test-retest reliability at a 3-week interval was .88
The Current Study: Methods

- **Data collection**
  - Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Counseling Listserv
  - The Counselor Education and Supervision Network Listserv
  - Corpus Christi & Nationally
    - Churches, barber shops, various fraternity, sorority, and other professional organizations, door to door request, basketball courts, high school and collegiate sports staff, etc.

- **Quantitative results**
  - Reliability of Scores
    - $\alpha = .91$
    - There are 5 items on the Marital subscale ($\alpha = .66$)
    - There are 5 items on the Parental subscale ($\alpha = .84$)
    - There are 6 items on the Employment subscale ($\alpha = .64$)
    - SRES-BB total and subscale scores ($\alpha = .74$)

- **Descriptives**
  - Participants
    - Total of $n = 183$ participants
    - $n = 86$ men (47%) & $n = 97$ women (53%)
The Current Study: Demographics

□ Age
  □ Participants ranged from ages 20-63
  □ The median age of the sample was 32
  □ The mode was 29

□ Education
  □ Largest percentage of the sample possessed a master degree 32.8% (n = 60)
  □ Bachelor degree at 22.4% (n = 41)
  □ Some college at 18% (n = 33)
  □ Doctoral degree at 13.7% (n = 25)
  □ Associate degree at 5% (n = 10)
  □ High school diploma at 4.9% (n = 9)
  □ General Education Development (GED) at 1.6% (n = 3)
  □ 1st-12th grade at 1.1 percent (n = 2)

□ Annual Income
  □ Median annual income was $50,000 with a range from $0-$155,000
The Current Study: Demographics

- Marital status
  - 36.6% \((n = 67)\) were single
  - 33.9% \((n = 62)\) were married
  - 23% \((n = 42)\) in a relationship
  - 5.5% \((n = 10)\) divorced
  - 1.1% \((n = 2)\) were widowed

- Two major influences to gender role development
  - Family 10.3% \((n = 19)\)
  - Family & Bible 9.3% \((n = 17)\)
The Current Study: Demographics

□ Hear about the study
  □ 15.3% \( (n = 28) \) via CESNET
  □ 9.3% \( (n = 17) \) TAMUCC-Counseling Listserv
  □ 4.9% \( (n = 9) \) church
  □ 70.5% \( (n = 129) \) other
  □ 30.1% \( (n = 56) \) were requested to participate by the researcher
  □ 7.7% \( (n = 14) \) by friends
  □ 6.6% \( (n = 12) \) via Facebook.
□ Participants reported hearing about the study through a multitude of outlets including university Listservs, social media, professors, and friends and family of the researcher
The Current Study: Results

□ Quantitative analysis
  □ Independent $t$-test
    □ Conducted to assess if statistically significant differences in overall score on the SRES-BB existed between men and women
    □ .01 alpha level was utilized
    □ Male and female groups were normally distributed - box plots examined
    □ Homogeneity of variances assumption was not met
      □ Due to equal sample sizes my results were robust against threats to normality or variance assumptions
    □ Statistically significant differences were detected between men and women respondents: $t(181) = 5.91$, $p = .001$
    □ Effect size was large $d = -1.33$: indicative of meaningful differences between the groups
  □ MANOVA
    □ Conducted to determine if statistically significant differences existed between African American men and women on SRES-BB subscales to include employment, marital, and parental roles
    □ .01 alpha level utilized
    □ A statistically significant effect was identified between gender and the three dependent variables, Wilks’ $\lambda = .809$, $F(3, 179) = 14.06$, $p < .001$
The Current Study: Results

- MANOVA con.
  - Approximately 19% of the variance in the model was accounted for in the combined dependent variables across the subscales yielding a strong effect
  - A post hoc sensitivity power analysis was conducted
    - Given the sample size of $n = 183$ statistical significance would be detected for a small ($f^2 = .05$) effect size given the sample size
  - A post hoc discriminant analysis was conducted to determine how gender differences were manifested across the dependent variables
    - One discriminant function: Wilks’ $\lambda = .81$, $\chi^2 (3) = 37.98$, $p = .001$
    - Approximately 100% of the variance in the model was accounted for in the discriminant function for employment, marital, and parental total subscale scores
The Current Study: Results

- MANOVA con.
  - Marital subscale loaded strongly ($r = .96$) and had a strong relationship ($\beta = .679$) to the discriminant function
  - Parental subscale loaded strongly ($r = .85$) but did not have a strong relationship ($\beta = .339$) to the discriminant function
  - Employment loaded the weakest ($r = .58$) and had a weak relationship ($\beta = .103$) to the discriminant function
The Current Study: Results

- Phenomenological Inquiry
  - “Phenomenology is a study, the ways in which the world appears, or presents itself, to us in experience” (Heinamaa, 1999).
  - The purpose of this phenomenological exploration:
    - To explore the gender role socialization experiences of participants in this study who previously reported sex-role egalitarian attitudes.
    - To illustrate how African American men and women in this sample describe their gender role socialization experiences.
    - To explore how their gender role socialization experiences have shaped current views of the roles men and women are perceived to assume.
    - To explore their perceived beliefs about whether or not differences exist between African Americans and other ethnic groups regarding gender role socialization experiences.
The Current Study: Results

- **Qualitative Data**
  - 8 participants (4 men & 4 women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>SRES-BB Score</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Annual Income</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Gender</th>
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</table>
The Current Study: Results

- 8 Themes
  - Familial Generational Socialization
    - Sub-theme: The significance of displaying respect in familial and interpersonal relationships
  - Communal Instillation of Religious/Spiritual Values
    - Sub-theme: Women’s submission in the marital union
  - Gender Role Flexibility
    - Sub-theme 1: The influence of relationship status
    - Sub-theme 2: The value of independence in self-care
    - Sub-theme 3: Impromptu and intentional life transitions
    - Sub-theme 4: Female empowerment in role fluidity
  - The Influence of Educational Accomplishment on Gender Role Socialization
  - The Influence of Society and Social Networking on Gender Roles
  - Male Gender Role Norms
    - Sub-theme 1: The primary financial contributor
    - Sub-theme 2: The protector
    - Sub-theme 3: Fulfillment of maintenance tasks
The Current Study: Results

- **Women Gender Role Norms**
  - Sub-theme 1: The caretaker and nurturer
  - Sub-theme 2: Financial contributor
  - Sub-theme 3: Chief executive officer of the household
  - Sub-theme 4: Spousal undergirdance
  - Sub-theme 5: Instillation of religious values and routines
  - Sub-theme 6: Fulfillment of domestic tasks
  - Sub-theme 7: Paradoxical messages

- **Ethnic Cultural Differences in Gender Role Socialization**
Limitations

- Self-report inventories and interviews may be limited due to each individual’s biases as well as their willingness to volunteer for a study in the social sciences (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007)

- Utilizing the SRES-BB
  - The non-inclusion of people over the age of sixty-five
  - The short form was designed for the total score on the instrument to be derived
    - The short form was not designed for subscale scores on the instrument to be derived

- Time
  - Recruitment of participants with more diverse socio-economic and educational attainment statuses

- Demographic Information
  - Did not collect geographical location of origin or current location
Implications

- Implications for Counselors and Counselor Educators
  - The results indicated a need for counselor educators and practitioners to explore the possible meaning attached to labels such as one’s gender or ethnicity
  - Awareness of systemic issues that can impact seemingly unrelated areas such as gender role socialization practices
  - Counselor educators and practitioners should be aware that attributions of privilege credited to being White, appear to be true of middle and upper-class Whites, but not Whites of low socio-economic status
  - The results of this study provided implications for counseling African American individuals, couples, and families
    - Experiences with discrimination, gender role strain, and economic and power differentials can lead to marital conflict
    - Incorporating religion and spirituality in the treatment of African American clients.
Recommendations

- **Future Research**
  - When studying sex-role egalitarian attitudes
    - Utilize a multidimensional assessment
    - Utilize an instrument that measures social desirability
    - Consider an instrument that assesses gender equality
  - Develop an updated assessment of the sex-role egalitarianism construct
  - Inquire about participants definitions of equality, independence, and egalitarianism
  - Replicate this study cross-culturally
  - Explore coping strategies employed by African American women, particularly where role strain is an issue
  - A qualitative exploration of low socio-economic status White culture
References


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