

Gender-role Attitudes and Women's Decision on Employment: An Example of Taiwan

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Abstract. This paper explores Taiwan women's gender-role attitudes and their impact on their decisions to join the labor force.

The research was conducted by face-to-face interviews through structured questionnaires. 505 women in the north part of Taiwan were interviewed. The test of gender-role attitudes consisted of three measurements including:

⊕ The appropriateness of employment in their child-bearing age.

⊗ Women's attitudes toward men being the breadwinners, and women the homemakers.

⊗ Women's attitudes toward gender role divisions in the family.

The findings state women's decisions regarding employment are highly associated with women's gender role ideology, and the data further indicate that Taiwanese women still maintain strong traditional gender role perspectives, an attitude that maintains women's appropriate role is in the home, particularly for women who are at the age of child-bearing.

Key words: Taiwan, gender-role, attitudes, women, employment

In Taiwan, women's labor force participation rates have remained at around 45% since 1986. Many theoretical concerns have been used as models for explaining women's employment, such as macro- and microeconomic perspectives (Chow, 1994; Lu, 1993; Tsey, 1998; Wang, 1994). This paper will focus on a social-cultural value examination, exploring how the women's sense of their own gender roles may influence women's participation in the labor force.

Related Literature

As increasing numbers of women have entered the labor market since the 1980s, more attention has been paid by women's movements and social and economic scientists to the issue of women and work. By and large, the concern has focused on employment opportunities available to women as compared to those available to men in the work force. This is to say, the emphasis has been on seeking evidence of unequal treatment. However, as

important as these factors are, they fail to explain fully the persistence of women's low participation rates in the labor force. I contend that gender-related factors critically shape the relationship between social forces and women's position. Specifically, I argue that the issues of women and work must be placed within a social-cultural context shaping women's gender ideology.

Rosabeth Moss Kanter (1976) has suggested three basic models conceptualize the problems women face in the world of employment: individual, role-related, and socially structured. These three models correspond to three levels of explanation for the determinants of social life. The following outline is informed by Kanter's models.

The individual model focuses on women's personalities and capacities. The inferior positions in which most women find themselves at work as well as home is explained as stemming from basic differences between men and women in character, temperament and orientations. These differences may be attributed to biological and social natures, to socialization patterns, or to both.

The role-related model focuses on the "dual" roles handled by women who work, thus assuming that most working women have families and homes to take care of. In this model, the traditional homemaker role of women is the major constraint on their full and successful participation in the workplace. Women suffer divided loyalties and multiple demands on their time and energy. They are restricted in the sorts of jobs they can accept, often basing their choices on such non-work-related criteria as location and hours. All of these considerations hinder women's commitment to work and chances of promotion.

The explanation for women's employment problems contained in the social structural model is more complex than those in the first two models. One major difference is that whereas the individual and role-related models focus on problems on the supply side of employment, that is, problems with women workers themselves, the social structural model focuses on the demand side of employment. One factor in particular is emphasized in this model, namely, that employment-related inequalities between men and women in opportunity, status, pay, benefits, and promotion have developed into a "dual labor market." A social structural approach aims at identifying factors contributing to the perpetuation of duality in the labor market.

As discussed above, every model provides explanations for women's participation in the labor force. However, the individual model aptly identifies

some of the employment problems women encounter, but use of this model in and of itself can have implications for sex discrimination. In addition, the extent and scope of change contained in the model is very limited; in fact, it is limited to those women whose personalities and capacities differ from the stereotypical assumptions of the model. The consequence of any change leaves intact the structures causing segregation and inequality in the labor market, while enabling some women to better adapt themselves to that structure. This model is noted as the "blaming-the-victim" approach and refined by the "human capital" explanation (Ruggie, 1994).

The implications of the social structural model go beyond "blaming-the-victim," rather tending to "blame the employer." However, "blaming the employer" and passing legislation to ensure that "he" stop discriminating may not result in the sort of equality that women, or those promoting the legislation, are seeking. Sex discrimination is based on factors that occur outside the work environment, and more generally in the hierarchy of sex-based inequality in society at large.

The role-related model suggests the focus be extended beyond women themselves, to the broader system, while explaining patterns of women's participation in the workplace. The emphasis is placed on releasing women from their traditional ideology and permitting them the opportunities to participate in the labor force. One limitation is a lack of recognition, on society's part, of the fact that women should go to work after marriage or having children. The researcher believes this "pre-labor-market" factor can provide a great deal of information to aid in identifying women's choices in the labor market (Ruggie, 1984).

Following the role-related model, this research further proposes gender-role perspective as the center of testing role-related model as the determinant of labor force participation. Gender-role perspective stems from role theory and with linkages to structure-functionalism; it treats gender as social role, characterized by a distinct and well-integrated set of attitudes and behaviors (Fox & Murry, 2000; Glenn, 1992; Hossain & Roopnarine, 1993)

Method

Participants

1. The participants (n=505) are composed of women aged between 20 and 65 living in the northern part of Taiwan, especially in Taipei City, Taipei County, and Keelung City.

The sample was drawn from the voting directories of the cities and counties stated above. In order to ensure a representative sample, stratified multistage random sampling was utilized. For a purposive survey frame, seven levels of urbanization were employed as criteria were for determining the sample size in different areas. The employment status of all the samples included working and non-working (which we do not know before we interview) and are randomly distributed.

2. Our sample consists of 130 respondents (25.8%) aged between 20 and 29, 164 respondents (32.6%) aged between 30 and 39, 126 respondents (25.0%) aged between 40 and 49, 68 respondents (13.5%) aged between 50 and 59, and 47 respondents (9.4%) aged between 60 and 64.
3. Over 65% (n=328) of the respondents are working, with the remaining 35% (n=177) not working. Of the subjects reporting marital status, 75.8% are married and 22.6% are unmarried. Most of them (60.8%) are living in nuclear families, with 16.7% living in extended families. In addition, nearly 80% (77.8%) of the respondents have children, and only 22.8% are childless.

Instruments

Gender-role attitude measurement is modified from two measurements:

- ① employment and child care attitude measurement and ② women's employment concerns. Both are used in the research "employed women and child care issues" (Yi & Ku, 1986).

Gender-role attitude measurement is composed of three measurement scales: ① appropriateness of employment at childbearing age, ② traditional gender-role attitude scale, ③ gender-role divisions of family labor.

For the first measurement, the respondents were asked to express their attitude toward the appropriateness of women participating in the labor force at differential stages of life, with 5 interval scales, including the following:

- ① before marriage
- ② married but no children yet

- × most of the children under six years old
- ≡ most of the children in elementary school
- ≡ most of the children in junior (senior) high school
- ⊗ most of the children having grown up

For the second measurement, the respondents were interviewed with questions regarding "men playing the instrumental role; women playing the expressive role" or "men playing the role of breadwinner; women playing the role of homemaker." The questions of traditional gender-role corresponding with 5 interval scales are constructed as follows:

⊕ For normative family: men are the breadwinners; women are the homemakers.

⊗ In general, women's employment decisions are made simply because of a family's economic needs.

× Helping the husbands career development.

≡ Working women's careers may affect a family's happiness.

≡ Working women's roles may affect their ability to handle the demands of bearing and caring for young children.

For the last measurement, the respondents were asked to reflect on their gender-role ideology. The interviewees were asked to rate "who should take the responsibility for the housework" by 5 intervals:

⊕ All responsibility should be taken by the wife.

⊗ Most of the responsibility should be taken by the wife.

× The wife and husband should share the responsibility.

≡ Most of the responsibility should be taken by the husband.

≡ All of the responsibility should be taken by the husband.

Procedure

Data for this study was collected through structured interviews. Since women's security tends to be a problem in Taiwan, written letters were delivered before the formal interview took place. Once the interviewers reached the homes of the prospective participants, very few of the women contacted refused to be interviewed. However, if the prospective participant did refuse, stand-by samples were used to guarantee the number of samples required.

All investigations and the supervision of the survey process were carefully conducted in order to ensure the usefulness of the data. After the interview, telephone calls were made to the homes in order to double-check the results.

Four questionnaires were problematic, and those were excluded from the effective samples. In the end, the total number of samples in this study was 505.

Results

Women's attitudes toward gender roles have been proved to be influential factors in women's choices regarding employment (Molm, Spitze, Spoeth, 1976; Ruggie, 1984; Yi & Kau, 1986; Chou, 1984). It is assumed that women who have a traditional gender-role perspective tend to choose the family as the center of their life. These women tend to assume that they belong to the family, their husband and children. Therefore, whenever there is a conflict between work and family, these women tend to leave their jobs and return to the family in order to meet the demands of their family role. On the other hand, women who believe their role should not be limited to the private sphere tend to choose strategies that balance work and family, and their participation in the labor force remains possible. My research also confirms this assumption that gender-role ideology affects women's decisions regarding employment.

As stated before, the "gender-role attitude" used in this study is composed of three measurements including ① the appropriateness of employment during a woman's childbearing and child-rearing ages, ② traditional gender role perspective, and ③ gender-role based divisions of housework. Each measurement consists of several questions. The following explores how the gender-role ideology of women tends to affect their employment status or decision.

Appropriateness of Employment for Women of Child-bearing and Child-caring Age:

The respondents of this research showed that the women of Taiwan are highly conservative in their views on employment for women. Their attitudes toward supporting employment for women become weaker as women move into their childbearing and rearing years. About 95% of the respondents accept that it is appropriate for women to participate in the work force before they are married. About 95% of the respondents accept that it is appropriate for women to participate in the work force when women are in the time

between getting married and giving birth to their first child. (Table 1)

However, only 45% respondents agree that it is appropriate for women of childbearing age to join the work force and develop their roles outside the family. It is clear that Taiwan's women emphasize their domestic role more than their work role once women have reached childbearing age. However, 63% of the respondents accept the idea of women participating in the labor force as they leave their childbearing period and move onto the stage when their children are in elementary school. As their school-aged children grow up, it becomes more acceptable for women to choose to work outside the home. About 77% of the women interviewed responded that it is appropriate for women to go to work while their children are in junior high school, and 91% of sample supported women being in the workplace once their children have reached maturity (see Table 1).

The data discussed apparently indicate that most of the respondents believe Taiwanese women's appropriate role is in the family when women are at the ages of childbearing and child caring. However, our data also indicate differences in attitudes between currently working women and non-working women. Working women maintain a more supportive attitude towards women's employment than non-working women, regardless of age or what stages of life the women are in. The data explore several decisive differences. About 50% of the working women support employment for women while the women have children under the age of 6, compared to 36% of the non-working women. Secondly, about 68% of the working women consider it appropriate for women to work when they have one or more children in elementary school, compared to 54% of the non-working women. Thirdly, about 89% of the working women accept the idea of women taking a role outside the family when women have children in junior high school, compared to 73% of the non-working women. For the other life stages of the women, working women also provide more supportive attitudes toward employment than non-working women.

Table 1. Attitudes towards Women's Employment

Unit: persons(%)

different stages	Appropriateness					
	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree	missing
Total sample 505						
1. before marriage	6(1.2)	2(0.4)	10(2.0)	24(4.8)	462(91.7)	1
2. after marriage but before child-birth	11(2.2)	6(1.2)	10(2.0)	42(8.3)	435(86.3)	1
3. most children under the age of 6	129(25.5)	115(22.9)	32(6.4)	98(19.5)	129(25.6)	2
4. most children in elementary school	77(15.3)	77(15.3)	31(6.2)	107(21.3)	211(41.9)	2
5. most children in middle school	48(9.5)	77(15.3)	30(6.0)	93(18.5)	295(58.6)	2
6. after children have grown up	7(1.4)	10(2.0)	29(5.8)	59(11.7)	399(79.2)	1
Working women						
1. before marriage	1(0.3)	1(0.3)	6(1.8)	13(4.0)	306(93.6)	1
2. after marriage but before child-birth	4(1.2)	2(0.6)	8(2.4)	23(8.3)	290(88.7)	1
3. most children under the age of 6	71(21.8)	68(20.9)	24(7.4)	69(21.2)	94(28.8)	2
4. most children in elementary school	41(12.6)	41(12.6)	22(6.7)	73(22.4)	149(45.7)	2
5. most children in middle school	27(8.3)	20(6.1)	21(6.4)	58(17.8)	200(61.3)	2
6. after children have grown up	1(0.3)	3(0.9)	20(6.1)	33(10.1)	270(82.6)	1
Non-working women						
1. before marriage	5(2.8)	1(0.6)	4(2.3)	11(6.2)	156(88.1)	0
2. after marriage but before child-birth	7(4.0)	4(2.3)	2(1.1)	19(10.7)	145(81.9)	0
3. most children under the age of 6	58(32.8)	47(26.6)	8(4.5)	29(16.4)	35(19.8)	0
4. most children in elementary school	36(20.3)	36(20.3)	9(5.1)	34(19.2)	62(35.0)	0
5. most children in middle school	21(11.9)	17(9.6)	9(5.1)	35(19.8)	95(53.7)	0
6. after children have grown up	6(3.4)	7(4.0)	9(5.1)	26(14.7)	129(72.9)	0

In order to verify the significance of the differences of opinion of working and non-working women, a T-test has been used to determine the level of significance. The degree of supportiveness is calculated in 5-interval scores, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. In general, the scores on supportiveness for women's employment when women are at child caring and rearing ages are significantly different: 4.13 for working women and 3.80 for non-working women, with a P value of 0.0002. These attitudes toward women's role in the workplace can explain women's decisions on their roles in the private and public spheres. Positive attitudes reinforce women's staying in the labor market; however, negative attitudes reinforce women's staying in the family. (See Table 2)

Table 2. Comparison between Working and Non-Working Women

Degree Different stages	Appropriateness						T-test			
	total			working women		non-working women		T	DF	P value
	n	mean	SD	n	mean	SD	n	mean	SD	
1.before marriage	504	4.85	0.58	327	4.90	0.42	177	4.76	0.78	2.22 234 0.0276*
2.after marriage but before child-birth	504	4.75	0.75	327	4.81	0.62	177	4.64	0.93	2.17 263 0.0307*
3.most children under the age of 6	503	2.97	1.57	326	3.14	1.56	177	2.64	1.55	3.48 501 0.0005***
4.most children in elementary school	503	3.59	1.52	326	3.76	1.45	177	3.28	1.60	3.41 501 0.0007***
5.most children in middle school	503	4.09	1.34	326	4.18	1.28	177	3.94	1.43	1.92 501 0.0548
6.after children have grown up	504	4.65	0.79	327	4.74	0.64	177	4.50	1.00	2.89 256 0.0042***
Total score	503	4.01	0.89	326	4.13	0.82	177	3.80	0.98	3.78 311 0.0002***

*score : strong disagree=1, disagree=2, no answer=3, agree=4, strong agree=5.

Traditional Gender-role Ideology:

Taiwanese women still remain a very traditional gender-role perspective, a perspective which in turn affects their participation in the labor force. My research data strongly indicate that this role of women is stereotyped. In

total, about 59% of the respondents maintain that a normative family is the family in which the man assumes the role of breadwinner, and women that of homemaker. Less than one-third of the respondents share a modernized view of shared gender roles, i.e. breadwinning and housekeeping. In addition, 62% of the respondents insist that the husbands' careers are far more important than the wives' (their own) careers. Women strongly retain their subordinate status in the family. Furthermore, 61% of the respondents share their "career myth" - that women who are highly involved in career development may encounter family unhappiness. Also, 70% of the respondents responded that the central role of women is the role of care provider and educator of the children; therefore, the work role would interfere with the women's family role. Thirty-three percent of the respondents are even more conservative, this portion even suggesting that women seek employment simply out of economic necessity rather than for other reasons.

As discussed above, Taiwanese women still have their traditional gender-role perception, which further influences their tendencies to take on social roles. However, does this role ideology provide a strong explanation for women's current status in employment? Further data analysis was conducted in this study. Comparing the attitudes toward women's sex-role perception between working and non-working women, we find that working women and non-working women share different gender-role ideologies.

Roughly half of the working women (52), although still conservative, tend to support less the assumption that the normative family is composed of a breadwinner (man) and a homemaker (woman), compared to non-working women (74). With respect to their sense of women's secondary role in the family, working women tend not to be so supportive of this concept. The percentage is 57, compare to 71 of non-working women. Furthermore, working women, compared to non-working women, agree less often with the statement that husbands' careers are more important than wives' (Table 3).

In addition, working women are not as anxious as non-working women when faced with the challenges of child-rearing. When they are asked about whether women's career development would affect their child-care and childbearing, ***66% of the working respondents agree with this point, compared to ***66% of non-working women. The only criterion of measuring women's role stereotypes, which indicates both two groups share non-differential perception, is women's attitude toward career development and its cost to family happiness. *** Sixty percent of the respondents in the two groups share this view.

Table 3. Traditional Gender-role Perception

Unit : persons(%)

criteria	degree	strongly disagree	disagree	no opinion	agree	strongly agree	missing
	Total		samples		505		
1. man-breadwinner, woman-homemaker	56(11.1)	110(21.8)	39(7.7)	35(26.7)	165(32.7)	0	
2. women's employment role only due to economic necessity	166(33.0)	167(33.2)	36(7.2)	70(13.9)	64(12.7)	2	
3. women's careers are less important than man's	39(7.7)	115(22.8)	38(7.5)	132(26.1)	181(35.8)	0	
4. woman's work role negatively affect family role	53(10.5)	116(23.1)	29(5.8)	204(40.6)	101(20.1)	2	
5. women's employment role may affect childbearing and child-caring	30(6.0)	95(18.8)	24(4.8)	190(37.7)	165(32.7)	1	
Working sample							
1. man-breadwinner, woman-homemaker	48(14.6)	84(25.6)	26(7.6)	80(24.4)	90(27.4)	0	
2. women's employment role only due to economic necessity	129(39.3)	109(33.2)	23(7.0)	34(10.4)	33(10.1)	0	
3. women's careers are less important than man's	32(9.8)	87(26.5)	22(6.7)	80(24.4)	107(32.6)	0	
4. woman's work role negatively affect family role	34(10.4)	73(22.4)	22(6.7)	140(42.9)	57(17.5)	2	
5. women's employment role may affect childbearing and child-caring	25(7.6)	68(20.8)	18(5.5)	123(10.1)	93(28.4)	1	
Non-working sample							
1. man-breadwinner, woman-homemaker	48(14.6)	84(25.6)	26(7.6)	80(24.4)	90(27.4)	0	
2. women's employment role only due to economic necessity	129(39.3)	109(33.2)	23(7.0)	34(10.4)	33(10.1)	2	
3. women's careers are less important than man's	32(9.8)	87(26.5)	22(6.7)	80(24.4)	107(32.6)	0	
4. woman's work role negatively affect family role	34(10.4)	73(22.4)	22(6.7)	140(42.9)	57(17.5)	0	
5. women's employment role may affect childbearing and child-caring	25(7.6)	68(20.8)	18(5.5)	123(10.1)	93(28.4)	0	

Table 4. Comparison between Working and Non-Working Women

Indicators	Agree degree*									T-test		
	Total			working			non-working			T	DF	P value
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
1. man-breadwinner, woman-homemaker	505	3.48	1.42	328	3.24	1.46	177	3.92	1.22	-5.54	418	0.0001***
2. women's employment role only due to economic necessity	503	2.40	1.39	328	2.19	1.32	175	2.81	1.44	-4.85	501	0.0000***
3. women's careers are less important than man's	505	3.60	1.37	328	3.44	1.42	177	3.89	1.22	-3.78	409	0.0002***
4. woman's work role negatively affect family role	503	3.37	1.32	326	3.35	1.29	177	3.40	1.37	-0.44	501	0.0007***
5. women's employment role may affect childbearing and child-caring	504	3.72	1.26	327	3.58	1.30	177	3.40	1.15	-3.42	502	0.0007***
Traditional gender-role percept	500	3.32	0.89	325	3.16	0.88	175	3.60	0.83	-5.43	498	0.0000***

*score: strong disagree=1, disagree=2, no answer=3, agree=4, strong agree=5.
The higher score indicate strong gender-role stereotyping.

For further tests on whether gender-role stereotyping affects women's choice concerning participation in the labor force, a T-test was utilized in this study (see Table 4). The data precisely indicate that women's traditional perception of their own gender role plays an influential role in the decision whether or not to enter the labor market, with p value=0.0000. Women who have a more traditional gender-role ideology tend to choose to stay home, with no role outside the family. However, women with a less traditional gender-role ideology tend to participate in the labor market.

The data in Table 4 show that the role concept of non-working women is significantly different from that of working women in the following respects: "man-breadwinner and women-homemaker", "women's employment role due to their economic necessity", "women's career less important than man's", and "women's work role negatively affecting family role" (see Table 4). Non-working women tend to accept these role values, whereas working women tend to be less likely to accept them. These data reflect how several

key gender-specific work-family role concepts work together to affect decisions on labor and labor force participation.

Gender-role Division of Family Sphere

The women's sense of the gender-role division in the family sphere is used as another gender-role measurement and as a criterion to verify its implications for women's decisions regarding employment.

Most women have been traditionally socialized to take on more family responsibilities. However, this research assumes that women who tend to assign themselves symmetrical roles in the public and private spheres, as men have, are more likely to go to work. On the other hand, women who consider their family role to be their major responsibility are more likely to stay home.

We also examined women's gender role division in the family by taking several kinds of housework into consideration. We found that when it came to caring for the child, feeding the child, and caring for the elderly, 60 percent or more of the women surveyed agreed that men should share in the duties. However, women's expectations regarding men's participation in the handling of discipline issues, education, and play were much higher; 80 percent or more of the respondents expected the men to be involved in the actual raising of the child (see Table 5).

Table 5. Gender-role Division in Family Sphere

Type	Division					
	all wife do	most wife do	do together	most husband do	all husband	others
	Total samples					
1. do housework (cook sweep)	56(11.1)	112(22.2)	336(66.5)	0(0.0)	1(0.2)	0
2. child-caring	54(10.7)	135(26.8)	313(62.1)	1(0.2)	1(0.2)	1
3. child-educating	16(3.2)	28(5.6)	428(84.9)	26(5.2)	6(1.2)	1
4. study with children	16(3.2)	28(5.6)	393(78.6)	27(5.4)	11(2.2)	5
5. communicate with school teacher	42(8.3)	84(16.7)	331(65.8)	38(7.6)	8(1.6)	2
6. play with children	21(4.2)	42(8.4)	423(84.8)	10(2.0)	3(0.6)	6
7. Take care of the elderly	30(6.0)	76(15.1)	390(77.7)	4(0.8)	2(0.4)	3

Division \ Type	all wife do	most wife do	do together	most husband do	all husband	others
Working sample						
1. do housework (cook sweep)	20(6.1)	58(17.7)	250(76.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0
2. child-caring	20(6.1)	76(23.2)	231(70.4)	1(0.3)	0(0.0)	0
3. child-educating	5(1.5)	17(5.2)	291(88.7)	10(3.1)	5(1.5)	0
4. study with children	5(1.5)	26(8.0)	271(83.1)	17(5.2)	7(2.1)	2
5. communicate with school teacher	19(5.8)	51(15.6)	232(70.9)	22(6.7)	3(0.9)	1
6. play with children	5(1.5)	22(6.7)	293(89.9)	5(2.9)	2(1.2)	2
7. Take care of the elderly	12(3.7)	36(11.0)	274(84.0)	3(0.9)	1(0.3)	2
Non-working sample						
1. do housework (cook sweep)	36(20.3)	54(30.5)	86(48.6)	0(0.0)	1(0.6)	0
2. child-caring	34(19.3)	59(33.5)	82(46.6)	0(0.0)	1(0.6)	1
3. child-educating	11(6.3)	11(6.3)	137(77.8)	16(9.1)	1(0.6)	1
4. study with children	11(6.3)	27(15.5)	122(70.1)	10(5.7)	4(2.3)	3
5. communicate with school teacher	23(13.1)	33(18.8)	99(56.3)	16(9.1)	5(2.8)	1
6. play with children	16(9.2)	20(11.6)	130(75.1)	5(2.9)	2(1.2)	4
7. Take care of the elderly	18(10.2)	40(22.7)	116(65.9)	1(0.6)	1(1.6)	1

However, one third of the women tended to claim the regular housework (tasks such as doing the laundry, shopping, cooking, and cleaning) as their own duties. In addition to that, compared with those items above, the percentages indicate many women still maintain that housework and caring for the child are women's primary responsibilities, rather than either the man's or a shared responsibility.

Whether there is a difference between working and non-working women regarding their gender-role division attitudes is answered in Table 6. The data in Table 6 tell us there is a significant difference between those two groups, with $p=0.0001$. In other words, non-working women and working women maintain their different views on gender role divisions in the family (see Table 6). With respect to different items, there are significant differences in their perceptions regarding housework (laundry, cooking) ($p=.0001$), feeding the child ($p=.0001$), playing with the children ($p=.0096$), and caring for the elderly ($p=.0001$). In general, working women tend to have a more symmetrical gender role perspective. They feel more strongly than

non-working women that men should share more of the responsibilities in the family ($X=2.84$ vs. $X=2.62$). Their emphasis on gender equality in the family is more apparent than that of non-working women. In turn, the gender-role divisions in the family affect women's employment status.

Table 6. Gender-role Division in the Family between Working and Non-working Women

Types	total			working women			non-working women			T-test		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	T	DF	P
1. do housework (cook sweep)	505	2.56	0.69	328	2.70	0.58	177	2.30	0.81	5.85	275	0.0001
2. child-caring	504	2.52	0.69	328	2.65	0.60	176	2.29	0.79	5.26	284	0.0001
3. child-educating	504	2.96	0.53	328	2.98	0.45	176	2.91	0.65	1.16	268	0.2458
4. study with children	500	2.77	0.77	326	2.98	0.53	174	2.82	0.73	2.61	273	0.0096
5. communicate with school teacher	503	2.77	0.77	327	2.81	0.68	176	2.70	0.91	1.47	281	0.1439
6. play with children	499	2.86	0.53	326	2.92	0.39	173	2.75	0.71	2.96	228	0.0034
7. take care of the elderly	502	2.75	0.59	326	2.83	0.50	176	2.59	0.70	4.11	273	0.0001

*score: all done by the wife=1, mostly done by the wife=2, done together=3, mostly done by the husband=4, all done by the husband=5.
The higher scores indicate less gender-role stereotyping.

In conclusion, the research provides rich information about whether women's gender-role ideology affects their employment status. Through three major measurements (1) employment appropriateness at child-bearing age, (2) traditional gender-role ideology and (3) gender-role division in the family, the study proves that women's gender-role ideology comes to play an essential role in women's decisions regarding employment. The summary table (Table 7) leads us to a clear picture: working women tend to share a modern gender-role perspective, while non-working women tend to have a conservative gender role ideology. The mean scores of the three measurements, with $X=4.13$, $X=3.16$, $X=2.84$ for working women, and with $X=3.80$, $X=3.60$, $X=2.62$ for non-working women, explore the differences. Through T-test, the significant, with*** $P=0.0002$, $P=0.0000$, and $P=0.0001$

separately. (See Table 7).

Table 7. Women's Gender-role Attitudes and their Impact on Employment

Attitudes	Sample			Total			Working women			Non-working women			T-test		
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	T	DF	p
1. Appropriateness of employment at child-bearing age	503	4.01	0.89	326	4.13	0.82	177	3.80	0.98	3.78	311	0.0002			
2. Traditional gender-role ideology	500	3.32	0.89	325	3.16	0.88	175	3.60	0.83	-5.43	498	0.0000			
3. Gender-role division in the family	493	2.77	0.40	321	2.84	0.30	172	2.62	0.51	5.37	235	0.0001			

Conclusion

The data strongly support the assumption that women's employment is significantly related to their gender-role perception. Working women are more supportive of modern women's gender-roles, which assumes that women's and men's social roles should be symmetrical. Non-working women tend to assume their subordinate role in the family as their normative role. The ideology that the women embrace determines their choice of whether or not to participate in the labor force.

As the role-related model suggests, changes in the role ideologies of men and women and changes in the hierarchy of sex-based inequality in society at large might be far more important than individual choice has proven to be. Although measures have been taken to facilitate women's participation in the labor force, such as training programs and education programs, given the ideology of women's gender roles, it is doubtful that policies alone can go much beyond their present level of success in solving the problem of women and employment.

Labor market policies pushing training, employment and creation of jobs can provide a macro strategy for women's employment. However, universal programs, achieving non-stereotyping gender role ideology through formal and informal education, need to play a central role for the state, since my research clearly suggests that women's and men's social role ideologies are a pre-market factor affecting women's employment opportunities. The Equal

Employment Opportunity Act of Taiwan has been implemented through the Legislative Yuan on March 8, 2002, but its "blaming the employer" approach may not result in the sort of equality that is both desired and needed. What we need is a structural change in gender-role ideology between men and women, as well as between employers and employees. As long as the patriarchal gender roles stereotypes exist, women's participation in the labor market cannot go beyond the situation (45%) which we have now in Taiwan.

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