

WOMEN'S GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES: ASSOCIATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC
CHARACTERISTICS, WORK RELATED FACTORS,
AND LIFE SATISFACTION

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Factors related to women's gender role attitudes were assessed using data from a national survey in 1988 in which 3,507 members of the Young Women cohort were interviewed by phone. The demographic characteristics were education, age, marital status, and region of residence. Older women, married women, and those of Southern residence were hypothesized to have traditional gender role attitudes. These hypotheses were supported by the data ($p < .05$, $p < .05$, $p < .01$, respectively). As hypothesized, those with high educational levels ($p < .01$) had egalitarian attitudes. Four work related variables (labor force participation, hours worked at one's paid position, personal income, and earnings as percent of total family income) were hypothesized to relate to non-traditional gender role attitudes. Job dissatisfaction was hypothesized to relate to traditional gender role attitudes. Personal income ($p < .01$) was related to non-traditional gender role attitudes. There was no relationship between labor force participation and hours worked at one's position and gender role attitudes. Percent of total family income ($p < .01$) was related to traditional gender role attitudes, not egalitarian attitudes, and, as hypothesized, job dissatisfaction ($p < .05$) was related to traditional gender role attitudes. Life dissatisfaction was hypothesized to relate to egalitarian attitudes; however ($p < .01$) was associated with traditional, not egalitarian, gender role attitudes. When exploring practical reasons for women working, a negative relationship was found between Southern ($p < .01$) residence and labor force participation ($p < .01$) and practical reasons for women working. Higher educational levels ($p < .01$) were positively related.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the goals of the women's movement was and continues to be to challenge gender role norms of women's place in society. Women now have greater career options and have seen a broad range of opportunities arise. Researchers have noted that between the early 1970s and 1990s, gender roles became increasingly egalitarian (Glass, 1992; Harris & Firestone, 1998; Loo & Thorpe, 1998; Rice & Coates, 1995; Spence & Hahn, 1997; Tallichet & Willits, 1986; Twenge, 1997), while throughout the 1980s the labor market was also changing. According to Howe and Parks (1989), in 1988 the civilian unemployment rate fell to a 14 year low, the second longest period of sustained growth since World War II, and women were a major contributor to this market expansion. Adult women, who accounted for only 45% of the work force, accounted for over 60% of employment growth in 1988. However, during this same time, 97% of female college students still intended to marry and 72% intended to have children; although, 80% of these same females intended to go on to graduate school (Novack & Novack, 1996). Regardless of their liberal or traditional view of women, these female students also believed they should be free to decide whether or not to stay home with their children (Novack & Novack, 1996).

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that may have contributed to changes in women's gender role attitudes. Because the greatest change occurred from the early 1970s through the 1990s, this study will use data collected from a 1988 national sample of women with gender role attitudes as the dependent variable.

The literature review addresses factors that have been found to be associated with gender role attitudes. It is clear that some factors (e.g., education) are believed to influence gender role attitudes. However, one assumption that appears in this body of research seems to be that gender roles attitudes may be a factor leading women into taking certain positions. For example, O'Connell, Betz, & Kurth (1989) found women in engineering and veterinary medicine (male-dominated) jobs have less traditional attitudes than women in nursing (female-dominated) jobs. This often seems to imply it is women's liberal attitudes that caused or allowed women to take those jobs. This study posits that related factors may function in the other direction. This study will examine whether the variance in gender role attitudes can be explained by women's demographic characteristics, the work women do, and life dissatisfaction.

Demographic Characteristics

Many demographic characteristics have been linked to gender role attitudes. Those included in this study are education, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, and region of residence within the United States. While research has shown that each of these characteristics are related to gender role attitudes independently, additional evidence will point to a confounding of these characteristics, which may be the more important link to gender role attitudes.

Education. Several studies have found that individuals with more formal education are more egalitarian in their views of traditional gender roles (Harris & Firestone, 1998; Rice & Coates, 1995; Tallichet & Willits, 1986). However, the association levels off at the highest educational levels (Harris & Firestone, 1998). Nontraditional gender roles may also lead to the desire for additional education. Tallichet

and Willits (1986) found that women who had expressed nontraditional attitudes in their teens were more likely to further their education more than their traditional peers. Similarly, Bryant (2003) found that students' gender role attitudes became more liberal from freshmen to senior year in college. Contributing factors to this change included living on campus, leadership training, women's and ethnic studies courses, discussing politics, college GPA, and hours spent studying. Perhaps it is not one's education alone, but a combination of factors, including a rewarding college experience, that leads to more liberal attitudes regarding gender roles. These findings lead to the hypothesis that education should explain some variance in gender role attitudes. In addition, the change that occurs over time with experience supports the notion that experiences change gender role attitudes. This in turn supports aforementioned hypotheses such as the association between nontraditional work and time in job and gender role attitudes.

Age. Researchers have reported that younger people tend to be more egalitarian in their gender role attitudes than older individuals (Harris & Firestone, 1998; Rice & Coates, 1995). However, when studying college students, Bryant (2003) found no association. These conflicting results suggest that, similar to labor force participation, gender role attitudes are related to several confounding factors, not simply age alone. Perhaps the age/gender role traditionalism relationship should not be seen as linear, but rather a cohort effect.

Race/Ethnicity. Traditional gender role attitudes may be influenced by an individual's race/ethnicity. Unfortunately, the data set for this study only differentiates African Americans, whites, and "other." Among Hispanic, Black, and White women, Harris and Firestone (1998) report that Hispanics have the most traditional gender role

attitudes, with blacks having the most egalitarian. The traditional nature of Hispanic gender roles may be partly a function of Latino socialization (Gowan & Treviño, 1998).

When comparing Black and White participants, conflicting results have been reported. Rice and Coates (1995) report that overall, blacks are more liberal than whites about a mother working and a woman president, but more conservative about a woman working in general. Murrell, Hanson Frieze, and Frost (1991) reported similar results for college students. Compared to whites, black women were less likely to see themselves taking time from work to raise children, more often believed working mothers can have warm relationships with their children, and did not as often believe that preschool children suffer if their mother works. However, Bryant (2003) found that among college seniors, White women were more egalitarian than non-White women, in contradiction to other studies, perhaps due to a less than adequate sample of non-White women. In this dataset, Hispanics are categorized with whites. Although this classification may be common, the grouping would obscure likely differences. Consequently, ethnicity can only be used in an explanatory way.

Marital Status. Researchers have reported conflicting results regarding marital status and traditional gender role attitudes. Some report that married people have similar attitudes regarding traditional gender roles as unmarried people (Rice & Coates, 1995). Harris & Firestone (1998) report similar findings in that both being married and never married are significantly associated with more traditional gender attitudes. However, others have further differentiated “unmarried” and have found that compared to married women, unmarried women, whether never married, divorced, or separated, were seen as

less traditional (Tallichet & Willits, 1986), and divorced women without children are the most non-traditional in their attitudes (Plutzer, 1988).

When looking at gender role attitudes and marital quality, Amato and Booth (1995) found that a change in gender role attitudes toward the more egalitarian for wives was associated with increased reports of negative marital quality (more problems, more disagreements, and higher divorce proneness). Additionally, for both husbands and wives, nontraditional attitudes in 1980 were positively associated with divorce between 1980 and 1988. However, divorce was not associated with changes in gender role attitudes. From the previously noted research findings, there is a clear relationship between being married and more traditional gender role attitudes, but the relationship between not married and traditional attitudes is unclear. In this study, married women are hypothesized as being more traditional in their attitudes, and unmarried women are hypothesized as being less traditional.

Region of Residence. For this study, region of residence is categorized as South and non-South. Twenge (1997) showed that students living in the South clearly have more traditional/conservative attitudes toward women than students elsewhere. Southerners were more conservative than others about women working in general. However, they did not differ significantly from Midwestern and Western attitudes as to whether a woman should work even if her husband can support her (Rice & Coates, 1995; Twenge, 1997). Thus, although other factors could play a role in the formation of one's gender role attitudes, some evidence suggests region of residence contributes to gender role attitudes.

Traditional gender role attitudes are independently affected by education, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, and region of residence, but the more important relationship could be seen in how these variables combine to affect individuals' attitudes.

Work Related Factors

There are several work related factors that have been shown to have an impact on a woman's gender role attitudes. These include labor force participation, such as working inside or outside the home and hours worked for pay, and the industry of employment. Also included in this category are personal income and earnings as a percentage of total family income. A broader and more subjective work related factor is job satisfaction. Previous research and extrapolation from research results shows these factors likely relate to an individual's gender role attitudes and may provide evidence into how these attitudes may be influenced.

Labor Force Participation. Individuals who work either inside or outside the home for pay on a full or part-time basis are considered as participating in the labor force. Those who do not work for pay, such as homemakers, are not considered as participating in the labor force. According to research findings, women in the labor market have a less favorable attitude toward traditional gender roles than those who are not working for pay (Glass, 1992; Harris & Firestone, 1998; Plutzer, 1988; Rice & Coates, 1995; Tallichet & Willits, 1986). Comparing attitudinal differences between employed wives and housewives between 1972 and 1986, there was a widening of the gap on issues relating to motherhood and gendered divisions of labor (Glass, 1992). When looking at both time periods, the largest differences occurred on items directly related to appropriate gender

roles in the family and the impact of a mother's employment on children as opposed to items addressing a woman's political involvement or capability.

It is not merely the fact of employment that is related to gender role attitudes. Glass (1992) shared that women who worked the most hours generally had the least traditional gender role attitudes. In contrast, Plutzer (1988) showed that women working full and part-time had similar attitudes, which were significantly different from women who did not work. One example was that working women defended a woman's right to work even when her husband could financially support the family, which differed from women who were not employed. Interestingly, women who worked part-time were more liberal than both women employed full time and housewives in their political orientation (Glass, 1992). However, as Glass points out, traditional attitude differences based on labor force participation may be an artifact of other factors. When Glass controlled for age, family size and education, differences between housewives' and employed wives' attitudes about political involvement and women earning money disappeared. Due to findings such as these, employment and hours worked at one's paid position(s) are included in this study.

Personal Income and Percentage of Total Family Income. Traditional gender role ideology has been negatively related to earnings for both men and women, such that individuals with traditional gender role attitudes tend to earn lower incomes (Firestone, Harris, & Lambert, 1999). Perhaps women with more traditional gender role attitudes are working in "female typical" occupations, traditionally associated with lower pay. Men with traditional gender role attitudes may be working in "blue collar" occupations that may have yet to see diversity initiatives associated with management positions. Looking

at gender role attitude change across one decade, Tallichet and Willits (1986) found that women with higher incomes demonstrated greater change toward more egalitarian views than did their lesser-paid peers. This may be due to other confounding factors. Women with high incomes tend to be well educated and have longer job tenure. Both of these factors may also play a role in a woman's attitudes.

The proportion of family income earned by women may be related to their gender role attitudes. For example, women who were homemakers and had full-time working spouses were found to be the most satisfied with their economic situation in contrast to their full time working peers. The researchers hypothesized dual-earner couples, as opposed to traditional couples, earned more money and would therefore, have higher economic satisfaction. However, this was not found to be the case (Baker, Kiger & Riley, 1996). This could be explained by several factors. A wife working in the home may not feel the pressure of being a financial provider for the family; instead she gives that responsibility to her husband. In contrast, dual-earner couples both feel pressure to meet the family's financial responsibilities, and the wife may have to work regardless of what she desires. This may lead to dissatisfaction with the couple's work/life balance. Yet, when considering the relationship between the wife's earnings as a share of the total family income and gender role attitudes, some researchers found no relationship (Harris & Firestone, 1998; Plutzer, 1988). This supports the notion that many women, regardless of their personal wishes must work in order to meet financial responsibilities. For men, this could mean putting traditional attitudes aside and encouraging their wives to work.

These findings suggest that women earning higher salaries should have more egalitarian views. Women earning little of the total family income would also be expected to have more traditional gender role attitudes.

Current Business/Industry. Conflicting results have been noted when addressing the relationship between one's current business or industry and gender role attitudes. In some cases, studies directly assessed gender role attitudes, but other studies addressed beliefs clearly reflecting traditional or nontraditional attitudes. For example, O'Connell, Betz, and Kurtz (1989) reported women in nontraditional occupations are more committed to full time work than those in traditional occupations. Additionally, female students preparing for nontraditional occupations were significantly more likely than those preparing for traditional occupations to believe women have a right to compete for jobs traditionally held by men and less likely to believe that husbands should be the main breadwinner (O'Connell, Betz, & Kurth, 1989). Similarly, female college students planning for a career in a female-dominated profession tended to have more traditional views of gender than those preparing for a male-dominated position (Murrell, Hanson Frieze & Frost, 1991). However, a female-dominated career may also have been chosen because these women saw it as more compatible with combining career and family. Harris and Firestone (1998) found no relationship between traditional female occupational positions, professional/managerial status, or occupational prestige and traditional gender role ideologies. However, because only census codes were available to identify current occupation/industry, with no discernable manner to divide into male/female typical occupations, this variable was excluded from the study.

Job Satisfaction. Women's subjective judgment of their job satisfaction is another work related factor that may relate to traditional gender role attitudes. Job satisfaction may be predictive of job tenure, withdrawal, and productive or counterproductive work behaviors (Grandey, Cordeiro, & Crouter, 2005). Women who are satisfied with their work may have gender role attitudes supporting women holding nontraditional roles. Much of the research regarding job satisfaction and gender roles has been conducted from the work family conflict (WFC) perspective, indicating interference of work needs to family needs and vice versa (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Several authors have analyzed job satisfaction as it relates to gender and WFC. For example, Boles, Wood, and Johnson (2003) found that the gender of sales persons moderated the relationship of role conflict, role ambiguity, and WFC on various facets of job satisfaction. Among females, WFC was negatively related to job satisfaction and satisfaction with coworkers, and role conflict was negatively related to satisfaction with the supervisor. Taking care of the family remains the primary responsibility of women, whether or not they work, with women spending more time on family than men (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Consequently, findings such as these suggest low job satisfaction will be associated with traditional gender role attitudes. Other findings also support this possibility.

In Cardenas, Major, and Bernas' (2004) study of working mothers employed in city government, participants reported experiencing significantly more work distractions at home than family distractions at work, even though they were spending more time at work and on work related tasks. Traditional gender role attitudes were significantly related to family distractions at work. Although work distractions at home were

negatively linked to job satisfaction, the effect size was small. Traditional gender role expectations accounted for a large proportion of variance in job satisfaction.

The relationship between gender roles and job satisfaction has also been studied in terms of psychological well being. Differences in the relationship between job role stress and psychological distress may actually be artifacts of gender norms (Barnett, Marshall, Raudenbush & Brennan, 1993). This may mean that individuals whose jobs (or work in general) are in conflict with their socially prescribed gender roles would report higher levels of psychological distress. Higher psychological distress may affect an individual's life satisfaction.

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is simply the subjective perception of how satisfied or happy individuals are with their lives. One line of reasoning derives from Diener, Eunkook, Lucas, and Smith's (1999) finding that men and women are approximately equal in reports of global life satisfaction, despite both unpleasant and positive affect being higher among women (Barnett, Marshall, Raudenbush, & Brennan, 1993; Diener, et al, 1999). Women may have more emotional lives due to socially prescribed gender roles. The traditional female gender role implies women may be more willing to experience and express emotions (Diener, et al, 1999). Women who report having nontraditional attitudes may not have been socialized to assume greater care-giving responsibilities, thus affecting their emotional responsiveness and impact their subjective well being. Researchers have reported conflicting findings about gender roles and life satisfaction. Seybolt and Wagner (1997) found that those with feminine gender roles reported the

greatest life satisfaction, but Shichman and Cooper (1984) found that androgynous respondents were most satisfied.

Several factors contribute to an individual's life satisfaction. General satisfaction with life was found to be positively associated with education, income, and being married (Shichman & Cooper, 1984), and among married women, traditional sex role ideology was also positively related to global life satisfaction (Lueptow, Guss, & Hyden, 1989). Married women with nontraditional sex role ideologies are the least happy (compared to married men and women and divorced/separated men and women). This finding is similar to what Amato and Booth (1995) report when they state married women moving toward more egalitarian views report greater marital problems and disagreements. Marital happiness was most affected by gender ideology among older, working women across time (Lueptow, Guss, & Hyden, 1989).

RATIONALE

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the factors identified in previous research contributed to women's gender role attitudes using data from a national survey in 1988.

The demographic characteristics assessed included education, age, marital status, and region of residence. Consistent with research findings women with more formal education were hypothesized to have more egalitarian attitudes. Also, older women were hypothesized to hold more traditional attitudes than younger women. According to previous research findings, married women were hypothesized to have more traditional attitudes than unmarried women, and women living in the South were hypothesized to be more traditional other women. In regression terminology, older age, being married and Southern residence were hypothesized to relate to traditional gender role attitudes. Education was hypothesized to relate to egalitarian gender role attitudes. The association between a woman's ethnicity and her gender role attitudes was not formally assessed in this study.

The work related variables included in this study were labor force participation, hours worked at one's paid position, personal income, earnings as a percentage of total family income, and job dissatisfaction. Based on previous research, women in the labor market were hypothesized to have less traditional gender roles than those who were not participating in the labor market. Additionally, women working long hours were hypothesized to have more egalitarian attitudes. Also, women earning higher salaries and women earning a higher percentage of the total family income were hypothesized to have more egalitarian gender role attitudes. Finally, women reporting job dissatisfaction were

hypothesized to have traditional gender role attitudes. Stated in multiple regression terms, being employed, working long hours, high personal income, and earning a high percentage of the total family income were all hypothesized to relate to egalitarian gender role attitudes. Job dissatisfaction was hypothesized to relate to traditional gender role attitudes. Because only census codes were available to identify current occupation/industry, with no discernable manner to divide into male/female typical occupations, this variable was excluded from the study.

Life dissatisfaction was the final factor that was assessed in this study. Although conflicting research exists on the topic, women reporting greater life dissatisfaction were hypothesized to have more egalitarian attitudes than those with increased levels of satisfaction.

METHODS

Sample

This study used the original Young Women cohort from the National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS). In 1968, 5,533 women ages 14 to 24 as of December 31, 1967 were targeted, with a resulting sample of 5,159 (93.2%). Subjects for this study will come from the 1988 wave, in which 3,507 personal interviews were conducted for a retention rate of 68%. Approximately 75% ($n = 2627$) of interviews were with non-African American women, and 25% ($n = 880$) were with African American women. The average participant was born in 1948 and had 2.14 children. Of those interviewed in 1988, 40% ($n = 1389$) completed their final year of high school, and 24% ($n = 837$) completed four or more years of college. For region of residence, 41% ($n = 1439$) were residents of the South, and 59% ($n = 2068$) did not live in the South.

Procedures

The National Longitudinal Surveys (NLS) are conducted by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau, and the Center for Human Resource Research at The Ohio State University. The purpose is to learn about the labor market and other experiences that may be related to work. The project began in 1966 under the sponsorship of the Office of Manpower, Automation, and Training (now the Employment and Training Administration). The first four cohorts were Older and Younger Men and Women (*NLS of Young Women User's Guide*, 2001).

The Young Women cohort resulted from a multi-stage probability sampling procedure drawn by the Census Bureau from 1900 primary sampling units (PSUs). Each PSU consisted of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs), counties, parts of

counties, and independent cities. Four hundred eighty-five PSUs were selected to represent every state and the District of Columbia. Using the primary units, 235 sample areas were created by combining one or more primary units that were reported to be relatively homogenous according to socioeconomic characteristics. Within each area, one unit was selected to represent the entire area. Within this selected unit, a probability sample of housing units was selected to represent the population. For the original four cohorts, screening interviews began in 1966 for an initial sample of 42,000 housing units. From these housing units, usable information was collected for 34,662 households. The sample design called for over-sampling of African Americans at twice the expected rate in the total population. The initial screening was used to select the Young Women cohort (*NLS of Young Women User's Guide*, 2001).

The 1988 interviews, used in this study, were conducted in person. Prior to each survey period, the Census Bureau generated a list of respondents and forwarded that list to 12 regional offices. Cases were given to interviewers based on geographic area. For each respondent, interviewers received a questionnaire, Household Record Cards, flashcards, and an information booklet. It was the interviewer's responsibility to contact each respondent in his/her caseload, regardless of whether they had moved. If a respondent had moved, then her information was forwarded to the interviewer for that particular geographic region. Prior to the interview, respondents were sent letters thanking them in advance for their participation and a fact sheet with recent research concerning their cohort. In 1988, interviewers used a paper and pencil format to serve as a record for responses. Each personal interview using this format lasted between 50-60 minutes (*NLS of Young Women User's Guide*, 2001).

Measures

The criterion variable used in this study was attitudes toward traditional gender roles. Respondents rated 11 statements regarding women's opinions on the employment of wives. Ratings ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree using a 5-point bipolar scale. Statements that measured traditional gender role attitudes, as opposed to non-traditional attitudes, were reversed scored, so that a high score on these statements represented a traditional gender role attitude; a low score represented a non-traditional gender role attitude. All 11 statements are listed in Table 1 of the Appendix. Predictor variables that were used in the analysis included a set of demographic characteristics, a set of work related factors, and life satisfaction.

Demographic Characteristics. The demographic characteristics that were assessed in this study included education, age, marital status, and region of residence. For education, participants responded with the highest grade of regular school they had completed. Age was measured in years.

The marital status variable included three coding categories: married, past married, and never married. Women whose spouses were present or absent were considered married, and those who were widowed, divorced or separated were considered past married. To be used in the regression analysis, marital status had to be dummy coded. Those who were married were compared to those who were not married (including past married and never married). Married individuals accounted for 66.9% ($n = 2345$) of the sample, while unmarried participants accounted for 33.1% ($n = 1162$).

The region of residence variable characterized individuals as either living in the South or non-South. The South is comprised of the South Atlantic, East South Central,

and West South Central divisions (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas). Participants living in the South accounted for 40.9% ($n = 1436$) of the sample, and those not living in the South made up 59.1% ($n = 2071$).

Information regarding the participant's race was also gathered and categorized as white, black, or other. Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and other Latin Americans are categorized as "white," while Japanese, Chinese, American Indian, Korean, and Eskimo are characterized as other. However, for reasons mentioned earlier, race/ethnicity was not included in the regression analysis.

Work Related Factors. The work related factors that were included in this study were labor force participation, hours worked at a paid position, personal income, percentage of total family income, and job satisfaction.

Current labor force participation was assessed by the respondents' response to the item asking which activity they did the most the previous week (working, with a job but not at work, looking for work, going to school, keeping house, unable to work, and other). For this study "working" and "going to school" were combined and labeled working. Keeping house was kept the same. A new "not working" group combine those with a job, but not at work; looking for work; unable to work; and other. To be included in the regression analysis, labor force participation had to be dummy coded. Those who held a job (the above-mentioned "working" group) were compared to those who did not hold a job (whether working in the home or without employment). Employed individuals accounted for 63.7% ($n = 2233$) of the sample, while unemployed individuals accounted

for 31.3% ($n = 1101$). Participants also reported the number of hours they had worked in the previous week.

For the 1988 interviews, participants' reported their annual personal income as the sum of all wages, salaries, commissions, and tips from all jobs before deductions for the past twelve months. Participants also reported the range of the total family income of all family members for the past year. Percent of total family income due to the woman's employment was calculated by first finding the midpoint of the total family income range, and then dividing the individual's income by that midpoint. The range of \$50,000 and over was recoded into \$75,000 based on the highest individual salary reported of \$100,000.

Job satisfaction was one item indicating how respondents felt about their current job on a 4-point Likert scale from "like it very much" to "dislike it very much," meaning a score of 1 represented high satisfaction with one's job, and a score of 4 represented low satisfaction with one's job. For interpretation's sake, this variable has been labeled "Unsatisfied-job."

For this sample, current business/industry was assessed by the participant's response to the question, "What kind of business or industry is this?" Verbatim responses were then coded by Census personnel using three-digit codes from the 1980 classification system. Current business/industry was not included in the analysis because it could not be deciphered into male or female-typical occupations.

Life Satisfaction. General life satisfaction was assessed as the response to, "Taking things altogether, would you say you're very happy, somewhat happy, somewhat unhappy, or very unhappy these days?" This means that a score of 1 represents being

very happy with her life, and a score of 4 means that the respondent is very unhappy. For the sake of interpretation, this variable is labeled “Unsatisfied-life.”

Analysis

The first step in the analysis of data was to conduct a factor analysis on the gender role attitude items. There was some concern that these items may have been loading on more than one factor, hence measuring more than one construct in the attitudes domain. Two factors emerged. Means for each item included in each factor were calculated. Thus, two scales were formed. Hierarchical regression was used to see which predictor variables explained the variance in each of the scales created. The first block of variables entered into the regression equation included the demographic variables: education, age, marital status, and region of residence. The second block was comprised of the work related factors: labor force participation, hours worked at one’s position, personal income, percentage of total family income, and job satisfaction. Finally, the third block entered included the life satisfaction item. Variables were “dummy” coded as needed.

RESULTS

A factor analysis with Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was performed on the 11 gender role attitude items for the sample of 3,507 women. Rotation converged in 3 iterations, and 2 factors were extracted. Factor loadings are reported in Table 2.

Six items comprised Factor 1. The mean of these items was calculated to form the traditional gender role attitudes scale. Standardized Cronbach's alpha was .89. Three items comprised Factor 2 after dropping the item for men sharing housework due to cross-loading. The means for these items formed the practical reasons for working scale. The standardized Cronbach's alpha was only .64, but this scale was included to increase knowledge. The Cronbach's alpha for both scales would have decreased if any item were deleted. Means and standard deviations for the traditional gender role attitudes scale are listed in table 3, and means and standard deviations for the practical reasons for working scale are listed in table 4.

Once each of the scales was created, hierarchical regressions were run for each scale. Descriptive statistics for the variables used in the regressions are located in Table 5. The correlation matrix for all of the variables included in both regression analyses is located in Table 6. The statistical significance of small correlations is due to the large sample size. The size of the correlations suggests multicollinearity would not be a problem in the regression equations.

Hierarchical regression was used to test the hypotheses. Multiple regression equations were first calculated for traditional gender role attitudes and then for practical reasons for working. In each equation, the demographic variables were entered in Step 1 (age, Southern residence, being married, and education). At Step 2, the work related

variables (hours worked at one's job, personal income, percent of family income earned, being employed, and job dissatisfaction) were entered. At Step 3, life dissatisfaction was entered.

Tables 7 and 8 summarize the results of the regression procedures to explain the variance accounted for in traditional gender role attitudes. Table 7 shows that demographic and work related variables each made contributions, increasing the variance accounted for (5.4% and 2.9%, respectively). Life satisfaction in Model 3 made a significant but quite small (0.3%) independent contribution. Table 8 gives a different perspective by showing the results in ANOVA form. It is important to note that while R was significantly different from zero after entering each block of variables, effect sizes for each step ranged from small to moderate (see Table 7).

Table 9 shows the results for the hypotheses by examining the contribution of each independent variable individually. Most hypotheses were supported. Of those supported, older age ($\beta = .052, p < .05$); Southern residence ($\beta = .080, p < .01$); being married ($\beta = .063, p < .01$); and job dissatisfaction ($\beta = .046, p < .05$) were all positively related with traditional gender role attitudes. Higher education ($\beta = -.146, p < .01$) and higher personal income ($\beta = -.135, p < .01$) were associated with non-traditional attitudes. Surprisingly, the percent of family income earned by women ($\beta = .067, p < .01$) and life dissatisfaction ($\beta = .057, p < .01$) made significant contributions to gender role attitudes, but the associations were in the opposite direction from that posited. They contributed to traditional attitudes, rather than non-traditional gender role attitudes. Also in contrast to hypothesized relationships, neither number of hours worked in a week ($\beta = -.046, p =$

.057) or being employed ($\beta = -.041, p = .079$) related to traditional gender role attitudes, although both approached significance.

Exploratory analysis was conducted by using the same procedure to calculate the association of the demographic, work related, and life dissatisfaction variables with women's practical reasons for working. Summary Table 10 shows that demographic characteristics and work related variables each made contributions, increasing the variance accounted for (1.9% and 1.9%, respectively), but life dissatisfaction was unrelated to women's practical reasons for working. Again, while R is significant at the end of each block entered, the effect sizes were small. Table 11 shows the summary using ANOVAs for the combined steps.

Table 12 shows the individual contribution of each independent variable. Education ($\beta = 0.90, p < .01$) was positively related to women's practical reasons for working. Southern residence ($\beta = -.079, p < .01$) and being employed ($\beta = -.118, p < .01$) were both negatively related to women's practical reasons for working.

DISCUSSION

Several of the proposed hypotheses based on previous research findings were supported by the data. Older age, Southern residence, being married, and job dissatisfaction were all positively related to traditional gender role attitudes. Perhaps older women in this study were not as affected by the feminist movement, allowing them to keep their traditional attitudes. Additionally, because of the agriculture nature of the South, many of these women are responsible for the home, so that their husbands can work in the fields. Husbands may expect their wives to assume the traditional role as care giver and mother. Also in accordance with previous research, increased education and increased personal income were associated with non-traditional gender role attitudes. Increased educational levels are required to achieve the highest occupational positions. These positions are typically associated with higher income, as well. Women who desire the highest career achievements may not be focused on traditional values.

Four hypotheses were not supported by the data. According to research findings, women in the labor market have a less favorable attitude toward traditional gender roles than those who are not working for pay (Glass, 1992; Harris & Firestone, 1998; Plutzer, 1988; Rice & Coates, 1995; Tallichet & Willits, 1986). This was not supported by the results of this study. Additionally, Glass (1992) reported that women who worked the most hours generally had the least traditional gender role attitudes. This was also not supported by this study. These two results could be explained by the fact many women may be forced to work because of their financial need regardless of their preference to do so. Additionally, women may have to work long hours because their positions necessitate regardless of their desire to work those long hours.

Two additional significant relationships were found; however, in the opposite direction than had been hypothesized. Earning a high percentage of the family's income and an increased level of life dissatisfaction were both associated with traditional, not egalitarian, gender role attitudes. It could be that those who earn higher percentages of the total family income feel that they are better providers for their families and are fulfilling their care giving responsibilities. Those who are dissatisfied with their lives may be so because they are being forced to play a role (e.g. homemaker, primary child care provider, wife, etc.) out of duty, not out of desire. Some women may feel that they should work in the home because of societal or religious influences, whether they really have those beliefs or not.

When addressing the practical reasons for working scale for exploratory purposes, several interesting items came out of the analysis. First of all in Step 1, with only demographic variables entered, being married and education were both related to practical reasons for working, and Southern residence was negatively related to practical reasons for working. Those who are married may have families for which to provide and have additional financial pressures (which are both practical reasons for working), and those who have obtained higher levels of education could have done so in order to obtain their desired position at work. In Step 2 with all work related variables included, being married no longer significantly related to practical reasons for working. This could be because collectively, the work related variables may be functioning as a mediator for marriage, or they may be functioning to suppress the relationship. Other work related items were not related to practical reasons for working. These results are interesting in that if one is working for monetary reasons, one would expect a relationship between

personal income and percent of the family income earned, but the data do not support either relationship.

Once life dissatisfaction was added to the regression equation in Step 3, Southern residence and employment were still negatively related to practical reasons for working with the same amount of variance accounted for in the DV as in Step 2. However in Step 3, education accounted for an increased amount of variance in the DV than in Step 2. Life dissatisfaction was not significantly related to practical reasons for working. It appears that of the variables used in this study, education maintains the strongest relationship with practical reasons for working. With an increased number of dual-earner couples coming about, reasons as for why people go to work could be an area of research assessed in the future.

Limitations

While the data in this study do support previous research findings, this study does have its limitations. First of all the effect sizes found were small. While many significant relationships were found, their importance is limited due to their small effect sizes indicating a minimal relationship. Researchers choosing to use this sample in the future may want to randomly select participants to decrease sample size and see if the results are replicated.

Also, there could be an issue with range restriction. The mean score of the traditional gender role attitudes scale was 2.19. A score of 5 on these items would indicate a very traditional gender role attitude. When determining between traditional and non-traditional attitudes, the determination is really between less egalitarian and more egalitarian attitudes, because this sample wasn't extremely traditional in the first place.

Additionally, the age range in this sample is limited. Participants in 1988 were aged 34 to 47. This group of women, especially the younger women, was probably the most influenced by the feminist movement of the 1970s and would therefore maintain similarities in attitude for the cohort. This could explain why the gender role attitudes were more egalitarian than traditional.

The calculations of percent of total family income due to the woman's employment also lead to error messages in the SPSS output. Because total family income was reported as a range, the midpoint of each range had to be used to calculate the percentage of the woman's earnings. In the case of the range of "\$50,000 and over", a midpoint of \$75,000 was used based on the highest individual salary reported of \$100,000. However, 14 participants (approximately 0.4% of the sample) earned more than \$75,000. This discrepancy lead to error messages in the output.

Additionally, dummy coding of the categorical variables may have lead to a loss of information in the interpretation of the results. For example, in this study, married participants were only compared to those who were not married. Further distinction between divorced, never married, or widowed participants could not be made because regression analysis was used. Also, those who were currently working were compared to those who were not working. Analysis did not allow for the relationship between working in the home, but not for pay, being on disability leave, but with a job, or looking for a job on either scale to be made. Finally, the job and life dissatisfaction variables should have been reversed scored prior to analysis in order to aid in interpretation of results.

Other issues arise when looking at how the initial survey was dispersed and how data were collected. According to the *NLS Young Women User's Guide* (2001), prior to

the 1988 phone interviews, participants were sent a “fact sheet” with recent research findings concerning their cohort group. This information could have created bias in how the participants answered interview questions, perhaps wanting to be more in line with the research findings.

Concerning data collection, Hispanics were placed in the same category as Whites. Harris and Firestone (1998) reported that among White, Hispanic, and Black women, Hispanics were the most traditional in their gender role attitudes. However, Bryant (2003) reports that among college women, Whites, compared to non-Whites, were more egalitarian. Neither of these findings could be reviewed in this study because of the way the ethnicity data were collected. Additionally, current business/industry was coded using the 1980 Census codes. These codes do not separate occupations into discernable male/female-typical jobs. When comparing the census codes to the codes listed in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, again no discernable distinction could be made. Because of the coding system used by the original researchers, the relationship between a woman’s current business/industry and her gender role attitudes could not be assessed.

Implications

It has already been stated that, although many significant results were evident, these findings may have little practical importance due to their small effect sizes. The size of the sample caused non-relationships to reach statistical significance. However, the lack of association is interesting in itself. Researchers who have found significant findings related to gender role attitudes from samples of college students should attempt to replicate their results using a more diverse sample. It may be that college students have yet had the experiences necessary to formulate gender role

attitudes, and once exposed to variables outside the college setting, factors that once played an important role in gender role attitude formation, may not be as valuable as once thought. Additionally, while these data are old (from 1988 interviews), due to the overall egalitarian attitude of the sample, one might expect these results to generalize to today. Additional studies should be conducted to see if these results still hold true.

Another implication of these results is the effect they may have played in the business world. Many of the hypotheses supported by this study's results are congruent with what other researchers have discovered. Older women, married women, those of Southern residence, and those who are not satisfied with their jobs are more traditional than their counterparts. Additionally, those with higher incomes and higher educational levels are thought to be more egalitarian. Acting in accordance with these findings, many businesses may have recruited women who were of younger age, single, and not from the South assuming these women would have less absenteeism and turnover due to the influence of family and care giving responsibilities. Additionally, women with higher educational levels and those with higher earnings with previous employers may have been given special consideration because they appear more dedicated to working. However, due to the small effect sizes and little practical importance of this study's results and possibly the results of other studies, employers assuming the research results have "real world" applicability, could be doing so mistakenly. This study found no relationship between being employed and/or working long hours and gender role attitudes, when other studies had. Additionally, results from this study attributed a relationship between earning a high percentage of total family income and life dissatisfaction to egalitarian attitudes, not traditional gender role attitudes. An employer

making business decisions based on previously supported notions of women and their attitudes should be cautioned because things, even the results from scientific research, are not always as they appear.

Table 1

Traditional Gender Role Attitudes Items

Modern conveniences permit a wife to work without neglecting her family.

A woman's place is in the home, not in the office or shop.

A wife who carries out her full family responsibilities doesn't have time for outside employment.

A working wife feels more useful than one who doesn't hold a job.

The employment of wives leads to more juvenile delinquency.

Employment of both parents is necessary to keep up the high cost of living.

It is much better for everyone concerned if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.

Men should share the work around the house with women, such as doing dishes, cleaning, and so forth.

A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

Women are much happier if they stay at home and take care of their children.

A woman should not let bearing and rearing children stand in the way of a career if she wants it.

Table 2

*Factor Loadings for Principal Components Extraction and Varimax Rotation of Four**Factors*

Variables	Factor loadings	
	1	2
Place in home	.81	.24
Man outside achiever	.81	.16
No time employ	.80	.23
Women happier at home	.75	.26
Juvenile delinquent	.74	.22
Warm relationship	.68	.35
Career if she wants	.52	.49
Working wife useful	.07	.80
Cost of living	.22	.75
Work without neglect	.42	.53
Men share housework	.45	.49

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for the Traditional Gender Role Attitudes Scale (TRAD)

Item	Mean	Std. deviation
Place in home	1.92	1.17
Man outside achiever	2.32	1.33
No time employ	2.11	1.15
Women happier at home	2.20	1.12
Juvenile delinquent	2.37	1.30
Warm relationship	1.91	1.10

Standardized Cronbach's alpha (α) = .89

$N = 3,507$

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations for the Practical Reasons for Working Scale (Pract)

Item	Mean	Std. deviation
Working wife useful	2.95	1.40
Cost of living	2.05	1.19
Work without neglect	2.50	1.29

Standardized Cronbach's alpha (α) = .64

$N = 3,507$

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Hierarchical Regressions

Variable	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev.
Age	3,507	34	47	39.68	3.10
Education	3,507	0	18	13.20	2.59
Hours worked	2,327	0	126	37.28	13.13
Personal income	3,354	0	100,000	12,821.34	13,204.70
Percent of income	3,372	0	133.33%	39%	.52
Unsatis-job	2,626	1	4	1.54	.72
Unsatis-life	3,487	1	4	1.59	.69
Traditional	3,483	1	5	2.19	.77
Practical	3,483	1	5	2.56	.75
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	2,167				

Table 6

Correlations Among Variables Used in Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age	-	-.024	.008	-.052**	-.002	-.025	-.056**	-.006	-.015	.005	.066**	.001
2. South		-	-.034*	-.131**	.052*	-.063*	.022	-.025	.009	.026	.112*	-.090**
3. Married			-	.056**	-.123**	-.123**	.334**	.117**	.088**	-.207**	.059**	.119**
4. Education				-	-.031	.345**	.079**	.052**	-.061**	-.085**	-.233**	.096**
5. Hours worked					-	.254*	.157**	.457**	-.050*	.017	-.089**	-.109**
6. Personal income						-	.454**	.378**	-.047*	-.043*	-.288**	-.130**
7. Percent income							-	.294**	.019	.079**	-.121**	-.145**
8. Employed								-	-.022	.029	-.242**	-.221**
9. Unsatis-job									-	.259**	.073**	.014
10. Unsatis-life										-	.046**	-.067**
11. Traditional											-	.299**
12. Practical												-

** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Coefficients and Effect Sizes for Each Step Entered with

Traditional Gender Role Attitudes Scale as Dependent Variable

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Effect size (<i>f</i> ²)	Std. error of estimate	Change statistics			
						<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i> change	df	Sig. <i>F</i> change
1	.23 ^a	.054	.052	.055	.675	.054	30.35	4, 2141	.000
2	.29 ^b	.083	.079	.086	.664	.029	13.70	5, 2136	.000
3	.29 ^c	.086	.082	.089	.664	.003	6.90	1, 2135	.009

^a Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education

^b Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job

^c Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job, Unsatis-life

Table 8

ANOVA Summary Statistics with Traditional Gender Role Attitudes Scale as Dependent

<i>Variable</i>						
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1. Demog ^a	Regression	55.248	4	13.812	30.352	.000 ^a
	Residual	974.292	2,141	.455		
	Total	1,029.540	2,145			
2. Work ^b	Regression	85.528	9	9.503	21.502	.000 ^b
	Residual	944.012	2,136	.442		
	Total	1,029.540	2,145			
3. LifeSat ^c	Regression	88.570	10	8.857	20.096	.000 ^c
	Residual	940.970	2,135	.441		
	Total	1,029.540	2,145			

^a Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education

^b Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job

^c Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job, Unsatis-life

Table 9

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Traditional**Gender Role Attitudes**

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Partial correlations	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta (β)	sr^2_i	
1	Age	.012	.005	.051	.053	.015
	South	.120	.030	.085	.086	.000
	Married	.078	.031	.054	.055	.011
	Education	-.058	.006	-.192	-.192	.000
2	Age	.012	.005	.052	.054	.013
	South	.112	.030	.080	.082	.000
	Married	.083	.032	.057	.055	.011
	Education	-.045	.007	-.148	-.140	.000
	Hours worked	-.002	.001	-.044	-.040	.066
	Personal income	Error	.000	-.140	-.123	.000
	Percent of income	.086	.029	.071	.065	.003
	Employed	-.123	.070	-.041	-.038	.080
	Unsatis-job	.059	.021	.060	.062	.004
	3	Age	.012	.005	.052	.054
South		.112	.030	.080	.082	.000
Married		.092	.033	.063	.061	.005

(table continues)

Table 9 (continued).

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Partial correlations	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta (β)	sr^2_i	
3 cont.	Education	-.044	.007	-.146	-.139	.000
	Hours worked	-.002	.001	-.046	-.041	.057
	Personal income	Error	.000	-.135	-.119	.000
	Percent of income	.081	.029	.067	.062	.004
	Employed	-.123	.070	-.041	-.038	.079
	Unsatis-job	.046	.021	.046	.047	.031
	Unsatis-life	.060	.023	.057	.057	.009

Table 10

Hierarchical Regression Coefficients for Each Step Entered with Practical Reasons for

Working as Dependent Variable

Model	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Effect size (<i>f</i> ²)	Std. error of estimate	Change statistics			
						<i>R</i> ² change	<i>F</i> change	df	Sig. <i>F</i> change
1	.14 ^a	.020	.019	.019	.700	.020	11.12	4, 2141	.000
2	.21 ^b	.042	.038	.040	.693	.022	9.78	5, 2136	.000
3	.21 ^c	.043	.039	.041	.693	.001	1.69	1, 2135	.194

^a Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education

^b Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job

^c Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job, Unsatis-life

Table 11

ANOVA Summary Statistics with Practiccal Reasons for Working as Dependent Variable

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1. Demog ^a	Regression	21.803	4	5.451	11.120	.000 ^a
	Residual	1,049.435	2141	.490		
	Total	1,071.237	2145			
2. Work ^b	Regression	45.278	9	5.031	10.474	.000 ^b
	Residual	1,025.959	2136	.480		
	Total	1,071.237	2145			
3. LifeSat ^c	Regression	46.089	10	4.609	9.599	.000 ^c
	Residual	1,025.148	2135	.480		
	Total	1,071.237	2145			

^a Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education

^b Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job

^c Predictors: Age, South, Married, Education, Hours worked, Personal income, Percent of income, Unsatis-job, Unsatis-life

Table 12

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Practical**Reasons for Working**

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Partial correlations	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta (β)	sr^2_i	
1	Age	.007	.055	.030	.030	.165
	South	-.117	.031	-.081	-.081	.000
	Married	.090	.032	.061	.061	.004
	Education	.027	.007	.087	.087	.000
2	Age	.006	.005	.026	.027	.214
	South	-.114	.031	-.079	-.079	.000
	Married	.047	.034	.032	.030	.166
	Education	.027	.007	.089	.083	.000
	Hours worked	-.001	.001	-.017	-.015	.488
	Personal income	Error	.000	-.028	-.024	.264
	Percent of income	-.052	.030	-.042	-.038	.081
	Employed	-.362	.073	-.118	-.106	.000
	Unsatis-job	.033	.021	.033	.034	.119
	3	Age	.006	.005	.027	.027
South		-.114	.031	-.079	-.079	.000
Married		.052	.034	.035	.033	.130

(table continues)

Table 12 (*continued*).

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	Partial correlations	Sig.
		<i>B</i>	Std. error	Beta (β)	sr^2_i	
3 cont.	Education	.028	.007	.090	.084	.000
	Hours worked	-.001	.001	-.018	-.016	.468
	Personal income	Error	.000	-.025	-.022	.310
	Percent of income	-.055	.030	-.044	-.040	.067
	Employed	-.362	.073	-.118	-.106	.000
	Unsatis-job	.026	.022	.026	.026	.234
	Unsatis-life	.031	.024	.029	.028	.194

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