



Factors affecting Changing Gender roles among farm families in Osun State, Nigeria

O.K. Jubreel^{1*}, K.Y. Ogunleye², A.R. Ayoade³, D.T. Adeomi⁴

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria¹

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria²

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria³

Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria⁴

Corresponding Email: okoladipupo@lautech.edu.ng*

Received: 03-03-2024 Reviewed: 17-03-2024 Accepted: 04-04-2024

Abstract

Gender roles are assumptions that individuals, and the general public have of people based on their biological characteristics. These assumptions are usually as a result of values and beliefs of the society. In spite of the global war against gender inequalities, many societies in Africa are structured in a way that socio-cultural norms form the basis of gender roles. This reflects on many households where men are typically favoured than women in gender roles. However, changing trends across the world has impacted on many areas of society. Therefore, the study assessed the key factors influencing changing gender roles among farm families in Osun State, Nigeria. Data were collected through interview schedule. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select twenty (20) rural farming households from eight Local Government Areas in the State. Data were described and analyzed using percentage, mean and Pearson product moment correlation. Findings revealed a mean age of 43.5 ± 11.73 years. The mean household size was 6.9 ± 1.7 persons. Access to education and resources ($p = 0.001$) and economic opportunities ($p = 0.002$). Likewise, environmental factors generally had significant influence on changing gender roles ($p = 0.01$). This study points to the importance of ensuring that the fair share of responsibilities with regards to gender roles in society is constantly promoted and highlights of their contributions is well recognized.

Keywords: Gender, Roles, Farm-families, factors, Sex, household

Introduction

One of the issues facing modern global communities is gender inequality, which has attracted the attention of human rights advocates, activists, and governmental and non-

governmental organizations that work to eradicate gender inequality and all of its associated vices worldwide (Muchomba, 2015). In essence, gender inequality in all of its appearances stems from the social and economic customs of each society (Bourguignon, 2018).

Now, gender roles, are socially prescribed and manufactured standards that are given to individuals in societies based on sex differences, and they are not constant throughout time and space. It is necessary to know the definition of "gender" in order to comprehend the word "gender roles". Gender" is a social term that is often confused with the term "sex:" Gender and sex are two distinct notions. Biologically, sex is defined by an individual's fundamental sex characteristics. Conversely, gender denotes the meanings, values, and traits that individuals attribute to various sexes (Muehlenhard & Peterson, 2011). Biologically-oriented theories ascribe gender differences to the differential biological roles played by males and females (Pelletier *et al.*, 2016).

Invariably, gender roles can cover a wide range of behaviors, including those associated with family, the economy, and other societal roles (Eagly a& Wood, 2016). These gender roles, have historical context and are specific to a place. Through socialization and the formation of gender roles, the behaviors of men and women generally support and sustain division of labor (Eagly a& Wood, 2016). Some scholars contend that the biological and evolutionary distinctions between males and females are the source of gender roles (Winchester, 2013). Throughout history, women in the African have played significant role in their communities, serving as caretakers, farmers and entrepreneurs. They were responsible for taking care of the household, raising children (Asuquo & Akpan-Idiok 2021) and preparing food for the family. Women were also involved in agriculture, often cultivating crops alongside their male counterparts. In some communities, women were also involved in trade and commerce, selling goods in local markets.

Earlier in Africa, women stayed back at home while their husbands and sons would go to work at the farm. However, these women would not stay idle but engaged in manual processing of food crops and other farm produce asides their housekeeping duties. With the introduction of formal education, industrialization and paid employment, men as well as women are become drifted into the modern sector of the economy (Oladejo, Olawuyi, & Olawuyi, 2011). Gender roles have therefore undergone major changes over time, especially with colonialism and westernization.

As African societies continue to experience increasing social and economic transformations, traditional family systems undergo significant shifts, giving way to new practices and dynamics, with the circulation of western cultural values, ideologies, and practices being identified as a major catalyst in reshaping family structures across the continent (Adaki, 2023). For example, in many African societies, women are no longer restricted to the home but are now also involved in the workforce and politics, however, there are still social and economic challenges that prevent the African Women from being fully enabled (Klaa & Buheji, 2020).

Sadly, the lack of awareness of the unique roles and contributions of men and women farmers results in policy makers, planners, and extension personnel assuming that the situation and needs of farmers are the same, regardless of gender. This results in a partial view of reality, focusing on male farmers' needs rather than women farmers', affecting agricultural production and food security. Thus, policy making, planning and extension services are built on a partial

view of reality (FAO, 2023). Also, research had generally focused on the improvement of production and technologies for men's crops and tasks, while those of women are neglected.

The objectives of the study therefore include:

1. To identify the personal characteristics of farm families in the study area.
2. To determine the environmental factors influencing gender roles in the study area and
3. To investigate the changing gender roles in the study area.

Hypothesis

In null form, the hypothesis was:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between selected environmental factors of the respondents and their change in gender roles.

Literature Review

The issue of uneven gender relations is prevalent around the world, although it is pioneered more in low-income nations than in developed nations (Caracciolo and Santeramo, 2013). Agyeman (2016) asserts that gender dynamics within African societies have historically been linked to the members' ancestry and customs. For instance, the land tenure system in Africa has prompted intense conversations about access, ownership, and advantages via a gender lens, with women being viewed as the group that is oppressed (Byamugisha, 2016).

These contradictory conversations revolve around the newly interpreted gender roles that modernization have placed on African civilizations, which run counter to long-held African realities that some Africans, shockingly, still dance to (Akinola, 2018). Despite the progress that has been made, women in African culture still face a number of challenges. For example, women are still underrepresented in many areas of society, including politics and business. Women also often have limited access to education and healthcare and are more likely to live in poverty than men. Gender roles have evolved in the contemporary world, with women performing men's work and vice versa (Priyashantha, De Alwis, & Welm illa, 2022). Several cross-cultural studies confirm this change, with minor exceptions, highlighting the evolving nature of gender roles (Priyashantha, De Alwis, & Welmilla, 2022). While there are jobs in agriculture for both men and women worldwide, these roles are rapidly changing and vary widely by region. Quisumbing et al (2014), highlight gender differences in access to productive resources, highlighting women's limited opportunities in the agricultural sector, affecting both smallholder farming and larger commercial systems. Understanding agriculture involves recognizing gender dynamics, but the terms "sex" and "gender" can be unclear and inconsistent, making it crucial to distinguish between biological categories of male and female. Although there are distinctions between men and women, the majority of modern researchers agree that these disparities are mostly the result of societal structures. Relationships, cultural norms, and the media all serve to reinforce gender stereotypes, which are instilled through traditional, social, and educational training (Winchester, 2013).

Madueke (2014) highlights the culturally assigned responsibilities of men and women in African societies and families, where men were responsible for all family matters and labor divisions within households since the dawn of man. For instance, Ngubane (2010) and Ngohengo (2021) highlight the persistent issue of men as primary decision-makers in African families, despite collective production efforts, and the challenges posed by campaigns for

gender equality in traditional African settings. Gender roles may be shaped by ideological, religious, ethnic, economic, and cultural factors and are a key determinant of the distribution of responsibilities and resources between men and women. Gender roles are socially, rather than biologically, determined, they are fluid and subject to change based on changing norms, resources, policies, and contexts. “Gender” and “women” are often but inaccurately used interchangeably. Gender refers to relations between men and women, not an exclusive focus on women. Much of the literature and practice of agricultural development has focused on men, an attention to gender often means rebalancing and paying more attention to women but should not be to the neglect of men. Gender also intersects with other domains of disadvantage, such as poverty, caste, ethnicity, age or life-cycle stage, and the like. Thus, while it is often used as an analytical category, it should not be taken in isolation from other factors that affect development outcomes.

Research methods

Study Area

The study was carried out in Osun State, Nigeria. It is an agrarian State in the South-West geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The State consist of 30 Local Government Areas and the Yoruba ethnic group is dominant in the region. Osun State is blessed with fertile land, making it one of Nigeria's main agricultural hubs. The region's primary crops include plantain, cassava, cocoa, palm oil, locust beans and various fruits

Sampling Procedure and Sample size:

A four-stage sampling procedure was used in this study. Osun State was purposively selected for the study based on the high presence of farm families. Next was a random selection of twenty-five percent of Local Governments Areas in the State. Followed by a random selection of 1 rural community from the each of the selected 8 Local Government areas. Lastly, 20 farming households were randomly selected from each of the 8 communities to give a total of 160 respondents for the study.

Sources of data:

Interview Schedule was utilized to collect the study's primary data. A well-structured interview schedule was used to collect data. A total of 160 instruments was prepared, while 158 respondents were available for enumeration.

Result/Findings

Result on personal characteristics of respondents (Table 1) showed that more than half (51.8%) of the famers were female. Majority (84.8%) were married and respondents had a mean age of 43.5 ± 11.73 years. A larger proportion (60.8%) of respondents had between 11 and 20 years farming experience. This show that the respondents are well experienced in farming. The mean years of formal education among the respondent was 3.7 ± 3.6 years. The

Factors affecting Changing Gender roles among farm families in Osun State, Nigeria

mean household size was 7.0 ± 1.7 members which is higher than the average rural household size of 5 members in Nigeria (Statista, 2019).

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by personal characteristics

Variable Table	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age (years)	<40 years	62	39.2	43.5 ± 11.73 years
	41-50 years	50	31.6	
	Above 50years	46	29.1	
Sex	Male	76	48.1	
	Female	82	51.8	
Formal education	No formal	69	43.6	3.7 ± 3.6 years
	1-6 years	68	43.1	
	7-12 years	21	13.3	
Household size	< 5 persons	7	4.4	6.9 ± 1.7 persons
	5-9 persons	145	91.2	
	>9 persons	7	4.4	
Marital status	Single	9	5.7	
	Married	134	84.8	
	Others	15	15.5	
Farming experience	<10years	28	17.7	16.32 ± 6.56 years
	11-20 years	96	60.8	
	21-30 years	34	21.5	

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 2 reveals that 81.0% of the respondents strongly agreed that, modernization could lead to changing gender roles. Likewise, a huge proportion of the respondents (77.8%) believed that gender bias in terms of inheritance, land ownership limits equal participation in farming activities. While a little above half (55.7%) of the respondents disbelieved that restricted access to education among women shapes the role they take. More than half of the respondents (62.7%) strongly agreed that religious institutions uphold rigid gender norms that prevent people from freely expressing their identity. The result on Table 2 further shows that a non-negligible proportion (41.1%) of the respondents believed that cultural beliefs and societal norms have influence on gender roles. Again, 43.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and 56.3% agreed that poor economic power limits people from breaking free from traditional gender roles.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by environmental factors

S/N	Items	SA %	A %	U %	D %	Sd %	Mean
1.	Modernization could lead to changing gender roles	81.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.81
2.	Access to economic opportunities have impact on perception of gender roles.	56.3	43.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.56
3.	Restricted access to education among women shapes the role they take.	0.0	4.4	0.0	39.9	55.7	4.46

3.	Cultural beliefs and societal norms have influence on gender roles take up.	41.1	27.2	15.2	8.2	8.2	3.84
4.	Poor economic power limits people from breaking free from traditional gender roles.	43.7	56.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.43
5.	Gender bias in terms of inheritance, land ownership limits equal participation in farming activities affects gender role.	77.8	22.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.77
6.	Gender equality/laws and promotions alters traditional norms and fuels the changing gender roles.	19.6	48.7	31.6	0.0	0.0	3.87
7.	Religious institutions uphold rigid gender norms that prevent people from freely expressing their identity	62.7	29.7	7.6	0.0	0.0	4.55
8	Rural communities are mostly faced with strict cultural gender responsibilities.	19.0	51.9	15.8	13.3	0.0	3.76
9	Access to education play a key role in challenging unwanted social norms	0.0	0.0	32.3	55.1	12.7	3.80

Source: Field survey, 2023

Table 3 reveals that 48.1% of the respondents agreed that men are primary bread winners in the family. Likewise, 80.7% of the believed that women venture in farming activities that were male dominated before. Very few of the respondents (12.4%) strongly disagreed that there has been no significant change towards greater equality, (55.5%) agreed that traditional gender norms constrain both men and women in their roles. Also, 65.3% strongly agreed that women are contributing more to household finances than before. Few of the farmers (18.0%) strongly disagreed that women prioritize family over career. A larger proportion (83.2%) of the respondent strongly believed that traditional gender norms does not determine one's farming choices. Only 12.4% of the respondents strongly agreed that traditional norms of masculinity dominance are abandoned

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Changing Gender Roles

S/N	Items	SA %	A %	U %	D %	SD %	Mean
1.	Traditional norms of masculinity dominance are abandoned.	12.4	18.6	27.4	16.4	25.2	3.23
2.	Increased access to formal education for girls leading to more opportunities beyond caregivers and housekeeping.	55.8	44.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.56

Factors affecting Changing Gender roles among farm families in Osun State, Nigeria

3.	Men and women have equal involvement in household responsibilities and caregiving.	40.9	15.7	34.7	2.2	6.6	2.18
3.	Men are naturally suited for leadership positions.	40.1	30.3	10.9	18.6	0.0	2.08
4.	Women are contributing more to household finances than before.	65.3	28.5	6.2	0.0	0.0	4.59
5.	Women venture in framing activities that were male dominated before.	80.7	19.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.81
6.	Men are primary bread winners in the family.	19.6	48.1	16.1	16.1	0	3.72
7.	There have been no significant change towards greater equality, the traditional norms and practices still dominates.	40.1	45.3	2.2	0	12.4	1.99
8	Women prioritize family over career	19.6	31.2	16.0	15.2	18.0	2.82
9	Traditional gender norms should not determine one's farming choices.	83.2	16.1	0.0	0.4	0.4	4.81
10	Traditional gender norms constrains both men and women in their roles	44.1	55.5	0.4	0.0	0.0	4.44

Source: Field survey, 2023

Hypothesis Test

Table 4 and 5 summarizes and shows that no significant relationship existed between environmental factors ($p = 0.325$) and the changing gender roles. Therefore, H_0 is accepted. However, a significant relationship existed between access to education and resources ($p=0.002$), Economic opportunities ($p=0.001$) and changing gender roles. H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

Table 4: Correlation analysis between Personal characteristics and Changing gender roles

	R	P	Decision
Access to education and resources	0.325	0.001	Significant
Economic opportunities	-0.389	0.002	Significant
Social expectation	-0.204	0.325	Not Significant

Source: Field survey, 2023

**($P < 0.01$)*

Result on Table 5 shows that there is a significant relationship between the environmental factors and changing gender roles ($p = 0.001$). Hence, H_0 is rejected and H_a is accepted.

Table 5: Analysis of the relationship between Environmental factors and Changing gender roles

	R	P-value	Decision
Environmental factors vs. change in gender roles	0.399	0.001	Significant

Source: Field survey, 2023 * $(P < 0.01)$

Discussions

Personal characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 reveals that 51.8% of the respondents were female while 48.1% were male. Result on age showed that 39.2% of the respondents were less than 40years, 31.6% were between 41-50years while 29.1% were more than 50 years of age. The mean age of the respondent was 43.5year. This shows that the respondents were more of the older generation. The result is similar to the findings of Olayiwola, Tashikalma and Giroh (2017) who found the means age of rural households in Oyo State to be 45.7years. This could have influence on gender roles because the older generation are more likely to interact mostly with historical and societal norms (Zhaoyang, *et al.*, 2018).

Education plays a vital role in the development of critical thinking in humans (Al-Shuaib, 2014). This is important in a person's interaction with people and decision making. Table 1 shows that 43.6% of the respondents had no- formal education, 43.1% of the respondents had between 1 and 6 years of formal education, while 13.3% of the respondents had between 7 and 12 years of formal education. The mean household size of the respondent was about 7 persons. This finding is similar to the findings of Ayoade and Adewole, (2015) who found the mean rural household size was about 7 in Southwest Nigeria.

Thomas and Philip (2015) opined that the majority of rural dwellers are married. The findings on marital status of respondents as shown on Table 1 indicates that majority (84.8%) of the respondents were married others were either separated, widowed or single. This suggest that respondents could have opportunities for shared responsivities and perceived gender roles differently.

Environmental factors

Wekwete, (2014) posited that women have limited access to credit, land, agricultural inputs, equipment and extension services and some issues embedded in the deep-rooted cultural norms and beliefs in the societies influence gender roles. The finding of the study revealed that selected environmental factors such as access to education and resources and economic opportunities had influence on changing gender roles. This is likely because access to employment, income and financial freedom in current times has the ability to empower individuals to challenge traditional gender believes. Likewise, access to education can promote awareness of gender issues resulting in more positive attitudes towards gender roles.

Again, the study generally reveals that environmental factors had a significant impact on changing gender roles which means that, these external variables especially have a notable impact on shaping perceptions and behaviours regarding gender roles.

Gender roles

Akinlolu (2022), posited that gendered perceptions may influence the aspirations and expectations and career choice of people. This study found that gender roles have shifted from the basic traditional practices where men and women are restricted to certain roles based on social perception. Women are contributing more to household finances than before; women venture in farming activities that were initially male dominated. Also, the respondents established that traditional gender norms should not determine one's career choices. In spite of these, it was found that the respondents were still strongly held back by some of the social beliefs as revealed in their disposition to question on traditional gender norms constrains both men and women in their roles. This means that barrier of career choices based on social norms is gradually tilting towards acceptance of better practice. This findings, corroborates the findings of Kulkarni & Nithyanand (2012), who found that respondents believed that social influences are important aspect of career choice. This suggest that, should there be more awareness and campaigns regarding gender equity, the respondents are more liable to accept and engage in fair share of responsibilities and roles.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that access to education shapes the role that people take. Although, gender stereotypes still exist, there is evolving cultural shift due to civilization and it does influence the way gender roles are perceived. This shows the significance of societal, cultural and economic frameworks in determining perceptions and practices related to gender roles. The study therefore recommends that gender inclusive education, community outreach and awareness in collaborations with local institutions should be encouraged in order to foster positive changes and practices related to gender roles.

References

- Adaki, Andeskebtso. (2023). The Role of Westernization in the Changing African Family Structures: A Systematic Literature Review. *Humanities, Society, and Community*. 10.31098/hsc.v1i1.
- Agyeman, J., Schlosberg, D., Craven, L., & Matthews, C. (2016). Trends and directions in Environmental Justice: From inequity to everyday life, community, and just sustainabilities. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 41(1), 321–340. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-enviro-110615-090052>
- Akinlolu, M. (2022). Gender stereotypes and career choices: A cross-sectional study on a group of South African students in construction programmes. *Acta Structilia* 29. 83-115. 10.18820/24150487/as29i2.4.
- Akinola A.O. (2018). Women, Culture and Africa's Land Reform Agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology* pp. 1-8

- Asuquo, E. F., & Akpan-Idiok, P. A. (2021). The Exceptional Role of Women as Primary Caregivers for People Living with HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, West Africa. In *IntechOpen eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.93670>
- Bourguignon F. (2018). World changes in inequality: An overview of facts, causes, consequences, and policies. *CESifo Economic Studies* 64(3):345-370.
- Byamugisha A (2016). Measuring the performance of the economic infrastructure and competitiveness cluster in Uganda. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research* 8(1):1-11.
- Caracciolo, F., & Santeramo, F. G. (2013). Price trends and income inequalities: Will Sub-Saharan Africa reduce the gap? *African Development Review*, 25(1), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8268.2013.12012.x>
- Eagly, Alice & Wood, Wendy. (2016). Social Role Theory of Sex Differences. 10.1002/9781118663219.wbegss183.
- Jafry, T., & Sulaiman, R. (2013). Gender inequality and agricultural extension. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, 19(5), 433–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1389224x.2013.824166>
- Klaa, Cherifa & Buheji, Mohamed. (2020). Role of African Women in Development and Economic Life: Reality and Challenges. *International Journal of Inspiration & Resilience Economy*. 4(1):1-9. 10.5923/j.ijire.20200401.01.
- Kulkarni, M., & Nithyanand, S. (2012). Social influence and job choice decisions. *Employee Relations*, 35(2), 139–156. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01425451311287844>
- Lindsey, L. L. (1990). *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective*. <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA23980171>
- MacKinnon D., Cumbers A. (2011). An introduction to economic geography: globalization, uneven development and place 2nd edn Pearson.
- Muchomba, F. M. (2015). The gender dynamics in intrahousehold allocation of resources. <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8mw2g6t>
- Muehlenhard, C. L., & Peterson, Z. D. (2011). Distinguishing between sex and Gender: history, current conceptualizations, and implications. *Sex Roles*, 64(11–12), 791–803. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-011-9932-5>
- Ngohego, J. K. (2021). Modernism and the change of African gender relations: Historical discourses. *African Journal of History and Culture*, 13(2), 110–115. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ajhc2020.0472>
- Ngubane SJ (2010). Gender roles in the African culture: implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS (Doctoral dissertation, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch).
- Oladejo, Joana & Olawuyi, Seyi & Olawuyi, Tosin. (2011). Analysis of Women Participation in Agricultural Production in Egbedore Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria.. *International journal of Agricultural economics and rural development*. 4. 1-11.
- Olayiwola, S & Tashikalma, A & Giroh, Y. (2017). Analysis of food security status and coping Strategies among rural households in Oluyole Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. 2. 1-28.
- Pelletier, R., Khan, N., Cox, J. L., Daskalopoulou, S. S., Eisenberg, M. J., Bacon, S., Lavoie, K., Daskupta, K., Rabi, D. M., Humphries, K. H., Norris, C. M., Thanassoulis, G., Behloul, H., & Pilote, L. (2016). Sex versus Gender-Related Characteristics. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 67(2), 127–135. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacc.2015.10.067>
- Priyashantha, K. G., De Alwis, A. C., & Welmilla, I. (2022). Gender Stereotypes Changes and Changing Gender Role Behaviors: A Theoretical perspective. *Kelaniya Journal of Management*, 11(2), 63–80. <https://doi.org/10.4038/kjm.v11i2.7685>

Factors affecting Changing Gender roles among farm families in Osun State, Nigeria

- Quisumbing, A. R., Meinzen- Dick, R., Raney, T., Croppenstedt, A., Behrman, J. A., & Peterman, A. (2014). Closing the knowledge gap on gender in agriculture. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 3–27). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8616-4_1
- Wekwete, N. (2014). Gender and Economic Empowerment in Africa: Evidence and Policy. *Journal of African Economies*. 23. i87-i127. 10.1093/jae/ejt022
- Winchester, H. P., & Browning, L. (2015). Gender equality in academia: a critical reflection. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(3), 269–281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080x.2015.1034427>
- Winchester, Margaret. (2013). Mental Health Practitioner's Guide to HIV/AIDS10.1007/978-1-4614-5283-6_41. 223-225
- Zhaoyang, R., Sliwinski, M. J., Martire, L. M., & Smyth, J. M. (2018). Age differences in adults' daily social interactions: An ecological momentary assessment study. *Psychology and Aging*, 33(4), 607–618. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pag0000242>