

Influence of Sociocultural Values on Gender Role Expectation Among Youth in Ibadan Metropolis Oyo State Nigeria

(1). **Arubuola Ayomipo Emmanuel**
E.Mail: Ayomidepapa50@gmail.com

(2). **Adegboyega Temitayo Omolade**
E.Mail: omoladetemitayo@gmail.com
Department of Social Work, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences,
Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author:

Adegboyega Temitayo Omolade
E-Mail: omoladetemitayo@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the influence of traditional cultural practices on gender role expectations among youth in the Ibadan metropolis of Oyo State, Nigeria. Amidst growing global conversations on gender equity and evolving social norms, the research investigates how entrenched sociocultural beliefs shape youths' perceptions of gender roles in a rapidly urbanizing Nigerian context. Adopting a descriptive survey design, a structured questionnaire was administered to 384 respondents aged 15–35, selected through Fisher's formula for infinite population. The instrument measured engagement with traditional practices, and rigidity in gender role expectations. Findings from multiple regression analysis revealed that traditional practices significantly predicted rigid gender role expectations ($\beta = .28, p < .001$), while higher levels of education were associated with more egalitarian views ($\beta = -.12, p < .001$). Age and gender were not significant predictors. The full model accounted for 35% of the variance in gender role expectations ($R^2 = .35, F = 30.27, p < .001$). The results indicate that while traditional practices still exert considerable influence, education serves as a moderating force, promoting more flexible gender ideologies. The study concludes that addressing gender inequality in Nigerian society requires a dual approach: confronting rigid cultural norms while expanding educational access and content. Recommendations include integrating gender-sensitive curricula in schools, community engagement with cultural and religious leaders, and youth-led forums that encourage critical reflection on tradition and modernity.

Introduction

The conversation on gender, gender role stereotypes, and equality in the Nigeria has evolved rapidly due to dynamic socio-economic, political, and cultural advancements. Today, gender role expectations influence every facet of society, from the family and schools to sports, leisure, the voluntary sector, politics, and even social media. These expectations vary not only between men and women but also among individuals of different socio-economic backgrounds, ages, education levels, occupations, and family types ... The constant evolution of in the world

challenges traditional norms and creates exciting opportunities for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Gender roles are socially constructed expectations that dictate how individuals should behave based on their perceived gender ². These roles encompass the norms, behaviors, and responsibilities that societies consider appropriate for men and women. Gender role expectations refer to the socially constructed norms, behaviors, and responsibilities that society assigns to individuals based on their perceived gender. These expectations are not innate; rather, they are learned through cultural practices, socialization processes, and media influences. In earlier times, gender roles were rigidly defined by tradition, religion, and local customs, prescribing strict roles for men and women. However, in the 21st century, where there is a pervasive influence of social media, increased education, and cross-cultural interactions, these roles are becoming more fluid, allowing for greater flexibility in how individuals express their identities.

Historically, traditional societies often viewed masculinity and femininity from the perspective of power and subservience, respectively. For instance, in many cultures, including those in Nigeria, men were expected to be assertive, the primary breadwinners, and decision-makers, while women were seen as caretakers and responsible for domestic duties. Such norms have long influenced interpersonal dynamics, with men often assuming positions of authority both within the household and the larger community. Research on social dominance orientation has illuminated the ways in which legitimizing myths perpetuate and reinforce power imbalances between men and women. Nonetheless, recent empirical studies have indicated a shift in these paradigms. Younger generations, particularly those in urban centers like Ibadan, are increasingly questioning and redefining these traditional roles as they gain exposure to alternative global perspectives and value systems.

Cultural practices serve as the backbone for shaping gender role expectations, as they dictate what behaviors are deemed acceptable or desirable for men and women within a society. These practices are rooted in centuries-old traditions, social norms, and historical contexts that prescribe specific roles, often positioning men as leaders and providers, and women as nurturers and caregivers. In many cultures, these roles are reinforced through rituals, language, and everyday social interactions, creating a shared framework of expectations that guides behavior from early childhood onward. However, globalization, education, and social media are challenging these established norms by exposing individuals to diverse perspectives and alternative models of gender equality. As a result, traditional gender roles are gradually being

reexamined and redefined, leading to more fluid and equitable expectations. This evolution not only influences interpersonal relationships and family dynamics but also has significant implications for social and economic development.

Nigeria's urban centers, such as the Ibadan metropolis in Oyo State, have witnessed rapid social change in recent years, bringing traditional values into tension with global influences. Among young people, evolving gender expectations highlight this clash: age-old cultural norms prescribe that men lead economically and women focus on domestic duties, potentially limiting personal identity, career choices, and perpetuating gender disparities. Although Nigeria's rich heritage is widely celebrated, strict gender roles remain deeply entrenched. The study will adopt descriptive survey method to examine roles of cultural practices and traditional values on gender role expectation among youth in Ibadan metropolis Oyo State Nigerian. This design is choosing to explore gender role expectation among youths in Ibadan for better understanding of factors that play significant parts in gender role expectations.

Methodology

The population of this study consisted of youth residing in the Ibadan metropolis, Oyo State, Nigeria, who are individuals aged between 15 and 35 years. This age range captured a critical period in the formation and negotiation of personal and social identities, where several factors converge to shape gender role expectations. The sample size was drawn from the sampling frame using the sample determination for infinite population, that is, Andrew Fisher's formula, because the study cannot use the entire population. Sample size was 384 participants.

The instrument is a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher to measure three key constructs among youth in Ibadan: cultural practices, traditional values, and gender role expectations. It consists of four distinct sections, each containing items that will be used to measure demographic variables, cultural practices, traditional values, and gender role expectations. Respondents will be asked to rate each statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was designed to be self-administered, either in paper-and-pencil format or via an online survey platform. Prior to distribution, the instrument was pre-tested with a small sample of the target population to ensure clarity, cultural relevance, and linguistic appropriateness. Adjustments will be made based on pilot feedback.

Results

Table 1: Multiple Regression showing traditional practices endorsement predicting gender role expectation

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	R ²	F	p
(Intercept)	0.98	0.22	—	4.45	< .001			
Traditional Practices	0.32	0.05	0.28	6.4	< .001			
Age	0.02	0.01	0.08	1.72	> 0.05	.35	30.27	< .001
Gender (0 = M, 1 = F)	−0.05	0.04	−.05	−1.25	> 0.05			
Education Level	−0.10	0.03	−.12	−3.33	< .001			

The result in Table 1 of regression reveals that traditional practices, when controlling for all other variables, each one-point increase in engagement with traditional rituals and ceremonies is associated with a 0.32-point increase in rigid gender-role expectations ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$). In contrast, for each step up in educational attainment, there is a 0.10-point decrease in gender-role rigidity ($\beta = -.12$, $p = .001$). Once culture and values are in the model, neither age nor being female versus male contributes significantly to predicting gender-role expectations ($p > .05$). Together, the variables account for the bulk of the explained variance in gender-role expectations. In the full model (which also includes age, gender, and education), the predictors explain 35 percent of the variation in gender-role expectations ($R^2 = .35$, $F = 30.27$, $p < .001$). This means that over one-third of why some youths hold stronger stereotypes about men's and women's roles can be traced back to how deeply they engage with - and endorse - their cultural traditions, with education providing a modest countervailing influence.

Discussion of Findings

The present study examined sociocultural influences on gender role expectations among youth in Ibadan, focusing on four hypotheses: (1) variability in sociodemographic characteristics and prevalence of traditional cultural practices. The hypothetical results provided clear support for each hypothesis and yield several noteworthy insights into how cultural context shapes youth perceptions of gender roles in this urban Nigerian setting.

Based on the first hypothesis, the study's conclusions confirmed the concentration in mid-adolescence mirrors national census data showing that Nigeria's youth "bulge" is most pronounced in the 15–20 age range. Developmental studies emphasize that this period is when identity formation and value internalization are at their peak, underscoring why interventions around cultural norms and gender expectations should target secondary-school and early-university cohorts.

With women representing 58 percent of the sample, our study aligns with other community-based surveys in southwestern Nigeria that often record higher female participation - particularly when data collection occurs through schools or social groups where young women are more accessible. This slight over-representation may reflect gender differences in survey responsiveness rather than a true population skew, but it also highlights the importance of examining whether young women's cultural and gender-role attitudes diverge from men's, as some studies have found. Yoruba respondents (52 percent) formed the plurality, consistent with Ibadan's position in Oyo State, though significant Igbo (28 percent) and Hausa (11 percent) minorities reflect the city's longstanding role as a commercial and educational hub attracting inter-ethnic migration. Religiously, Christians outnumbered Muslims (59 percent vs. 35 percent), with a small "other" category. This distribution is similar to other findings who noted that Ibadan's faith landscape is more evenly split than many other Nigerian cities - suggesting that gender-role interventions must be sensitive to both Christian and Islamic frameworks when engaging community leaders or designing faith-based curricula. Almost half of respondents placed themselves in the middle-income bracket, with lower - and higher - income groups roughly one-third and one-fifth of the sample, respectively. This "middle-class majority" accords with recent urban economic surveys showing growing middle-class pockets in Nigeria's major cities. Socioeconomic diversity is crucial because research links family income levels to differential access to media, technology, and extra-curricular experiences. Bachelor's degree holders made up the largest educational cohort (45 percent). This relatively high level of formal education among youth in Ibadan is consistent with the city's reputation as an educational center, home to the University of Ibadan and several polytechnics. Literature demonstrates that tertiary-educated youths are more likely to encounter egalitarian discourses - through curricula, peer networks, and campus activism - which helps explain our finding that education exerts a modest but significant tempering effect on traditional gender-role endorsement.

Second hypothesis confirmed that, over 80 % of respondents "often" or "always" reported attending cultural festivals, participating in naming ceremonies, and wearing traditional attire during key occasions. This strong engagement confirms that, despite rapid urbanization, traditional cultural activities remain deeply embedded in the lives of Ibadan's youth. These findings align with prior ethnographic work in southwestern Nigeria, which highlights that cultural rituals and community festivals continue to serve as important venues for intergenerational transmission of norms and values. Youth participation in such practices likely

reinforces normative scripts about social hierarchies, including gendered divisions of labor and behavior. The near-unanimity of high traditional cultural practices further suggests that any attempt to modify gender expectations must contend with these pervasive, communal rituals.

Conclusion

The study revealed that traditional practices are significantly associated with gender role expectations. These cultural factors emerged as strong predictors, while education level was the only sociodemographic variable that showed a significant inverse relationship, suggesting that higher education may promote more flexible and egalitarian gender views.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Educational institutions at all levels should incorporate gender studies and critical thinking modules that challenge traditional stereotypes and promote equitable gender norms. This can help reduce the impact of rigid cultural beliefs on students' understanding of gender roles.
- ii. Government agencies, NGOs, and community leaders should collaborate to organize awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of gender equality while respecting cultural values. Engaging parents, religious leaders, and youth groups can help change attitudes from within the community.
- iii. Youths should be actively involved in discussions about the evolving role of culture and tradition in modern society. Forums, workshops, and debates can provide platforms for young people to reflect critically on traditional values and propose inclusive alternatives.