

The Attitude of Married Men towards Gender Division of Labor and their Experiences in Sharing Household Tasks with their Marital Spouses in Southern Ethiopia

Bewunetu Zewude^{1*}, Tewodros Habtegiorgis¹, and Belayneh Melese²

¹Wolaita Sodo University, Department of Sociology

²Wolaita Sodo University, Department of Civics and Ethical Studies

Article History: Received: January 25, 2021; Accepted: December 11, 2021; Published: December 15, 2021

Abstract: The objective of the present study was to assess the attitude of married men towards gender division of labor and their experiences in sharing household tasks with their marital spouses. Quantitative data were collected from randomly selected married men in Wolaita Sodo town, analyzed by SPSS software, and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. It was found that respondents have positive sex role and family role orientations (mean=2.8, St.dev=.469). It was also found that majority (86.1%) of respondents reported to have the experience of sharing household tasks with their spouse. In addition, the patterns of gender division of labor among survey participants show that 37.2% disclosed to have an egalitarian division of both the household and the public tasks. Moreover, laundering of clothes has been a household task that most respondents (76.1%) commonly do, followed by cleaning a house (63.6%), feeding children (59.3%), and making *shiro wot* (55.4%). Conversely, baking *enjera* has been a household task that respondents least want to do (13%). Coefficients of regression regarding gender role attitude of respondents and their experiences of engaging in household tasks revealed that respondents' attitude towards gender role attitude is significantly associated with their current number of children ($R=.093$; $P<.001$), their wives' current employment status ($R=.313$; $P<.001$), and wife's educational status ($R= -.145$; $P<.01$). Married men in Wolaita Sodo town have positive gender role orientations and high experiences of sharing household tasks with their spouses.

Keywords: Attitude; Experience; Family role; Gender; Household tasks

Licensed under a Creative Commons. Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.



1. Introduction

Gender is a social construction and codification of differences between the sexes and social relationships between women and men (Jelaludin, Angeli, Alemtsehay, and Salvini, 2001). Gender roles are roles that are played by both women and men and which are not determined by biological factors but by the socio-economic and cultural environment (International Cooperative Alliance and International Labour Organization [ICA-ILO], 2001, cited in Gemechu, Boo, and Subramani, 2009). Gender roles and relationships influence the division of work, the use of resources, and the sharing of the benefits of production between women and men (Lemlem, Sambrook, Puskur, and Ephrem, 2010). One of the most pressing issues contributing to the persistence of gender inequality is the gendered division of domestic labor. Despite their entry into paid employment, women still carry out more domestic work than men, limiting their ability to act on an equal footing within the workplace (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Coltrane, 2000). According to Cohen (2004), there clearly is a connection between the work women do at home and the occupations that are female dominated in the labor market.

Across rural Ethiopia, dominant and rigid gendered cultural norms, values and practices influence how girls and boys are socialized and how they come to understand themselves as adults. Men are seen as heads of the household, public figures, principal income-earners/farmers and ultimate authorities in the home and community. The patriarchal, hierarchical and polygynous organization of many African households, the young age at marriage for women, patrilocal residence after marriage, the large age difference between spouses, the unequal work burden between the sexes, the high bride price, and the low educational level of women tend to perpetuate the low status of women and make them voiceless and powerless in all spheres of life (Paulina, 2001). Women continue to work more hours than men on domestic tasks, and the sex segregation of housework typically means that husbands and wives define their domestic chores along sex-typical lines (Blair and Lichter, 1991).

According to the gender display approach, also called “doing gender,” housework is a process by which husbands and wives demonstrate their gender identities to others. This approach looks at the way that people construct gendered identities through their self-presentation, including the use of housework (Civettini, 2015). Feminists contend that the division of domestic works between men and women is the result of long held and socially constructed gendered norms and values in a society (Fraser, 2000). Activities, opportunities, and resources of people are significantly influenced by gender (Fernando, 1998, cited in Gemechu, *et al.* 2009). Blair and Lichter (1991) hold that traditional sex role attitudes and beliefs are important and continued to reinforce conventional definitions of “women’s work.” Such taken for granted beliefs allow actors to be reliably categorized as men and women in all contexts and understood as more or less appropriate candidates for different roles and positions in society (Ridgeway, 2001).

Economic theories argue that the spouse who brings more resources to the partnership will have the power to get the other spouse to do more housework (Becker, 1991). The ‘relative resource’ or ‘economic dependence’ argument, on the other hand, holds that carrying out domestic tasks is a function of the time available to both partners (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015). As men spend more hours in market work than women, then women have more time to carry out domestic work; meaning that as women become ‘more like men’ and take up paid work, then men will become ‘more like women’ and undertake more domestic work. The smaller the earnings gap between husband and wife, the more equal the division of housework, that women’s income is related to the division of housework, net of the effect of work hours, and that women’s share of the housework decreases along with their economic dependence on their husbands/partners (Civettini, 2015).

Studies reveal that the division of domestic labor among married couples varies by occupation and income. For instance, according to the findings of a research by Lyonette and Crompton (2015), men whose female partners earn more than they do carry out more domestic work than those whose partners earn less. Those men whose partners work longer hours relative to their own are also more likely to take more responsibility for housework, supporting time availability arguments. Family

power, measured by the personal resources of each spouse (income and employment), may also affect the allocation of domestic tasks by reinforcing traditional assignments of tasks by gender. Accordingly, powerful men are better able to avoid undesirable female sex-typed tasks. On the other hand, powerful women are better able to extract labor from their husbands as well as influence the types of family work these men do (Blair and Lichter, 1991).

Biological differences between the bodies of men and women play a major role in determining the type of work performed by them and therefore contributes to the social construction of some kinds of work as more masculine than others (Evans, 2004; Fisher, 2006). Fisher (2006) added that the sexual nature of men's bodies, size, muscle mass, and strength contribute to the gender division of nursing labor. A study undertaken in Afghanistan (Echavez, SayedMahdi, Leah, 2016) reveals that people in the study area believe that men should assume the role of a breadwinner and a man has the responsibility to procreate, support, and protect the family and country while women should be responsible for managing their homes. According to Chesely (2011), the decision to have a father stay home is heavily influenced by economic conditions, suggesting that men's increased job instability and shifts in the relative employment conditions of husbands and wives push some men into at-home fatherhood.

There appears to be a relationship between housework and gendered pay gap. Women do more housework than men, and the demands of housework do not affect women and men in the same way. Where women work fewer hours they do more housework but men do not vary by their housework hours relative to hours worked – their contribution tends to remain low. Women that do the largest amounts of housework experience a pay gap even when compared with the small number of men who also do a lot of housework (Brynin, 2017). The devaluation hypothesis rests on the assumption that society attributes different competencies to women and men. According to this hypothesis, women are ascribed to have strengths in housework and family duties, while men are ascribed to be more productive in gainful employment. For this reason, women and the professions in which most of them work have a lower status and are thus poorly paid (Anne and Elke, 2013). Moreover, inequality of pay between men's and women's professions can arise as a result of differences in human resources requirements. For example, the theory of compensating differentials claims that lower wages compensate for better possibilities to reconcile work and family duties in female dominated professions (Anne and Elke, 1981, cited in Katharina, 2017).

In a study undertaken in Ethiopia by Jones, Stephenson, Bekele, Gupta, Perezniето (2014), while many girls expressed that they want a more equal division of labor at home, it was evident that boys and parents did not regard an 'ideal wife' as one who had ambitions for greater equality. The authors noted that attitude towards sticky gender norms is changing through time and the key role played by education, religious leaders, role models, and the support of male relatives was also identified. It was marked that supportive attitudes emerge from a combination of empathy and fear of the law; boys in the study recognized that girls' work burden at home has a negative impact on their school achievements.

In Ethiopia, women are underrepresented in formal employment with the largest rates of unemployment recorded among adult and young women by comparison with men and boys. On the other hand, women's representation in politics and decision-making has been increasing steadily, at various levels. The level of women's representation in the Ethiopian House of People's Representatives grew from 21.4% to 27.9% in 2005 and 2010 legislative elections, respectively (UN Women, 2014). Furthermore, traditional attitudes toward women are changing with the increase in women's and girls' literacy and economic positioning relative to men and a more supportive environment for gender equality. These recent changes have improved women and girls' status and gender relations at the household level (Catholic Relief Services [CRS], 2013).

Despite public support of the notion that dual earner couples should share equally in household tasks, reality is that only a small percentage of couples exhibit any real gender similarity in the division of family tasks (Blair and Lichter, 1991). Even when both partners have jobs, women do

considerably more housework. Data from the National Survey of Families and Households conducted by the University of Wisconsin shows that women who don't work outside the home spend about 38 hours a week on housework compared to 12 hours for their husbands. Working women continue to do the bulk of the cooking and cleaning, around 28 hours a week, while husbands of working women contribute about 16 hours a week on chores (O'Grad, 2015).

In Ethiopia, although the long held consideration of household chores as exclusively "women's task" is expected to change over time due to women's increasing participation in formal employments, however, there are no adequate empirical evidences that prove whether men's attitude and practices about sharing domestic labor have changed. The present research, therefore, aimed at exploring the attitudes and practices of married men about household division of labor between spouses in Wolaita Sodo town, Southern Ethiopia.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Study Design

Quantitative research approach was used where cross-sectional numerical data were collected from randomly selected married men in the study area. In addition, descriptive and explanatory research designs were used to analyze and present the collected data.

2.2. Data Collection Methods and Sources

Firsthand data were collected from research participants using survey research method. Given its advantage of enabling the researchers to undertake analysis of relationship between variables in addition to its generalizability, survey research method was preferred for this study. Moreover, survey method was chosen because of its inclusiveness in the types and number of variables that can be studied and require minimal investment to develop and administer. A self-administered questionnaire was prepared, translated into Amharic language, duplicated and was finally distributed to the survey respondents. A pilot study was undertaken prior to the main process of data collection on similar population but different from the actual research samples in order to check issues related to the tools of data collection.

2.3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The survey populations are all men in marital relationships living in Southern Ethiopia during the period of data collection from which a sample has been drawn. For the purpose of determining the sample size of survey participants, multi-stage cluster sampling technique was employed. In Wolaita Sodo town, there are seven administrative *kebeles*- the smallest governmental administrative units in Ethiopia. From these, three *kebeles*- *Wadu Amba*, *Fana Woniba* and *Arada Amba* were selected using simple random sampling technique. Given that the statistics pertaining to the population size to each *kebele* was outdated and no recent data was available, the total population size in the study area was unknown. Hence, in order to determine the appropriate sample size, the researchers employed Cochran's (1977) formula for calculating sample size of unknown population:

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2} = 384$$

Where, n is the sample size, z is the selected critical value of desired confidence level, p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, q = 1 - p and e is the desired level of precision. In order to back-up the potential non-response rate, five percent additional questionnaires were prepared in addition to the ones proportionate to the calculated sample size. Then, 403 questionnaires (384+19) were distributed to randomly selected married men in each *kebele*. From these, 365 responses were found to be completed, making the response rate 95%.

2.4. Instrumentation and Measurement

The questionnaire was partly adapted from the material of Blair and Lichter (1991) and then contextualized according to the specific research objectives of the study. Accordingly, gender role orientations of respondents were classified as sex role attitude and family role attitude. Sex role attitude was measured on a four point Likert scale that assess respondents' attitude towards sex-based segregation of tasks and how each partner should behave in marriage. Sex role attitudes were measured as follows: please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: 1) It is much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and the family; 2) Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed and the response categories for these questions was (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3= neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). On the basis of the Likert scale results, respondents were categorized as having traditional, mixed, or egalitarian sex role attitudes.

Family role attitude (attitude towards household division of labor), on the other hand, was measured by asking respondents the following questions: 1) if a husband and a wife both work full time, they should share household tasks equally; 2) Couples should equally share household tasks only if both are full time employees; 3) Household tasks should be reserved for women even if she works outside to earn the main living, 4) If a woman earns the main living, men should take care of the household tasks; again with response categories of (5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3= neutral, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree). The same classification of respondents was made on the basis of the Likert scale results. Existing practices and experiences of respondents in terms of household division of labor were assessed by asking respondents: 1) "Do you have the experience of sharing household tasks?" with response categories of Yes or No.

2.5. Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaires returned from the respondents were first checked for completeness. The correctly completed ones were then inserted into software known as Statistical package for social sciences version 20. Data generated from the software were presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Gender role orientation of respondents was determined by the mean of attitude measured on a Likert scale generated from ten statements designed for this purpose. Using 2.5 mean of attitude as a threshold, the gender role attitude below 2.5 was considered as less positive or negative and the finding above the threshold was taken to be positive. In addition, scatter plots were used to show the distribution of mean of attitudes in reference to the threshold. Moreover, respondents previous experience of engaging in housework, the types of domestic tasks they commonly do, and the reasons of respondents for not taking part in housework were analyzed and presented through descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage distributions. Furthermore, analysis of factors associated with respondents' gender role attitudes and practices were made by simple regression coefficients. Using 95% confidence interval, independent variables for which significance levels were below 0.05 were considered as significantly associated to the dependent variables.

3. Results

Data presented in Table 1 show the socio-demographic characteristics of survey respondents. Accordingly, majorities (55.9%) of the respondents hold MA/Sc Degree & above, followed by 36.1% who reported to have BA/Sc Degree. Moreover, while 93.4% of survey participants are permanently employed, 4.6% are temporarily employed, and 1.9% are unemployed. In addition, 48.2% of respondents earn a gross monthly income of 10001 & above birr, followed by 10.9% who reportedly earn 80001-9000 Birr, while 1.9% of the respondents have no monthly income at all. Furthermore, 57.8% of the respondents are followers of Protestant religion, followed by Orthodox Christians (32.6%). Whereas 68.2% of the respondents reported to have grown up in rural area, the remaining 32% have grown up in an urban area.

For the majority of the respondents (71.9%), both husband and wife are the breadwinners of the family (egalitarian) and 26.8% disclosed to have a traditional type of sex role structure where only husbands are the main breadwinners of the family. Furthermore, most (28.1%) respondents have 1 child, followed by 25.7% of respondents who have 2 children. Similarly, 66.7% disclosed to have a child that is less than 4 years old. Above all, the majority (67.8%) of the respondents reported that they have a housemaid or other supporting labor force that can assist domestic tasks in the house. Table 1 also contains the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents' wives. It is shown that 56.3% of the respondents' wives possess BA/Sc Degree, followed by 18.9% and 16.1% who have college diploma and 9-12 level of education, respectively. In addition, while 62.1% of them are permanently employed, 32.6% of the respondents' wives are unemployed. Moreover, 10.7% of them reported that they earn a gross monthly income of 3001-4000 Birr. Finally, a descriptive statistical report presented in Table 1 indicated that the average age of survey respondents is 36.6.

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

No.	Variables	Categories	Frequencies (%)
1.	Education status	9-12	13 (3.6)
		College diploma	16 (4.4)
		BA/Sc Degree	132 (36.1)
		MA/Sc Degree & above	204 (55.9)
2.	Current employment status	Permanently employed	341 (93.4)
		Unemployment	7 (1.9)
		Temporarily employed	17 (4.6)
3.	Gross monthly income (ETB ¹)	0	7 (1.9)
		1001-2000	14 (3.8)
		2001-3000	14 (3.8)
		3001-4000	11 (3)
		4001-5000	20 (5.5)
		5001-6000	25 (6.8)
		6001-7000	24 (6.6)
		7001-8000	24 (6.6)
		8001-9000	40 (10.9)
		9001-10000	10 (2.7)
4.	Religion	10001 & above	176 (48.2)
		Orthodox Christianity	119 (32.6)
		Islam	2 (0.5)
		Protestantism	211 (57.8)
		Catholicism	9 (2.5)
		Adventist	10 (2.7)
		Ghova	6 (1.6)
		Atheism	2 (0.5)
		Others	6 (1.6)
		5.	Grownup area
Urban	116 (31.8)		
6.	Bread winner of the family	Husband only	98 (26.8)
		Wife only	4 (1.1)
		Both	263 (71.9)
7.	Current number of children	0	32 (8.7)
		1	103 (28.1)
		2	94 (25.7)
		3	72 (19.7)
		4	35 (9.6)

¹ 1 USD is equal to 37 ETB (Ethiopian Birr) during the period of the present study

		5 & above	29 (7.9)
8.	Presence of <4 years old child	Yes	244 (66.8)
		No	121 (33.2)
9.	Presence of housemaid or other supportive human labor	Yes	248 (67.8)
		No	117 (32)
10.	Wife's educational status	Never attended school	8 (2.2)
		1-8	5 (1.4)
		9-12	59 (16.1)
		College diploma	69 (18.9)
		BA/Sc Degree	206 (56.3)
		MA/Sc Degree & above	18 (4.9)
11.	Wife's current employment status	Permanently employed	227 (62.1)
		Unemployment	119 (32.6)
		Temporarily employed	19 (5.3)
12.	Wife's gross monthly income	0	97 (26.5)
		1-1000	20 (5.5)
		1001-2000	10 (2.7)
		2001-3000	35 (9.6)
		3001-4000	39 (10.7)
		4001-5000	23 (6.3)
		5001-6000	28 (7.7)
		6001-7000	33 (9)
		7001-8000	32 (8.7)
		8001-9000	23 (6.3)
		9001-10000	12 (3.3)
		10001 & above	13 (3.6)
			N=365 (100%)

3.1. Gender Role Attitudes and Experiences of Engaging in Household Labor

Data presented in Table 2 show the distribution of mean of attitude of respondents towards sex role and family role of men and women. It is found that respondents have positive sex role and family role orientations ($mean = 2.8$, $St.dev = .469$). For instance, while most respondents hold a relatively positive attitude towards the statement: "spouses that share household tasks would have a successful marriage" ($mean = 4.29$, $St.dev = 1.203$), they have negatively reacted towards a statement: "Household tasks should be reserved for woman even if she works outside to earn the main living" ($mean = 1.84$, $St.dev = .958$). Furthermore, it is also noted from the data that whereas respondents hold a more positive attitude towards the family roles (expressed by the fact that most agreed to the appropriateness of men to share household tasks with women), most have a relatively negative attitude regarding gendered sex role. For example, "Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed" ($mean = 3.39$, $St.dev = 1.238$).

Table 2. The mean distribution of respondents' sex and family role attitude

No.	Statements	Mean	St. dev
1.	It is better if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of	2.68	1.215
2.	Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed	3.39	1.238
3.	Women disrespect men who involve in household chores	2.87	1.160
4.	spouses that share household tasks would have a successful marriage	4.29	1.203
5.	It is immoral for men to engage in household tasks	2.39	1.166
6.	If a husband and a wife both work full time, they should share household	4.08	1.212
7.	Couples should equally share household tasks only if both are full time	2.21	1.188
8.	If the woman earns the main living, men should take care of the	2.33	1.178
9.	Household tasks should be reserved for women even if she works	1.84	.958
10.	Even if unemployed, men should not do household tasks	1.68	.845

Table 3 presents data regarding the frequency distribution of respondents in terms of their practices (experiences) of engaging in household labor. Accordingly, it is found that majority (86.1%) of the respondents reported to have the experience of sharing household tasks with their spouse. In addition, the patterns of gender division of labor among survey participants show that 37.2% of them disclosed to have an egalitarian division of both the household and the public tasks, followed by 29.8% who reported that both involve in the public tasks while most of the domestic chores are covered by the wife, and husband does a little. Above all, 26.8% of the respondents disclosed to have a traditional type of gender division of labor (husband works outside while wife take care of the domestic chores).

Table 3. Frequency distribution of experience of engaging in household labor

No.	Variables/Questions	Categories	Frequencies (%)
1.	Previous experience of engaging in domestic labor	Yes	314 (86.1)
		No	51(13.9)
2.	The patterns of gender division of labor among respondents	Husband works outside while wife take care of the domestic chores	98 (26.8)
		Wife works outside while husband takes care of household tasks	12 (3.3)
		Egalitarian division of both the household and the public tasks	136 (37.2)
		Both engage in the public tasks but only wife works the household chores	10 (2.7)
		Both work the public tasks while most of the domestic chores are covered by the wife and husband does a little	109 (29.8)
			N=365

Table 4, on the other hand, shows the frequency distribution of respondents in the types of household tasks in which they are commonly involved and those that they would never want to do. Accordingly, it is found that laundering has been a household task that most respondents commonly do (76.1%), followed by cleaning a house (63.6%), feeding children (59.3%), and making *shiro wot*² (55.4%). Conversely, baking *enjera*³ has been a household task that respondents least want to do (13%) and never want to do unless there prevails compelling circumstances (62.1%), followed by making *doro wot*⁴ (54.3%). Above all, the main reason for most (43.2%) of those respondents who have no experiences of taking part in household tasks is found to be ineffectiveness due to lack of past experience, followed by 33.0% respondents who replied that they have no time since they spend most of the day to make a living. Nevertheless, only 20.5% believe that it is just women's responsibility and 3.4% believe women are disappointed when men engage in household tasks which again confirms the finding that respondents have positive family role orientation.

², ³, ⁴ are typical elements of Ethiopian staple food items

Table 4. Frequency distribution of respondents in the types of household tasks they commonly do

Frequency distribution of experiences and hesitations of married men regarding household tasks		Responses		Percent of cases
		N	Percent	
Types of household tasks respondents are experienced with	Baking <i>enjera</i>	43	2.3%	13.1%
	Baking bread	57	3.1%	17.4%
	making <i>shiro wot</i>	181	9.8%	55.4%
	making <i>doro wot</i>	50	2.7%	15.3%
	washing dishes	148	8.0%	45.3%
	Laundering	249	13.4%	76.1%
	cleaning a house	208	11.2%	63.6%
	buying consumables	171	9.2%	52.3%
	feeding children	194	10.5%	59.3%
	diapering children	120	6.5%	36.7%
	playing with children	174	9.4%	53.2%
	making coffee	102	5.5%	31.2%
	making tea	128	6.9%	39.1%
	Others	29	1.6%	8.9%
Total	1854	100.0%	567.0%	
Household tasks that respondents never want to do	Baking <i>enjera</i>	223	18.6%	62.1%
	Baking bread	149	12.4%	41.5%
	making <i>shiro wot</i>	85	7.1%	23.7%
	making <i>doro wot</i>	195	16.2%	54.3%
	washing dishes	72	6.0%	20.1%
	laundering	92	7.7%	25.6%
	cleaning a house	45	3.7%	12.5%
	buying consumables	60	5.0%	16.7%
	feeding children	28	2.3%	7.8%
	diapering children	92	7.7%	25.6%
	playing with children	15	1.2%	4.2%
	making coffee	56	4.7%	15.6%
	making tea	36	3.0%	10.0%
	There is no household task that I do not want to do	48	4.0%	13.4%
I don't want to do all types of household tasks	6	0.5%	1.7%	
Total	1202	100.0%	334.8%	
Reasons for not engaging in household tasks	I believe that it is just women's responsibility	18	14.1%	20.5%
	I have no time for it since I spend the whole day outside	29	22.7%	33.0%
	Lack of interest	12	9.4%	13.6%
	Ineffectiveness due to lack of past experience	38	29.7%	43.2%
	I believe women are disappointed when men engage in household tasks	3	2.3%	3.4%
	My wife is a homemaker that she takes care of tasks in the household	16	12.5%	18.2%
	We have enough labor in the house that my involvement is not needed	12	9.4%	13.6%
	I believe that it is just women's responsibility	18	14.1%	20.5%
	Total	146	114.20%	166.00%

3.2. Factors Associated with Gender Role Attitude and Experience of Engaging in Household Tasks

Table 5 presents regression coefficients of gender role attitude of respondents and their experiences of engaging in household tasks (washing plates, cooking, diapering children, etc). It is found that respondents' attitude towards gender role attitude is significantly associated to their current number of children ($R=.093$; $P<.001$), their wife's current employment status ($R=.313$; $P<.001$), and wife's educational status ($R= -.145$; $P<.01$). Accordingly, respondents who have many children, whose wives are permanently employed, and whose wives are less educated have positive gender role attitude. On the other hand, respondents' experiences (practices) of engaging in household tasks is significantly determined by their Current employment status ($R = .237$; $P<.001$), Wife's educational status ($R = -.094$; $P<.01$), current number of children ($R = -.059$; $P<.01$), gross monthly income of respondents ($R = -.025$; $P<.05$), and the presence of a housemaid or other supportive labor force in the house ($R = -.100$; $P<.05$).

Table 5. Regression coefficients of gender role attitude and experience of engaging in household labor

Independent variables	Attitude	Experience
Current employment status		.237***
Current number of children	.093***	-.059**
Wife's current employment status	.313***	
Wife's educational status	.105**	-.094***
Educational status	-.145**	
Wife's gross monthly income	.029*	
Gross monthly income	-.033*	-.025*
The presence of housemaid		-.100*
Grownup area	-.128*	
Religion	-.042*	
Presence of <4 years old child	-.177*	

*** $P\leq.001$; ** $P\leq .01$; * $P\leq.05$

4. Discussions

The acquisition of gender specific behavior is an integral part of who we are, how others respond to us and how we, in turn, respond to them. It is through one's culture that gender relation within the society and activities carried out by men and women are determined. Usually, different traits are emphasized for girls and boys; girls are encouraged to play with dolls as this prepares them for their future role as the nurturer and care giver of the household, while boys are channelized towards games and toys which are more aggressive and also more action packed (Singh, 2016). Gender differences in attitudes toward work and gender-role attitudes are important determinants of gender inequality in the labor market (Campa and Serafinelli, 2019). The objective of the present study was to assess the attitude of married men towards gender division of labor and their experiences in sharing household tasks with their marital spouses.

It is found that respondents have positive sex role and family role orientations ($mean = 2.8$, $St.dev = .469$). Furthermore, it is also noted from the data that whereas respondents hold a more positive attitude towards the family roles, most have a relatively negative attitude regarding gendered sex role. For example, "Preschool children are likely to suffer if their mother is employed" ($mean = 3.39$, $St.dev = 1.238$); "It is better if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and the family" ($mean = 2.8$, $St.dev = 1.215$). It is found that majority (86.1%) of the respondents reported to have the experience of sharing household tasks with their spouses. In addition, the patterns of gender division of labor among survey participants show that 37.2% disclosed to have an

egalitarian division of both the household and the public tasks. Jones, *et al.* (2014) noted that attitude towards sticky gender norms is changing through time and the key role played by education, religious leaders, role models, and the support of male relative. Blair and Lichter (1991) hold that traditional sex role attitudes and beliefs are important and continued to reinforce conventional definitions of “women’s work.” Such taken for granted beliefs allow actors to reliably be categorized as men and women in all contexts and understood as more or less appropriate candidates for different roles and positions in society (Ridgeway, 2001).

The data from the present study also revealed that laundering of cloths has been a household task that most respondents commonly do (76.1%), followed by cleaning a house (63.6%), feeding children (59.3%), and making *shiro wot* (55.4%). Conversely, Baking *enjera* has been a household task that respondents least want to do (13%) and never want to do unless there prevails compelling circumstances (62.1%), followed by making *doro wot* (54.3%). Above all, the main reason for most of those respondents (43.2%) who have no experiences of taking part in household tasks is found to be ineffectiveness due to lack of prior experience. According to the gender display approach, housework is a process by which husbands and wives demonstrate their gender identities to others. This approach looks at the way that people construct gendered identities through their self-presentation, including the use of housework (Civettini, 2015). Economic theories, on the other hand, argue that the spouse who brings more resources to the partnership will have the power to get the other spouse to do more housework (Becker, 1991). The ‘relative resource’ or ‘economic dependence’ argument holds that carrying out domestic tasks is a function of the time available to both partners (Lyonette and Crompton, 2015). As men spend more hours in market work than women, then women have more time to carry out domestic work; meaning that as women become ‘more like men’ and take up paid work, then men will become ‘more like women’ and undertake more domestic work. The smaller the earnings gap between husband and wife, the more equal the division of housework that women’s income is related to the division of housework, net of the effect of work hours, and that women’s share of the housework decreases along with their economic dependence on their husbands/partners (Civettini, 2015).

Coefficients of regression regarding gender role attitude of respondents and their experiences of engaging in household tasks revealed that respondents’ attitude towards gender role attitude is significantly associated to their current number of children ($R = .093$; $P < .001$), their wife's current employment status ($R = .313$; $P < .001$), and wife’s educational status ($R = -.145$; $P < .01$). On the other hand, respondents’ experiences (practices) of engaging in household tasks is significantly determined by their Current employment status ($R = .237$; $P < .001$), wife's educational status ($R = -.094$; $P < .01$), and current number of children ($R = -.059$; $P < .01$). Larsen and Long (1988) found sex as a factor determining gender role attitudes in which females scored significantly higher in the direction of attitudes as compared to males. Studies reveal that the division of domestic labor among married couples varies by occupation and income. For instance, according to the findings of a research by Lyonette and Crompton (2015), men whose female partners earn more than they do carry out more domestic work than those whose partners earn less. Those men whose partners work longer hours relative to their own are also more likely to take more responsibility for housework, supporting time availability arguments. Data from the National Survey of Families and Households conducted by the University of Wisconsin shows that women who do not work outside the home spend about 38 hours a week on housework compared to 12 hours for their husbands. Working women continue to do the bulk of the cooking and cleaning while husbands of working women contribute about 16 hours a week on chores (O'Grad, 2015). Despite public support of the notion that dual earner couples should share equally in household tasks, reality is that only a small percentage of couples exhibit any real gender similarity in the division of family tasks (Blair and Lichter, 1991).

In Ethiopia, women’s representation in politics and decision-making has been increasing steadily, at various levels. The level of women’s representation in the Ethiopian House of People’s Representatives grew from 21.4% to 27.9% in 2005 and 2010 legislative elections, respectively (UN

Women, 2014). Furthermore, traditional attitudes toward women are changing with the increase in women's and girls' literacy and economic positioning relative to men and a more supportive environment for gender equality. These recent changes have improved women and girls' status and gender relations at the household level (CRS, 2013).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Married men in Wolaita Sodo town have positive gender role orientations and high experiences of sharing household tasks with their spouses. Whereas, respondents hold a more positive attitude towards the family roles (expressed by the fact that most agreed for the appropriateness of men to share household tasks with women), most have a relatively negative attitude regarding gendered sex role. This implies that there is still a tendency among married men to segregate some tasks to exclusively belong to women and others to men. Furthermore, married men in the study area adopt an egalitarian type of gender division of labor in which couples equally share both the public and the domestic tasks. Above all, men who have more children, whose wives are permanently employed, and whose wives are less educated have relatively more positive sex role and family role attitude. Similarly, men who are permanently employed, whose wives are less educated, having less number of children, earning lesser monthly income, and those who do not have a housemaid or other supporting labor in their house demonstrated better experiences of involvement in household tasks. The findings of the present study would immensely contribute to the existing theoretical and empirical literature given the nature of the social structure where it is undertaken. In the context of Sub-Saharan African countries in general and in Ethiopia in particular, where patriarchy predominates most aspects of social interactions, the division of housework, including family role attitudes, are characterized by unbalanced distributions of sex and family roles and biased gendered attitudes favoring men while putting women at disadvantaged positions. The finding that married men in southern Ethiopia hold an egalitarian attitude of gender-based division of labor and have relatively high experiences as far as sharing housework with their women counter parts at home would help to bring a new perspective in the cross-cultural study of gender and social relationships.

6. Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our gratitude to duplication unit staffs of Wolaita Sodo University for their unreserved help in the process of duplicating the questionnaires. Finally, all respondents who have willfully devoted their time to filling the questionnaires also deserve appreciation.

7. References

- Anne, B. and Elke, H. 2013. Geschlechtsspezifische Verdienstunterschiede bei Führungskräften und sonstigen Angestellten in Deutschland: Welche Relevanz hat der Frauenanteil im Beruf? *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 42 (4): 315–336.
- Becker G. 1991. *A treatise on the family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Blair, S. and Lichter, D. 1991. Measuring the division of household labor: Gender segregation of housework among American couples. *Journal of Family Issues*, 12 (1): 91-113.
- Brynin, M. 2017. The gender pay gap: Research report 109. Equality and Human Rights Commission, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex.
- Campa, P. and Serafinelli, M. 2019. How are gender-role attitudes and attitudes toward work formed? Lesson from the rise and fall of the iron curtain. Free Network.
- Chesely, N. 2011. Stay-at-home fathers and breadwinning mothers: Gender, couple dynamics, and social change. *Gender and Society*, 25 (5): 642-664.
- Civettini, N. 2015. Gender display, time availability, and relative resources: Applicability to housework contributions of members of same-sex couples. *International Social Science Review*, 91 (1): 1-34.

- Cochran, W. G. 1977. *Sampling techniques*, 3rd edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Cohen, P. 2004. The gender division of labor “keeping house” and occupational segregation in the United States. *Gender and Society*, 18 (2): 239-252.
- Coltrane, S. 2000. Research on household labor: Modeling and measuring the social embeddedness of routine family work. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62 (4): 1208-1233.
- CRS (Catholic Relief Services). 2013. A sample gender analysis: Abridged version, catholic relief services, 228 West Lexington Street Baltimore, MD 21201–3413, USA.
- Echavez, C., SayedMahdi M. and Leah W. 2016. The other side of gender inequality: Men and masculinities in Afghanistan. Kabul: Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit.
- Evans, J. 2004. Bodies matter: Men, masculinity, and the gendered division of labor in nursing. *Journal of Occupational Sciences*, 11 (1): 14-22.
- Fisher, M. 2006. Masculinities and men in nursing: An exploratory survey and life history study. A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, faculty of education and social work, University of Sidney.
- Fraser, N. 2000. Rethinking recognition. *New Left Review*, 3 (3): 107–120.
- Gemechu, Sh., Boo, E. and Subramani, J. 2009. Gender roles in crop production and management practices: A case study of three rural communities in Ambo district. *Ethiopian Journal of Human Ecology*, 27 (1): 1-20.
- Jelaludin A., Angeli A., Alemtsehay B. and Salvini S. 2001. Gender issues, population and development in Ethiopia. In-depth studies from the 1994 population and housing census in Ethiopia, Central Statistical Authority (CSA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Institute for Population Research – National Research Council (IRP-CNR) Roma, Italy.
- Jones N., Stephenson J., Bekele T., Gupta T. and Pereznieto, P. 2014. Early marriage in Ethiopia: The role of gendered social norms in shaping adolescent girls’ futures. Overseas Development Institute: London.
- Katharina, W. 2017. Gender pay gap varies greatly by occupation, DIW Economic Bulletin, ISSN 2192-7219, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW). *Berlin*, 7 (43): 429-435.
- Larsen, K. and Long, E. 1988. Attitudes toward sex-roles: Traditional or egalitarian? *Sex Roles*, 19 (1/2): 1-11.
- Lemlem A., Sambrook, B., Puskur, R. and Ephrem, T. 2010. Opportunities for promoting gender equality in rural Ethiopia through the commercialization of agriculture, improving productivity and market success of Ethiopian farmers project (IPMS)– International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Lyonette, C. and Crompton, R. 2015. Sharing the load? Partners’ relative earnings and the division of domestic labor. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29 (1): 23–40.
- O’Grad, S. 2015. Division of labor in relationships: How to make it work. (<https://ogradywellbeing.com/division-labor-relationships-what/>). (Accessed on January 7, 2021).
- Paulina, M. 2001. Sociocultural factors affecting fertility in Sub-Saharan Africa. Workshop on prospect for fertility decline in high fertility countries. Population Division, Department of Economic and Social affairs, United Nation Secretariat, New York.
- Ridgeway, C. L. 2001. Gender division of labor: Small group interaction and gender. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*.
- Singh, V. 2016. The influence of patriarchy on gender roles. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies*, 3 (1): 27-29.
- UN Women. 2014. Preliminary gender profile of Ethiopia. United Nations Entity for gender equality and the empowerment of women, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

