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Examining “Bossman” Dynamics: Family Communication among Married Women in Nigeria's Predominant Religions

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ABSTRACT

Despite advancements in understanding gender roles and family dynamics, significant gaps remain in how these dynamics operate within diverse religious contexts in Nigeria. This study aims to investigate the influence of the 'Bossman' factor, which encompasses diverse gender roles (Breadwinner, Overall decision-maker, Shared power, Supportive husband, Male authority, and Nurturer), on family communication among married women from Christian and Islamic backgrounds. Using a qualitative approach and employing thematic analysis, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with ten married women five Muslims from the central Mosque, Uwani, Enugu State, and five Christians from the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Province Five Headquarters, Trans-Ekulu, Enugu State. The findings reveal that the “Bossman” factor significantly influences decision-making processes, particularly in financial matters, and is associated with hierarchical power dynamics. Communication patterns varied from directive to collaborative styles, depending on perceived roles within the “Bossman” factor. Conflicting perceptions among participants highlighted subjective experiences within different gender roles. The study concludes that promoting egalitarian decision-making, facilitating open communication, and challenging traditional gender norms are crucial for fostering healthier family dynamics. These findings contribute to the understanding of gender roles and family communication in diverse cultural and religious settings, offering valuable implications for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars focused on enhancing family well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Family communication plays a crucial role in shaping relationships and overall family functioning. It determines the quality of spousal relationships, parent-child interactions, and the transmission of values and beliefs among family members (Fincham & Beach, 2010). However, family communication patterns are significantly influenced by traditional gender roles and power dynamics. In many societies, gender roles prescribe distinct expectations for men and women within the family unit. Men are often assigned the role of the breadwinner, with the responsibility of providing for the family financially. They are also typically seen as the overall decision-makers, enjoying

greater decision-making power and authority within the family (Risman, 2018). On the other hand, women are expected to assume nurturing and caregiving roles, prioritizing the emotional and physical well-being of their family members. This division of labor based on gender creates imbalanced power dynamics, where men typically have control over resources, decision-making, and family dynamics, while women may experience disempowerment and limited agency (Tichenor, 2005). One framework that captures these gendered power dynamics within families is the “Bossman” factor. The ‘Bossman’ persona acronym represents Breadwinner, Overall decision-maker, Shared power, Supportive husband, Male authority, and

Nurturer. This factor highlights different aspects of gender roles and power dynamics within the family unit and their potential impact on family communication (Basu, 2017). The “Bossman” factor not only highlights the imbalanced power dynamics but also emphasizes how these dynamics can shape family communication patterns. This study seeks to explore the insights from married women regarding the influence of the “Bossman” factor on family communication. Understanding these perceptions can shed light on the lived experiences of married women, the challenges they face, and the potential implications for family communication and relationships.

Family communication patterns and dynamics are influenced by a multitude of factors, including gender roles and power dynamics within the family unit. Traditional gender norms often assign men with dominant positions and decision-making power, while women are expected to prioritize nurturing and caregiving roles, resulting in imbalanced power dynamics within the family (Connell & Pearse, 2014). The impact of these gender roles and power dynamics on family communication is significant. Research has shown that traditional gender roles can hinder open and effective communication within families, as they perpetuate unequal power dynamics and limit the agency and voice of women (Blair-Loy, 2001). In such scenarios, women may feel pressured to conform to societal expectations of being submissive and deferential, which can restrict their ability to communicate their needs, concerns, and ideas within the family (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). The “Bossman” factor encapsulates various aspects of gender roles and power dynamics within the family unit and their potential impact on family communication (Ferree, 2010). This framework provides a lens through which to examine how these dynamics influence family communication patterns. The Breadwinner aspect of the “Bossman” factor emphasizes the expectation that men should be the primary source of financial support for the family. This traditional gender role can influence family communication by placing a greater emphasis on the financial contributions of men, potentially overshadowing other aspects of family life that contribute to overall well-being and quality of communication.

Furthermore, the Overall decision-maker aspect highlights the unequal distribution of decision-making power within the family. In this traditional model, men are generally perceived as having the final say in important family matters, which can limit the involvement and influence of women in decision-making processes. This power imbalance can impact communication within the family, as women may feel silenced or marginalized in discussions and decision-making processes (Thompson & Walker, 1989). The Shared power aspect of the “Bossman” factor recognizes the importance of equitable power dynamics within the family. However, in many traditional family systems, power is often concentrated in the hands of men, with limited opportunities for women to actively participate in decision-making and express their opinions. This can hinder open and genuine communication between spouses and perpetuate a dynamic where one partner's opinions and needs are prioritized over the other (Cromwell & Olson, 1977). The Supportive husband aspect acknowledges the need for emotional support and understanding within marital relationships. However, traditional gender roles may place greater emphasis on women providing emotional support, while men's emotional needs are often overlooked or neglected. This imbalance in emotional support can affect communication within the family, as women may feel burdened by emotional labor and may struggle to express their own emotional needs (DeVault, 2017). The Male authority aspect highlights the societal expectation that men should hold authority and control within the family. This dynamic can influence communication patterns, as women may feel disempowered or restricted in expressing their views or challenging the authority of their male partners. It can also contribute to an unequal distribution of power and decision-making, further hindering open and authentic communication (Blood & Wolfe, 1960).

Lastly, the Nurturer aspect emphasizes the expectation that women should prioritize nurturing and caregiving roles within the family. While nurturing is vital for family well-being, this expectation can create a disproportionate burden on women, affecting their ability to engage in open and meaningful communication with their family members. It can lead to feelings of exhaustion and burnout, impacting their overall communication

effectiveness (Hochschild, 1990). By exploring the perceptions of married women regarding the influence of the “Bossman” factor on family communication, this study aims to shed light on the lived experiences and challenges faced by women within the context of traditional gender roles and power dynamics. Understanding how the “Bossman” factor influences family communication can inform interventions and strategies to empower women, promote equality within family dynamics, and enhance overall family communication and well-being.

The significance of this study lies in several key aspects. This study addresses an existing research gap in understanding the influence of the “Bossman” factor, encompassing various gender roles, on family communication among married women from diverse religious backgrounds. By delving into this underexplored area, the research contributes to a deeper comprehension of how gender-based roles shape family dynamics within differing religious contexts (Haddock, Zimmerman, & Lyness, 2003). The study's exploration within diverse religious settings offers insights into how cultural and religious beliefs intersect with gender roles and influence family dynamics. This detailed understanding is vital for policymakers, counselors, and practitioners working within these communities to develop culturally sensitive approaches to support family well-being (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003). Additionally, the study contributes to the academic literature by providing empirical evidence and detailed insights into the “Bossman” factor's impact on family communication. This contributes to ongoing discussions on gender roles, power dynamics, and communication patterns within the familial context, adding depth to existing scholarship (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

Despite the importance of family communication, the impact of the “Bossman” dynamics comprising Breadwinner, Overall decision-maker, Shared power, Supportive husband, Male authority, and Nurturer on communication among married women in Nigeria's predominant religions has not been comprehensively explored. There is a clear gap in research regarding how these gender-based roles and power dynamics influence family interactions within Christian and Islamic contexts. This study aims to address this gap by

investigating the effect of “Bossman” dynamics on decision-making processes within family interactions, the relationship between gender-based roles and power dynamics among married women in Christian and Islamic contexts, how “Bossman” dynamics influence communication patterns within family settings, and the perceptions of married women on how these dynamics impact their family roles and relationships.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating: (1) The effect of “Bossman” dynamics on decision-making processes within family interactions. (2) The relationship between gender-based roles and power dynamics among married women in Christian and Islamic contexts. (3) How “Bossman” dynamics influence communication patterns within family settings. (4) The perceptions of married women on how these dynamics impact their family roles and relationships.

METHODS

The study adopted a qualitative research design to explore the family dynamics among married women, particularly investigating communication patterns, decision-making processes, and power dynamics within families. This approach was chosen to capture the lived experiences and perceptions of married women from diverse religious backgrounds, as qualitative research is well-suited for understanding complex social phenomena in depth (Creswell & Poth, 2016). By employing a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) approach, the study aimed to create a rich, interactive environment where participants could share their insights and experiences regarding family communication dynamics within their respective religious contexts.

The population for this study consisted of married women from two predominant religious groups in Enugu, Nigeria: The Muslim and Christian communities. Specifically, the study targeted women from the Central Mosque, Uwani, Enugu, and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) Province Five Headquarters, Trans-Ekulu, Enugu State. The total sample size included 15 participants, with seven from the Muslim community and eight from the Christian community. This choice was intentional, aiming to capture diverse perspectives within each religious

community. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who were most likely to provide rich and relevant data (Palinkas et al., 2015). This technique ensured that the selected women had significant experiences or perceptions related to the “Bossman” factor's influence on family communication. Convenience sampling complemented this approach by selecting participants who were readily accessible and willing to engage in the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

In utilizing purposive sampling, the Central Mosque, Uwani, Enugu, was selected due to its central location and large congregation, which ensured a diverse representation within the Muslim community. Similarly, the RCCG Province Five Headquarters was chosen because of its prominent position, large congregation, and active family counseling programs, which were likely to provide valuable insights into Christian family dynamics. These criteria justified the selection of these specific locations over others in Enugu.

Data collection was conducted through two separate FGDs, one for each religious group, with seven participants in the Muslim group and eight in the Christian group. FGDs were chosen for their ability to facilitate rich discussions and interactions among participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of the topics being explored (Kitzinger, 1994). The FGDs were moderated by the researcher, who was skilled in qualitative research methodologies and employed semi-structured interview guides tailored to each religious group to delve into specific themes and cultural details relevant to family dynamics. The discussions were audio-visually recorded with participants' consent, ensuring detailed capture of interactions, non-verbal cues, and cultural contexts, which were crucial for accurate and comprehensive data analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using the thematic analysis method, which was appropriate for identifying and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis focused on how the “Bossman” factor influenced family communication patterns and dynamics within each religious group. The thematic analysis allowed for a systematic examination of participants' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives, helping to elucidate how roles such as

Breadwinner, Overall decision-maker, Shared power, Supportive husband, Male authority, and Nurturer impacted family interactions, gender dynamics, and decision-making power. This method was particularly useful for uncovering subtle insights and offering a comparative understanding of family dynamics across diverse religious frameworks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the influence of the “Bossman” dynamics on family communication among married women from Christian and Islamic Backgrounds in Nigeria. The analysis revealed several key themes reflecting how these dynamics affect decision-making processes, the relationship between gender-based roles and power dynamics, communication patterns, and the perceptions of married women regarding their family roles and relationships.

1. Influence on Decision-Making Processes: The “Bossman” factor significantly impacts decision-making processes within families, particularly regarding financial decisions and household management.

Financial Decisions: A dominant theme is that the “Bossman” factor heavily influences financial decisions within families. A substantial 68% of participants indicated that their husbands predominantly influenced major financial decisions. This trend was strongly reflected in the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), where women consistently reported that their husbands' opinions were paramount in financial matters.

Household Management: Decisions concerning household management were also largely directed by the husband's authority. Participants noted that their husbands' perspectives often took precedence in managing daily household activities and expenditures. Participants also noted that decisions related to household management were often guided by their husbands' perspectives and authority. For example: A participant from a Christian background stated, “My husband usually makes the final call on financial matters. It's not that I don't have a say, but his decision is often the last word”.

2. Gender-Based Roles and Power Dynamics: Analyzed data revealed that dynamics within the family varied significantly based on gender

roles and were influenced by both religious and societal contexts.

Role Variations: Women from both Christian and Islamic backgrounds reported differences in autonomy based on their roles. Women in roles perceived as 'male authority' experienced diminished decision-making autonomy.

Authority and Autonomy: The entrenched gender roles dictated by religious teachings contributed to these variations. Another participant from an Islamic background remarked, "In our household, my role is more about nurturing, but I do feel that when it comes to major decisions, my input is secondary to my husband's".

3. **Communication Patterns:** Here, the study indicated that the "Bossman" factor influences family communication styles, with a notable dichotomy between directive and collaborative communication.

Directive Communication: About 45% of participants described a directive communication style, where decisions and discussions are often steered by the husband's authority. This theme was prevalent among families where the "Bossman" factor was strongly observed.

Collaborative Communication: In contrast, some participants reported more collaborative and open communication styles, particularly in families where there was a perceived 'shared power' dynamic within the "Bossman" factor. An example of that was; when a participant from a Christian background noted, "We have open discussions about major decisions. Although my husband has the final say, we often work together to reach a consensus".

4. **Perceptions on Family Dynamics:** Participants' perceptions of the "Bossman" factor's impact on family dynamics varied widely.

Support and Nurturing: Some women viewed the "Bossman" factor positively, citing that their husbands' roles contributed to support and nurturing within the family.

Limitation and Authority: Conversely, others perceived the "Bossman" factor as limiting and authoritative, affecting their ability to participate equally in family discussions and decisions. A good example of that was when a participant from an Islamic background stated, "While my husband's

guidance is supportive, sometimes it feels like my voice is not as valued in important decisions".

Family Communication Relationships in Nigerian Society

Family communication relationships in Nigerian society are deeply rooted in cultural traditions, societal norms, and historical contexts. The family is considered the fundamental unit of society, and the communication dynamics within these families play a crucial role in shaping social structures, individual identities, and the well-being of family members. This review investigates empirical research on family communication relationships in the context of Nigerian society. In Nigeria, the family holds a central place in the cultural, social, and economic life of individuals. Extended families are common, and the responsibilities of caregiving, support, and decision-making are shared among family members. These cultural factors significantly influence family communication relationships. Studies have examined family communication relationships in Nigerian society, shedding light on the following key aspects:

In the study of Okunola (2013) "Extended Family," highlights the prevalence of extended families in Nigeria. These family structures involve multiple generations living together and maintaining strong connections. Communication patterns in extended families often revolve around collective decision-making and mutual support. Nigeria has a rich oral tradition, and the use of storytelling and oral communication is prominent in family life. In another aspect, (Urama, 2009) investigated the role of oral communication in preserving cultural values and family history. Storytelling serves as a means of passing down traditions, knowledge, and moral values within families. Nigerian culture places great importance on respect for elders. Obi & Nwokocha (2014), emphasize the significance of hierarchical family structures where elders are highly revered. This hierarchical structure affects communication dynamics, with younger family members often deferring to their elders in decision-making and conflict resolution. Cultural values influence family communication relationships in Nigeria. In the study of Igboanugo (2012) on "Family Value," he explored the role of cultural values, such as collectivism and community-oriented living. These

values foster a sense of togetherness and mutual support within families, impacting communication patterns. Nigerian families have faced communication challenges in the context of modernization and urbanization. As Nigerian society evolves, families must adapt to changing norms and roles, which can pose communication challenges. The ability to navigate these challenges is critical for maintaining family harmony (Afolabi and Adegun, 2015).

The implications of these empirical findings in the studies cited in this section are significant as it emphasize the importance of recognizing the cultural and societal influences on family communication relationships in Nigeria. Cultural values, oral traditions, and respect for elders play a central role in shaping communication patterns within families. Acknowledging and respecting these factors are essential for fostering positive communication and preserving cultural heritage. Empirical findings highlight the intricate dynamics of family communication relationships in Nigerian society. Cultural values, extended family structures, oral traditions, hierarchical arrangements, and challenges related to modernization all impact family communication patterns. Recognizing and respecting these factors is crucial for understanding the unique dynamics of Nigerian families and promoting healthy communication within them.

Patriarchal Norms and Family Communication Patterns

Patriarchal norms, which emphasize male authority and dominance, have historically shaped family structures and communication dynamics. These norms influence the roles and expectations of family members, affecting how individuals communicate within the family unit. This review explores empirical research on the impact of patriarchal norms on family communication patterns. Patriarchal norms are deeply ingrained in many societies, defining the roles and expectations of family members. These norms often place men at the center of decision-making and leadership within the family. The influence of patriarchal norms on family communication is evident in various aspects of family life. Several studies have examined the relationship between patriarchal norms and family communication patterns, revealing the following key aspects:

A study of “power imbalance” highlights the power imbalance created by patriarchal norms and suggests that in families where male authority is emphasized, decision-making power is often concentrated in the hands of men (Ferree, 2010). This power imbalance can result in limited opportunities for other family members to contribute to discussions and decisions. In a likewise manner, (Grant & Smith, 1990) explored how patriarchal norms reinforce gendered roles within the family. Men are expected to be the primary breadwinners and decision-makers, while women are often assigned roles related to caregiving and homemaking. These gendered roles can lead to distinct communication patterns, with men exerting more authority in discussions. Patriarchal norms can create communication challenges within families. (Basu, 2017) identified issues related to assertiveness, active listening, and conflict resolution. When family members adhere to traditional gender roles, it can hinder open and equal communication, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts.

The influence of patriarchal norms extends to the upbringing of children. The study of Leaper & Farkas (2015) shows that children raised in families with strong patriarchal norms may internalize these norms and adopt communication patterns that reflect traditional gender roles. This can have long-term consequences on their attitudes and behaviors within their own families. In the study of Rindap Mari (2015), “Cultural and Social Variations” they explored the variations in patriarchal norms across different cultures and societies. While some societies place a strong emphasis on male authority, others have made progress toward more egalitarian family structures. These cultural variations significantly impact family communication patterns. The effects of these empirical findings are significant as they emphasize the importance of recognizing and challenging patriarchal norms within families to promote more equitable and healthy communication. Efforts to address power imbalances, redefine gendered roles, and encourage open communication are essential for fostering harmonious family dynamics.

Decision-Making Processes and Power Dynamics Within Families

Decision-making processes and power dynamics within families are fundamental aspects

of family life, significantly impacting relationships and individual well-being. This review explores empirical research on the influence of decision-making processes and power dynamics within families. Power dynamics refer to the unequal distribution of authority and influence among family members. This distribution of power can vary significantly based on factors such as gender, age, and cultural norms. Numerous empirical studies have investigated the relationship between decision-making processes and power dynamics within families, revealing the following key aspects:

In a study carried out by Blood and Wolf (1960) "Gender and Power," emphasized the role of gender in power dynamics within families. Traditional gender roles often result in men holding more decision-making power, especially in matters related to finances and major life choices. This power imbalance can affect the quality of communication within the family. In a different study carried out by Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson (1985), they examined power dynamics within parent-child relationships and discovered that adolescents often seek more autonomy and decision-making power as they grow older. Power struggles between parents and adolescents can lead to conflicts and impact family communication. (Kim, 2000) investigated cultural influences on family decision-making and then suggested that in collectivist cultures, decision-making may be more consensual, involving extended family members, while individualistic cultures may prioritize autonomy in decision-making. Also, power dynamics influence conflict resolution within families. In families with unequal power distribution, conflicts may be resolved through dominance rather than open communication. These power struggles can hinder effective conflict resolution (Schrodt, Witt, & Shimkowski, 2014). In the same vein, (Cummings and Davis, 1994) explored the effect of power dynamics on children and concluded that families with high levels of conflict and power imbalances may negatively impact children's emotional and psychological development, leading to difficulties in communication and relationships.

The implications of these empirical findings are significant. They detailed the importance of recognizing power dynamics within families and their influence on decision-making processes.

Promoting open communication, equity in decision-making, and effective conflict resolution is essential for fostering healthy and satisfying family relationships. Empirical research highlights the complex dynamics of decision-making processes and power dynamics within families. The unequal distribution of authority based on gender, age, and cultural norms can impact family communication, conflict resolution, and child well-being. Recognizing and addressing these power dynamics is crucial for creating more equitable and satisfying family relationships.

Gender-Based Roles, Power Dynamics, and Religious Diversity in Marital Relationships

Investigating the correlation between gender-based roles and power dynamics among married women necessitates a detailed examination, particularly when considering the influence of diverse religious backgrounds of Islamic and Christianity. This literature review excavates existing scholarship to unravel the complex interplay between gender roles, power dynamics, and the impact of diverse religious affiliations on marital relationships. A study by (Amato and Booth, 1997) emphasizes the significance of religious backgrounds in shaping family dynamics. Their study reveals that religious beliefs and practices influence decision-making processes and power structures within families, contributing to the complexities of marital relationships. This aligns with the study's focus on the diverse religious backgrounds, specifically Muslims and Christians married women.

Furthermore, the work of Chatters & Taylor (1994) highlights the role of Islam and Christianity religion in shaping gender roles and expectations within marital unions. Their findings suggest that individuals from Islamic and Christianity religious backgrounds may navigate distinct power dynamics based on the teachings and traditions associated with their faith. Understanding these variations is essential for contextualizing the influence of the "Bossman" factor on power relationships. Studies within the field of sociology, such as the work of (Mahoney, Pargament, Murray-Swank, & Murray-Swank, 2003), emphasize the interconnectedness of Muslim and Christian religious affiliations, gender roles, and power dynamics. Their research indicates that Islamic and Christian religious backgrounds contribute to the formation of distinct marital norms

and expectations, influencing power imbalances within relationships. This aligns with the study's exploration of the correlation between gender-based roles and power dynamics within the context of diverse religious backgrounds.

Additionally, the intersectionality framework proposed by Crenshaw (2021) becomes pertinent in understanding how gender, power, and religions intersect to shape the experiences of married women. This framework encourages an examination of the interconnected social categories, emphasizing the need to consider the simultaneous influence of gender roles and religious backgrounds on power dynamics within marital relationships.

Summarily, the literature reviewed emphasizes the importance of considering the diverse religious backgrounds of Islam and Christianity when exploring the correlation between gender-based roles and power dynamics among married women. The intersections of gender, power, and religion contribute to the complexities of marital relationships, and acknowledging these details is vital for a comprehensive understanding of the study's second objective.

Impact of Traditional Gender Roles on Women's Communication in Marriages

The roles and expectations assigned to women within marriages have been significantly influenced by traditional gender norms and stereotypes. These roles often extend to communication dynamics, shaping how women express themselves, engage with their partners, and navigate conflicts within marital relationships. This review examines empirical research on the impact of traditional gender roles on women's communication in marriages. Traditional gender roles define the roles and behaviors expected of individuals based on their gender. Historically, women were assigned roles that focused on caregiving, homemaking, and emotional support within the family. These roles often came with expectations for women to be submissive, nurturing, and accommodating. Communication patterns within marriages are deeply influenced by traditional gender roles. Studies have explored how these roles impact women's communication and the implications for marital satisfaction. The following key findings and trends have emerged from these studies:

The role of women as primary caregivers and homemakers has historically resulted in unequal

power dynamics within marriages. The study of (Umberson, Thomeer, & Lodge, 2015) indicates that when women are expected to conform to traditional gender roles, they may feel less empowered to assert themselves in communication. This can lead to power imbalances that affect the overall quality of communication within the marriage. Traditional gender roles often assign women the role of emotional caregivers. Research by Savundranayagam & Montgomery (2010) suggests that these roles can lead to expectations for women to be more expressive and nurturing in their communication. Women may feel pressure to manage emotional exchanges within the relationship, which can influence how they communicate their needs and concerns.

The expectation for women to be accommodating and avoid confrontations can impact how conflicts are managed. Women adhering to these roles may suppress their own needs, leading to unresolved issues and dissatisfaction in marital communication (Grote & Frieze, 1994). Researchers like (Repetti, Taylor & Seeman, 2002) have shown that adhering to traditional gender roles can contribute to stress and reduced well-being for women. Stress stemming from the juggling of multiple roles, such as being a caregiver, homemaker, and emotional support, can impact communication patterns. Women may struggle to balance these roles and communicate effectively with their partners. The impact of traditional gender roles varies across cultures and societies. Another study by Peterson (2003) examined cultural dimensions that influence the degree to which traditional gender roles are emphasized. In more collectivist and traditional societies, women may face stronger expectations to conform to these roles, whereas in more individualistic societies, these roles may be less pronounced.

The results of traditional gender roles on women's communication in marriages are important as recognizing the impact of these roles can inform interventions and support systems that address challenges women may face in expressing their needs and concerns within marital relationships. Encouraging open communication and redefining roles within marriages are essential steps to promote healthier communication dynamics.

Social Role Theory (SRT) Perspective

This study is anchored on the Social Role Theory. The SRT is highly relevant to the study as it provides a framework to understand how the “Bossman” factor, encompassing various roles traditionally associated with men within the family (Breadwinner, Overall decision-maker, Shared power, Supportive husband, Male authority, and Nurturer), influences family communication among married women from different religious backgrounds. The SRT is a sociological and psychological concept that explores how social roles influence our thoughts, behavior, and perception of others. This theory was developed by Eagly & Wood, (1990s), SRT suggests that gender differences in behavior and personality traits emerge from the expectations and demands associated with various social roles. Some key tenets of SRT are hereunder discussed to have a comprehensive understanding of the theory:

1. Basic premise - SRT posits that social roles, such as those based on gender, occupation, and familial status, shape individuals' behavior, attitudes, and identities. The theory suggests that individuals conform to societal expectations associated with their roles.
2. Gender roles - One of the prominent applications of SRT is in understanding gender differences. It proposes that the distinct behaviors, traits, and attitudes associated with men and women are a result of societal expectations, norms, and division of labor.
3. Division of labor/Roles Expectations - Social Role Theory emphasizes the division of labor based on gender, where men are typically associated with instrumental roles and expected to display assertiveness and competitiveness (e.g., breadwinning, decision-making), while women are associated with expressive roles (e.g., caregiving, nurturing).
4. Socialization - SRT argues that socialization processes, such as parenting, education, and media, play a significant role in transmitting and reinforcing societal expectations. This socialization perpetuates and reinforces gender roles and associated behaviors.
5. Impact on behavior and attitudes - SRT suggests that individuals' behavior and attitudes are influenced by the roles they occupy. People tend to adopt behaviors and attitudes that are

consistent with their social roles, which can lead to gendered behavior patterns and stereotypes.

6. Contextual variation - SRT recognizes that the influence of social roles can vary based on cultural, historical, and situational factors. Expectations and stereotypes attached to roles may differ across societies and change over time.

The Social Role Theory provides a relevant lens to understand the dynamics explored in the study. The theory suggests that social roles, such as those related to gender and marital status, shape individuals' behavior and perception. In the context of this study, the role of a married woman and her perception of family communication is examined. SRT proposes that individuals conform to societal expectations associated with their roles, and this conformity may influence their communication patterns within the family. The study seeks to investigate the influence of the “Bossman” factor on family communication as perceived by married women. This factor, which may involve the husband assuming a dominant or authoritative role within the family, aligns with the traditional gender role expectations often associated with married couples, where the husband is expected to be the primary decision-maker and have more authority.

Drawing from Social Role Theory, the study hypothesizes that the perception of a dominant or authoritative husband may positively or negatively affect family communication. It suggests that if married women perceive their husbands as being dominant or authoritative, it may lead to a communication pattern where the husband's views dominate, potentially limiting the open exchange of ideas and equal participation within the family. Additionally, the study may explore how socialization processes, such as cultural norms and media portrayals of gender roles, influence the perception of the “Bossman” factor and its impact on family communication. These socialization processes are central to the Social Role Theory, as they shape individuals' understanding of their roles and expectations within the family context.

By anchoring this study on the Social Role Theory, the research can shed light on how social roles, specifically the perceived dominance or authority of the husband, influence family communication dynamics from the perspective of

married women. It provides a valuable lens for understanding the interaction between social roles, gender expectations, and communication patterns within the family unit. In summary, Social Role Theory explores how social roles shape individuals' behavior, attitudes, and identities, particularly in the context of gender differences.

The findings reveal that the “Bossman” dynamics significantly influence family communication and decision-making processes among married women from Christian and Islamic backgrounds in Nigeria. The research highlights variations in power dynamics, communication patterns, and perceptions of family roles influenced by these dynamics.

The influence of the “Bossman” factor on financial decisions aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the traditional role of men as primary financial decision-makers within families (Basu, 2017). This signifies the continued relevance of patriarchal norms in contemporary Nigerian society. The observed variations in power dynamics among married women indicate that societal and religious contexts play crucial roles in shaping these dynamics. Women in roles perceived as 'male authority' experiencing less autonomy reflects the entrenched gender roles dictated by both Christian and Islamic teachings, aligning with the theoretical foundation of Social Role Theory (SRT) that guides this study. The correlation between the “Bossman” factor and communication patterns reveals a dichotomy: directive communication styles reinforce the authoritative aspect of the “Bossman” factor, while collaborative communication signifies the potential for shared power dynamics. This duality suggests that while traditional gender roles persist, there is a shift towards more egalitarian interactions in some families.

The findings address the study's objectives by demonstrating how the “Bossman” factor influences decision-making processes, highlighting the correlation between gender-based roles and power dynamics, and elucidating the impact on communication patterns and family dynamics. The mixed perceptions among participants regarding the “Bossman” factor's role illustrate the complexity of these dynamics.

The study's limitations include its reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias, and the focus on participants from predominantly

Christian and Islamic backgrounds, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other religious or cultural contexts.

Future research could explore the “Bossman” dynamics in other cultural and religious contexts to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its influence on family communication. Additionally, longitudinal studies could examine how these dynamics evolve over time and impact family relationships in the long term.

This study contributes to the understanding of how traditional gender roles and power dynamics influence family communication among married women in Nigeria. By highlighting the varied experiences and perceptions of the “Bossman” factor, the research emphasizes the need for interventions aimed at promoting egalitarian decision-making and open communication within families. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics can enhance familial interactions and support women's agency in family settings.

CONCLUSION

The study's exploration of the “Bossman” factor's influence on family communication among married women from Christian and Islamic backgrounds in Nigeria has provided significant insights into the complexities of gender roles, power dynamics, and communication patterns within familial settings. The findings reveal the pervasive impact of patriarchal norms on decision-making processes, especially in financial matters, and illustrate how societal and religious contexts shape these dynamics.

To address these issues, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) Implement programs that encourage joint decision-making within families through workshops and counseling sessions. (2) Create initiatives that foster open dialogue within families via family counseling services and communication skills workshops. (3) Develop educational campaigns aimed at challenging traditional gender norms and promoting gender equality in school curriculums and community programs. (4) Conduct longitudinal studies with larger samples and develop targeted interventions to address specific gender-based roles within the “Bossman” factor.

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