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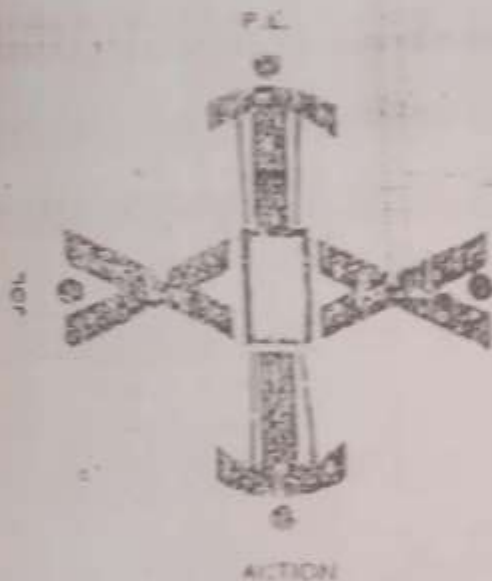


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RESPONSIBILITY TRAINING AS PREDICTOR OF SELF REPORTED GENDER BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS

BY

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ABSTRACT

Parents play significant roles in the training of female children towards their future roles, either as homemakers, or towards the career roles or a combination of both. This "Scripting" may influence some so much so that they do not play anything else but the script. The present study was carried out with the aim of finding out if there is a correlation between identified responsibility training given to the subjects under study in their younger years and their present sex role orientation. The study made use of women in university degree programmes, most of whom were homemakers and workers. The results showed that there was a significant relationship between sex role orientation and responsibility training among the subjects.

INTRODUCTION

The motivation to regulate behaviour to conform to either femaleness or maleness cuts across culture. Cultural myths then become self fulfilling prophecies, and thus do we arrive at the phenomenon known as "sex-typing" (Bem, 1981). Sex-typed individuals are seen to differ from other individuals not primarily in the degree of femininity, or masculinity they possess, but in the extent to which their self-concepts and behaviours are organised on the basis of gender rather than some other dimension. Gender schematic means a college student who might want to decide what new hobby to try will readily make the decision through the lens of gender and would therefore ask what sex is the hobby? What sex am I? Do they match? If so then the hobby will be considered further, if not, then it will be rejected without further consideration. Most people are said to be unaware that their per-

ceptions are organised on the basis of gender.

Gender schema therefore, to Sandra Bem is a theory of process not content. Sex-typed individuals are seen as processing information in terms of and conforming to whatever definitions of masculinity and femininity the culture happens to provide. It is the process of partitioning the world into two equivalent classes on the basis of gender schema. This tendency is reflected in the thinking of parents and guardians and it influences the training they give to their wards. This is more so for female wards. Parents who believe that their wards would not play much role apart from that of a wife, mother and homemaker would not make effort to give much training apart from the essentials of the above. Some may think that they would want their wards to be independent in varied ways and this would be reflected in the sort of training they give too. Sometimes this sort of training goes through the

school system in the hidden curriculum. The training a person has therefore would influence her sex role perception and orientation. Different studies and writers support this postulation.

For example, almost from the time girls enter schools, they appear to restrict the range of occupations open to them. Looft (1971) in a study found that more than three quarters of the girls in a study when asked "what do you want to be when you grow up?" Choose either to be a nurse or to be a teacher as first choice. It was interesting to find that several of the girls responded that they would be mothers, whereas not a single boy said he would be a father. Girls at all ages between nine and seventeen, also choose lower ranking occupations than boys of the same age. Wirtenberg and Nakamura (1976) observed that

The net result of all this was that by the time they finish their formal education (in most cases high school, in fewer cases, college) there are in the expectations and preparation that women and men have for their life work.

In the classroom, teachers are also important figures of note in the hidden - curriculum. They reinforce "sex appropriate" behaviours in various forms (Mussen, Conger, Kagan and Husten, 1984). Also all the teachers in higher institutions of learning are males, implying an absence of role models to inspire female students to achieve.

For the adult woman, who might be burdened by her role as a mother, overburdened by domestic labour and household chores, she might be left with little time and energy to pursue any income generating work, or to struggle to eman-

cipate herself, educationally, through programmes like the adult literacy programme (McLweeney and Freedman, 1980).

In another study by Block and Harrington (1974), parents were made to be in a teaching situation with their children and their behaviour was observed. The fathers of boys were said to have been more concerned with the child's achievement and emphasized the cognitive aspect of the teaching situation, while the fathers of girls appeared more amused to the interpersonal aspects and less concerned with performance. The implications suggested by the researcher include among others that:

1. Cognitive achievement may be a less salient socialisation domain for mothers, relative to fathers,
2. The belief that child rearing is the mothers responsibility may have obscured the fact that fathers may be more important in certain areas
3. Failure to study the father-child interaction may have led to an under estimation of sex differences in achievement pressures and skill training.

METHODS

The subjects of the study were women undergoing degree programmes in selected Nigerian Universities. The common factor among the subjects was that they were all females, a high proportion of them were also married. The generated hypothesis is as follows:

The instruments were used, the first was to find out the sort of training that they were given in childhood and adolescence, and the other was used to determine the subject sex role orientation.

Table I. *ANOVA analysis for sex role orientation and responsibility training among subjects*

Sources	DF	SS	MS	F-value	P-F
P	1	41151.43	41151.43	137.44	0.0000
RT	2	3081.99	1541.99	4.48	0.0088
SP & RT	2	0.000	0.000	0.00	1.0000
Error	212	67489.78	318.35		
Total	217	112147.52			

Alpha = 0.05

As observed in Table I, the relationship between sex role orientation and responsibility training among the subjects was significant, ($F_{2, 212} = 4.48$,

$P < 0.0088$). To locate the point of significant difference, the Duncan multiple range test was used and the result is as presented in Table 2.

Table II: *Duncan multiple range test for sex role orientation and responsibility training among subjects*

ST	RT	N	X	ME	DF	Critical Range
A	Career	14	100.33			
A	Family	10	94.50			
A	Family/Career	6	98.50			
F	Career	115	65.80			
F	Family	93	67.82			
F	Family/Career	18	61.39			

As could be observed from Table II, there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the androgynous students who felt they were initially trained for career and those trained for family responsibilities. The former had significantly higher mean scores than the later. It was also observed that most (33 out of 61, i.e. 54.1%) of the subjects in the androgynous group indicated that they were trained for career responsibilities while most (93 out of 157, i.e. 59.2%) of those in the feminine group

said they were trained for family responsibilities. This implied that sex role orientation to some extent related to one's perceived responsibility training (for family or career) in childhood or adolescence. A further analysis to confirm the above findings was deemed necessary, and in this instance, the Chi-square was applied on the frequency distribution in Table II to test for significance of difference between the obtained frequencies. This is on Table III.

Table III: Chi-square test for SRO and responsibility training among students.

GROUP	CAREER	FAMILY	C & F	TOTAL
A	33(11.1)	22(16.1)	6(3.4)	61
F	46(28.4)	93(41.4)	18(8.6)	157
Column Total	79	115	24	218

Note: Expected frequencies are shown in parentheses.

From Table III, the Chi-square value of 12.1 which is greater than the table value of 5.9 for 2df was obtained. This confirmed that there was significant difference in the responsibility training of androgynous and feminine oriented subjects. A greater proportion of the androgynous type (54.1%) were trained for career while a greater proportion (59.2%) of the feminine type were trained for family responsibilities. The study also revealed a greater number of the subjects were feminine in their sex role orientation which goes to show that many females are still sex typed.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to find out if the sort of responsibility training given to a female at the childhood or adolescence period could influence the sex role orientation. The results of the findings indicated that there could be a relationship and this was found to be significantly so, using Anova and the Chi-square analysis. From the results of the study, it is indicative that with the changing times, parents should change their training style. Moreso, since most females now work in competitive and challenging careers and succeeding in these environment requires some behavioural dispositions which may be quite different from what may be required at the home front.

Therefore, it is necessary that females are trained both for the home and

the workforce, to equip them maximally. The males also need to be trained for both the family life and the workforce when this permeates the society, labellings of females in achievement settings will reduce, tensions that usually arise where there are female heads will reduce in parastatals, when men readily accept such headships, and there will be more cooperation among men and women in the workforce and at home. Men and women will learn to complement each other rather than see themselves as competitors.

There will be more togetherness and this will invariably instil a sense of confidence and security among the sexes which will go a long way in making for personality development of the people as well as national development.

Other nations that have been able to move speedily in their national life had to learn this lesson and breakdown social rigidities and constraints, Nigeria can take a clue from these nations.

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