Investigating Gender and Gender Identity; Views of Undergraduate Students on Gender Roles and their Value System

Dr. P. Pratheesh
Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. Michael's College, Cherthala Affiliated to the University of Kerala, Kerala, India
 https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3976-5978

Dr. Mary Reema
Assistant Professor, Department of Malayalam, St. Michael's College, Cherthala Affiliated to the University of Kerala, Kerala, India
 https://orcid.org/0009-0006-1070-3051

Ms. Zita Francis
Assistant Professor on Contract, Department of Psychology, St. Michael's College Cherthala, Affiliated to the University of Kerala, Kerala, India
 https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6601-8050

Abstract
Social interactions often lead to conflicts between individuals' perceptions of themselves, identity, rights, and potential, and how others perceive and treat them. However, due to deeply internalized gender perceptions, it often seems that gender is not present in social relations. The objective of this article is to inquire into the relationship between value orientation and attitudes towards gender roles among undergraduates. During the 2023–2024 academic year, 253 undergraduate students from two major universities in Kerala, the Kerala and M G University, participated in the study. Two measures were used to gather data: the Social "Gender Roles Attitude" Scale and the "Portrait Value Scale." The article analyzed its data using Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's) and a non-random sampling technique. Multiple regression analysis was carried out in order to examine the relationship between the variables. The analysis revealed a statistically momentous and positive correlation between meaning orientations and attitudes towards gender roles subscales. Positively significant correlations were found between meaning orientations and the conventional gender roles and its varied dimension of attitude towards gender roles. Undergraduate students' justifiable preference for "traditional gender roles" was widely accepted as an explanation. The findings in this article are constrained by the limited sample size and local context in which it was conducted, making generalization impossible.

Introduction

A person's place in the society in which they live is determined by his or her gender. According to the social role theory gender stereotypes and social roles account for the behavioural differences between men and women. Attitudes and values are closely related. Notably, the person has benefited or acquired something in the circumstance that gives rise to these attitudes. Gender refers to

the habits, roles, and duties necessary in a society, irrespective of individual's biological sex (Purkayastha, et. al., 2003). To foster a culture that prioritizes gender equality, men must remodel their identities, develop new routines, and reshape their interactions with women. Gender is a technique of underlining the sociological basis of psychological roles of male and female, and it should not apply to physiological aspects but to social attributes. The studies and theories regarding gender show the sharing of positions that lie behind gender inequalities, and Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggests that human actions cannot be described by cognitive mechanisms alone.

Review of Literature

Construction of gender identity among Indians, particularly in women, is examined in this review of the literature. Since the main idea of this study is identity, it is imperative to provide a brief overview of the theoretical literature on the subject. There are various scientific perspectives regarding gender roles. Gender theories present perspectives on the allocation of roles that give rise to gender disparities (Keskin & Ulusan, 2016). The foundation of Freud's psychoanalytic theory is the idea that psychology must also look into the subconscious in order to fully understand human behaviour, as cognitive mechanisms alone cannot (Yapicioglu Ayaz, Kıvanccı & Safarov, 2019). This was among the earliest instances of gender progress in science. The biological deduction contends that biological characteristics determine how actions are formed and suggests that the brain systems of men and women produce distinct cognitive capacities.

Gender based social position/roles are diverse, and interpersonal gender variations result from these manifold social roles, according to the theory of social learning. It is true that no inherent difference between male and female; rather, it is the lessons learned during the socialization process (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Schmitt, 2003). Individual's gender-related actions are determined by the choices, preferences, and actions of other people according to interactive Model (Deaux & Major, 1987). Put differently, it suggests that a variety of factors, contingent upon the situation, impact gender-related social activities (Dokmen, 2018). The theory contends that gender roles are acquired later in life through socialization. Women continue to have more control over it (Deikman, Eagly, & Kulesa, 2002).

Studies on gender equality treats women's position as prime concern and can be found in the literature on gender roles. , Alptekin (2019), in the study with college students' find out that women pre-service teachers price equality more than their male counterparts. In another study, in Chinese university, Gui (2019) revealed that female hold more gender-equal views than men do. Similarly, Schroeder, Bamaca-Colbert, and Robins (2019) stated that while both female and male shows the tendency in to democratic gender role attitudes throughout teenage years, female exhibit more of these outlooks than male. Takkin (2020) discovered that college students exhibit strong egalitarian beliefs and self-assurance concerning gender norms.

In other research involving university students, gender perception differs according to the attitude of students toward gender roles influencing their value orientation. N.B.Serin, O.F. Cimen Gender-specific Participatory Educational Research (2019) discovered that women have more attitudes toward gender roles than men do, and that gender attitudes among university students are generally egalitarian. Male students' gender perception is lower than female students' in other research involving university students. Dursun (2020) asserts that views about violence against women vary according on a person's gender and that gender perception explains these attitudes. Additionally, they stated that the most stringent standards should be maintained for an equitable interpretation of gender roles (Ozmete and Zubaroglu-Yanardag, 2016).

Value is a crucial aspect of an individual's personality and character, shaping their attitudes and behaviors. Globalization has led to the emergence of new values like democracy and competition.

Aydın (2005), Dilmaç (2007), Demirhan İşcan (2007), Balcı (2008), Sesli (2014), Sesli & Demir (2016), Kıran (2016) in their researches focuses on university students' attitudes towards gender roles, examining how these attitudes influence their fundamental value orientations and contribute to the normalization of gender inequality.

Danielle Pierre (2017) in 'Broadening Understanding: Student's Perspectives on Respecting all Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in University Classrooms', a study on gender orientation among students, discovered that a major sect of the participants felt uncomfortable in campus social environments, with instructors being identified as a source of discomfort. The research also found that diversity orientation and course content were the most common barriers faced by students. More often than the material of the course, the study found that impediments were caused by flawed assumptions.

In another study titled 'North American Undergraduate Students' Sexual Orientation attitudes: Exploring Differences across Diverse Sexual and Gender Identities,' J. Sinno et al. (2022) investigates social attitudes regarding sexual orientation among US and Canadian university students. The findings indicate that the Sexual Orientations views Scale (SOBS) has four subscales that are highly influenced by sexual orientation, with gender identity being the most important indicator of endorsing different views. Another important factor is gender, as views on sexual orientation differ between straight-identified men and women.

In "Exploring Gender, Identity, and Mythology in Kari by Amruta Patil," Abhijit Ghosh (2023) analyzes the graphic novel Kari with a particular emphasis on gender, identity, and mythology. It examines its unorthodox portrayal of characters juggling identities and mythologies using feminist, post-colonialist, and cultural studies theories, highlighting the commonality of the human condition in these intricate issues.

In light of the above review, the following research queries are formed.
1. Is gender the primary cause of the stark differences in opinions among undergraduate students about gender roles?
2. In what ways do undergraduate students' perceptions of gender stereotypes predict important orientations in life?

Methodology

The study investigates the factors influencing undergraduate students' opinions on gender roles and their life orientations. It uses the relational survey model to examine the relationship between attitudes and value orientations among university students. The sample consisted of 253 students from M G University and University of Kerala, with 169 females and 83 males. The Gender Roles Attitude Scale evaluates gender attitudes, with conservative attitudes indicating lower scores and inclusive attitudes indicating higher scores. The Portrait Values Scale identifies value orientations, with a reliability coefficient of 89. The study used a t-test to analyze normal distribution variables, Pearson product moment correlation to study relationships, and multiple regression analysis to determine if variables forecasted each other. The arithmetical significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ and the data were prepared for review using SPSS 25th edition.

Findings

According to the results of the student survey, 81% of respondents think that women should have the same rights as men, but they also agree that men should have greater job rights in situations where there are few jobs, indicating that men would prefer this. Students generally accept women as political leaders because of India's long history of women leaders holding positions of power

when it comes to the gender-sensitive question of whether women or men could be better political leaders. However, the individual responses show that only 13% of students think men typically make better political leaders, while 56% of students think both genders make identically good quality political organizers or those female generally better leaders than male.

Although most young people believe that male and female partners should carve up family responsibilities, many of them continue to believe in traditional gender roles. 33% of students think that women should bear the majority of the responsibility for household tasks, whereas 63% of students think that men and women should share responsibility. A small majority (53%) think that earning money should be the responsibility of both men and women, but 44% think that men should be responsible for it primarily. With 64% of them fully in agreement, nearly 98% of them concur that a spouse necessarily obey her husband always. Female are only marginally less likely than male to believe that spouse should submit to their husbands in every circumstance.

95% of students strongly agree that it is desirable to have both boy and girl children. On the other hand, a sizable percentage supports sex-selective abortion, which involves testing a foetus to determine its sex and terminating it if it is female. In terms of gender discrimination at home, 41% of them acknowledged that it occurs, and 54% thought it was either totally or somewhat unacceptable. Across religious groups, female students feel that the sons should bear the primary responsibility for their parents' funeral rites and burial customs. According to Hindu custom, sons must carry out a parent's final ceremonies to guarantee their souls' release in the afterlife. Sons and daughters should both be responsible, according to the majority of Christian students. Regardless of religion, very few students think that daughters should be in charge of funeral customs.

In terms of education, 1% believes that boys should get priority in education than girls. The 99 % of the respondents agreed that boys should respect all girls, and also 99% believe that education should be gender neutral. In terms of behavior towards girls, 26% agreed that there is still mistreatment of girls. A quarter of others disagree, and half of the respondents, surprisingly, support gender-based behavior in society. 61% of them partially agreed that improved law and order through policing makes women safer.

The data examination on attitudes towards gender roles reveals the following findings.

Table 1 Gender Roles, t Test Result

Dependent Variable	Sex	n	Mean	Std.Dev	df	t	Sign.
Gender (Role & Attitude)	Man	84	120.93	27.33	250	7.533	.000*
	Women	169	144.12	17.13			

*P<.05

The study examined undergraduate students' perspectives on gender roles. The above table (Table 1) illustrates the results of the t-test on the gender role (identity) & attitude scale evaluations. The statistical test used was t-test to assess the extent of differences in students' reactions to gender roles based on sex. The result shows that women have higher average attitudes towards gender roles compared to men (t= 7.533, p<.05).

Again the statistical correlation analysis (Pearson Product Moment) is used to assess the association between study factors and contribute to interpretations and regression analysis. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation analyze the association between attitudes towards gender roles and meaning orientations. Table 2 summarizes key findings from the analysis.

Table 2 Value Orientation and Attitudes on Gender Roles

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	Std.Dev.
Portrait Value Scale	1.000						146.63	23.33
Equal Gender Role	.233	1.000					28.33	5.43
Female Gender Role	.206	.693	1.000				23.64	4.91
Marriage Gender Role	.223	.743	.693	1.000			25.41	4.86
Traditional Gender Role	.386	.543	.482	.573	1.000		27.33	5.43
Male Gender Role	.243	.683	.594	.674	.593	1.000	7.23	1.49

In light of the findings in Table 2, a statistically significant correlation was seen among the attitude subscales regarding the roles of gender and meaning orientations. Positive correlations have been found between the orientation of value and the following gender roles: male ($r=0.23$, $p < 0.01$), female ($r=0.20$, $p < 0.01$), marriage ($r=0.22$, $p < 0.01$), and traditional ($r=0.38$, $p < 0.01$).

The results on undergraduate students' attitudes towards gender roles were also obtained through using the multiple regression analysis to predict their value orientation. The gender element of marriage, egalitarian roles for men and women, female gender roles, conventional gender roles, and approaching male gender roles were among the independent variables and picture values examined in the study. It was discovered that the sub-dimension "traditional gender roles" was significant, with conventional gender roles having the greatest influence on value orientations. Gender roles, the role of women in roles, the factor of marital roles, traditional gender norms, and the role of men in responsibilities were not significant independent variables.

Discussion

The purpose of the study is to find out how undergraduate students view gender roles and how they relate to values. It was discovered that there are substantial differences in gender attitudes, with female students exhibiting a higher level of social equality than male students. This is in line with other research that discovered university students' strong inclusive views toward gender are a result of their high educational attainment. In a society where women are more effective in social situations, women have a stronger feminist world view than males do. People's gender roles and views are largely influenced by society, and these can change throughout time.

Female students were found to be more feminist, while male students followed more stereotypical gender views. This implies that, in addition to the influence of literature and social media, female teenagers' personality formation and attitudes about childrearing can be influenced by comprehending their gender roles and evaluating the process from an inclusive perspective. The establishment of equal gender roles is influenced by parents' adoption of a democratic approach when raising their children, particularly in the case of male students. Studies have indicated a robust correlation between meaning orientations and attitude subscales that challenge gender stereotypes. Students today have a strong connection between the life values component and gender interpretation sub-dimensions such "equal gender role" and "gender role in marriage." Women and men in society are still impacted by traditional conventions and cultural beliefs, although they are changing.

As standards change, men and women see things differently and frequently express opinions that support their own gender group. It was discovered that there was a positively significant association between the sub-dimension and value orientations of "traditional gender role" and attitude toward gender norms. Strong explanatory knowledge of undergraduate students' opinions toward "traditional gender role" implies that the conventional concept of gender becomes a crucial attitude that requires discussion. The kids of today exhibit a rather equitable attitude toward

stereotypes about gender, desiring that girls be treated more fairly than boys in terms of social status and distribution of income.

The inclusive gender approach does not distinguish significantly between men and women who take on equal roles and responsibilities in social, professional, marital, personal, and educational spheres. Various socio-political initiatives are being carried out to enhance the involvement of women in public roles and society. Women Commissions at both the national and state levels, Equal Justice Forums, and Progressive and Feminist Organizations are working hard to raise public awareness of social issues, including cultural awareness. In addition, the current curricula at schools, colleges, and universities address gender issues and encourage students to identify their gender identity in relation to gender in order to eradicate gender inequality. The study's conclusions about students' value orientation beliefs are presented, along with how they relate to one another and to social interactions and relations. Thus, it concludes that in order to advance gender equality and inclusion in a variety of spheres of life, it is imperative to comprehend and confront gender stereotypes and meaning orientations.

Conclusion

Gender awareness is a crucial concept that emphasizes the complexity of gender and sexual identities. It highlights how we express our gendered selves in various ways, influencing our interactions with others. We interpret and evaluate others' genders, often unaware of the origins of these influences. Gender has a crucial role in defining power, privilege, and opportunities. It also influences the advancement of equality and the absence of discrimination. For youth workers and young people dealing with issues of gender and violence, this is especially crucial. No one can fully escape the social and cultural processes that mold our identities, attitudes, and perceptions, which makes gender awareness essential. It is a process that evolves over time and in different contexts, making it essential for group work and interaction.

The study reveals that female undergraduate students have a stronger feminist mindset, with a higher degree of social equality than male students. Society plays a crucial role in determining gender roles and attitudes, which can shift over time. Understanding female teenagers' gender roles and their appraisal can influence their personality formation and child-rearing attitudes. Traditional norms and cultural values still affect women and men, but there is a shift in these norms.

References

1. Abhijit Ghosh (2023). Exploring Gender, Identity, and Mythology in Kari by Amruta Patil. Muse India Literary eJournal, ISSN: 0975-1815 Issue 110 (Jul-Aug 2023)
2. Auster, C. J., & Ohm, S. C. (2000). Masculinity and femininity in contemporary American society: A reevaluation using the Bem Sex-Role Inventory. Sex Roles, 43(7-8), 499-528.
3. Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2012). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
4. Danielle Pierre (2017). Broadening Understanding: Students' Perspectives on Respecting all Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in University Classrooms. Collected Essays on Learning and Teaching Vol. X. DOI: 10.22329/celt.v10i0.4753. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317797044_Broadening_Understanding_Students'_Perspectives_on_Respecting_all_Sexual_Orientations_and_Gender_Identities_in_University_Classrooms
5. Eagly, A. H., & Steffen, V. J. (1984). Gender stereotypes stem from the distribution of women and men into social roles. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 46(4), 735-754.
6. Endendijk, J. J., Groeneveld, M. G., van der Pol, L. D., van Berkel, S. R., Hallers-Haalboom, E. T., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., & Mesman, J. (2016). Gender-Differentiated Parenting

Revisited: Meta-Analysis Reveals Very Few Differences in Parental Control of Boys and Girls. PLOS ONE, 11(7), e0159193.

7. J. Sinno, N. Doria and P. Joy. (2022). North American Undergraduate Students' Sexual Orientation Beliefs: Exploring Differences across Diverse Sexual and Gender Identities' en. Journal of Homosexulity, Vol.70. Issue XI. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00918369.2022.2060623

8. Purkayastha, B., Subramaniam, M., Desai, M., & Bose, S. (2003). The Study of Gender in India: A Partial Review. Gender and Society, 17(4), 503–524. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594655

9. Richards, C., Bouman, W. P., Seal, L., Barker, M. J., Nieder, T. O., & T'Sjoen, G. (2016). Non-binary or gender queer genders. International Review of Psychiatry, 28(1), 95-102.

10. Ridgeway, C. L., & Smith-Lovin, L. (1999). The gender system and interaction. Annual Review of Sociology, 25,191-216.

11. Sangari, Kumkum (2002). Politics of the Possible: Essays on gender, history, narratives, colonial english. London: Anthem Press

12. Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., McBride, B. A., & Ho, M. H. (2004). Unidimensional Versus Multidimensional Perspectives on Father Involvement. Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice About Men as Fathers, 2(2), 147-163.

13. Smith, J. D., & Leaper, C. (2006). Self-perceived gender typicality and the peer context during adolescence. Journal of Research on Adolescence, 16(1), 91-103

14. Wong, M. S., Steinfeldt, J. A., Speight, Q. L., & Hickman, S. (2011). Gender Role Conflict, Coping, and Gender-Atypicality in Men. Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 12(1), 66-81.

15. Wood, W., & Eagly, A. H. (2012). Biosocial Construction of Sex Differences and Similarities in Behavior. Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 46, 55-123.