

DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILY ROLES: MARRIED AND SINGLE WOMEN

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Efficient distribution of family roles is very important for spouses. The family wellbeing in many respects depends on whether spouses act in coordination, whether they agree and are ready to play certain roles in family interactions. From the very beginning of their relations, it is crucial for partners to coordinate the expectations and ideas of marriage. It is necessary for spouses to define their family roles and integrate the playing of these roles, what it means to be a wife and a husband. It is vital for successful marriage that expectations of partners coincide.

Introduction. According to a traditional definition, a young family is a family in the first 3 years after marriage (in case of the birth of a child — without any restriction of duration of marriage) and if any of spouses are not 30-year old [2].

In many countries around the world and in our country in particular the divorce rate for subsequent marriages is very high. The most common reason for divorces is divergent views of spouses on what roles each of them has to play in family interactions.

A newly married couple is one of the most unprotected groups. With high frequency, young people get married because of unexpected pregnancy or even a child's birth. Young people often have a distorted idea of marriage, family, and sex. Almost 25 per cent of young people are ready to have open relationships without getting married, but they do not approve free sexual life. Among the acquired vital values, the youth place the relations in family, satisfaction in love, sex, intimate life on the 1st place; young people think that value of marriage increases if a couple have children [4].

As a result, "family myths" are formed and they affect the nature of matrimonial interaction and activity of family in general.

According to the data of Belstat for 2016 in Belarus the rate of marriage is 6, 8 and the divorce rate is 3, 4 per 1000 people. In 2015 the marriage rate was 1, 8 more per 1000 people, the divorce rate was 3, 5 [3]. It is possible to note that the number of marriages in our country are decreasing and that leads to an insignificant decrease in number of divorces. However, the situation is not positive as the fact of decrease in number of the registered marriage signals about basic changes in the concept "family" in modern society.

Traditionally researchers distinguish two units of the most relevant problems concerning young families: social, economic, social, and psychological [5].

The issues of adaptation of young spouses to each other, to a new situation (change of roles, stereotypes and styles of behavior) and to new relatives are very important too.

Main part. In our research, we supposed that conception of distribution of family roles of married women and single women differed. In addition, we suggested that conception of distribution of family roles of married women differed from real distribution in their families.

We analyzed modern research in psychology and pedagogy on the issue of family relations; marital communication as the core of the family system; gender stereotypes in functional and role structure of the family.

We made the analysis of conception of distribution of family roles of married and single women.

We used a questionnaire including 32 family roles. This questionnaire was made with the help of the roles described by Y.E. Alyoshina, L.Y. Gozman, E.M. Dubrovskaya, S.V. Kovalyov. In the questionnaire the following roles were presented: "a household manager", "one who buys food supply", "one who earns money", "a treasurer", "a poor performer of duties", "one who cleans home", "one who takes out garbage", "a cook", "one who clears the table after meals", "one who looks after pets", "an organizer of holidays and entertainments", "one who runs errands", "a decision-maker", "a mender of broken things", "a mediator in a conflict", "one who likes to be ill", "a supporter of strict discipline", "a chief accuser", "one who consoles the offended", "one who evades discussion of issues", "a creator of trouble for others", "one who keeps away from family problems", "one who makes sacrifice for the sake of others", "a family volcano", "one who nurses a grievance", "a joker", "a master/mistress", "one who is responsible for the care of a baby", "a tutor", "an organizer of family subculture", "one who is responsible for the maintenance of family relations", "a psychotherapist".

To compare expected and real family roles of married women we used the questionnaire "Distribution of Roles in Family" made by a team of psychologists led by Y.E. Alyoshina. It helped to study family relationships. 65 females took part in our research, 30 women of young adulthood had been married for no more than 10 years, and 35 students of Polotsk State University from 17 years to 21 years old who were not married. There were a few females from Turkmenistan.

The respondents were to choose a role, typical for men, typical for women, and 5 roles as the most important ones for family in the questionnaire. Married women were to mark the roles that they were playing in their families and roles played by their husbands. It helped us to see whether there was a coincidence in their ideas about typical family roles and actual state of role-playing.

Analyzing the results of married women, at the beginning we chose the roles that coincided in both questionnaires. These were the following roles - "a tutor", "a psychotherapist", "one who earns money", "an organizer of holidays and entertainments", "a master/mistress", "an organizer of family subculture".

Our task was to determine whether desirable distribution of these roles with actual role-playing coincided. We compared the results of both questionnaires.

During quantitative processing, it became clear that 63% of married women's conception of the role "a tutor" coincided with the distribution in their families. As for the role "a psychotherapist", a coincidence of gender representations reality was revealed at 47% of the respondents. The greatest coincidence occurred with the role "one who earns money" -73% of the respondents. The coincidence concerning the role "an organizer of entertainments" was revealed at 57% of the respondents.

The discrepancy on the role "a master/mistress" was the most obvious. The role "an organizer of family subculture" coincided at 14 (47%) respondents.

Then we compared the responses of married and single women.

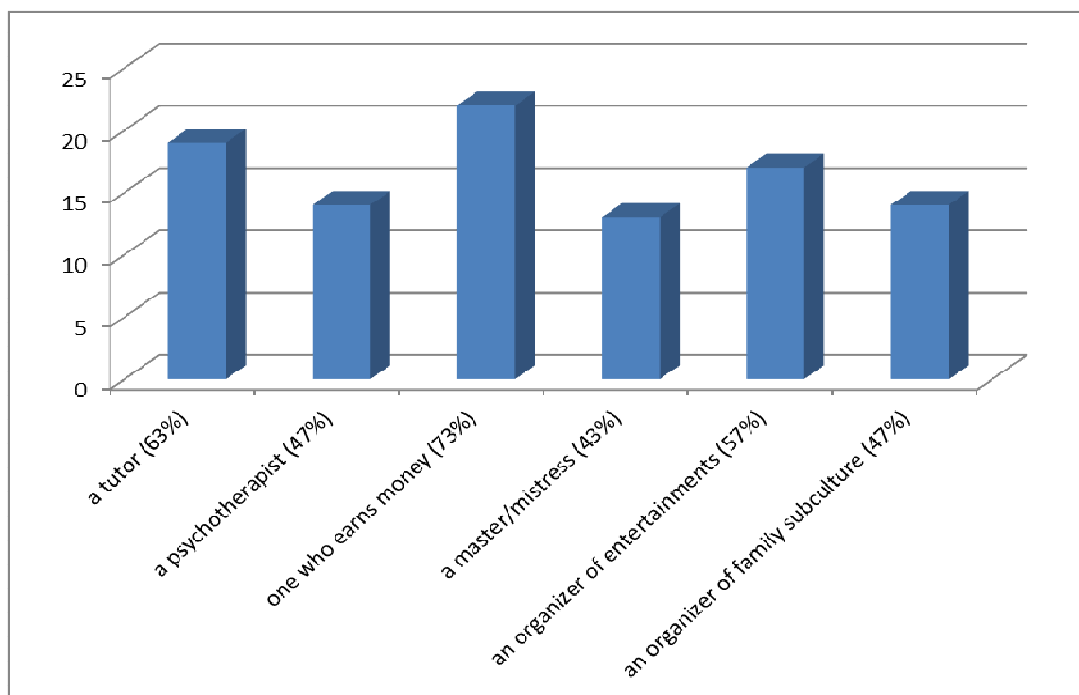


Fig. 1. Coincidence of gender conception of family roles and actual roles (married women)

It was revealed that the conception of distribution of family roles of married and unmarried women had small distinctions.

In a percentage ratio the most obvious divergences (more than 10%) had such roles as: "one who buys food supply", "a poor performer of duties", "one who cleans home", "one who takes out garbage", "a cook", "one who looks after pets", "a runner errands", "one who likes to be ill", "a supporter of strict discipline", "a creator of trouble for others", "a psychotherapist".

From the given list of roles, such roles as "a poor performer of duties", "one who looks after pets", "a supporter of strict discipline", "a creator of trouble for others" had significant distinctions.

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We should review these distinctions in more detail. According to the percentage ratio, most of single women thought the role of "a poor performer of duties" as typical for men. It might be a stereotype about male irresponsibility in performance of household chores. However, married women had a different opinion, they had family experience and they might realize that partners could share household chores.

A great number of single women believed that the role "one who looks after pets" was typical for men, but married women with knew that women looked after pets more often. Perhaps, in the situation we come across with another gender stereotype, a man carrying a puppy in hands does not get pleasant feedback, while a woman with a puppy attracts everybody's affection. Therefore, some men consider this role as belonging to women.

Distribution of opinions regarding the role "a supporter of strict discipline" is rather surprising. Single women considered it typical for women. In addition, in this situation, most likely, a stereotype that a wife should always take control of her husband and children is revealed. However, married women said that in a family life this role was played more often by the men.

The role "a creator of trouble for others" probably caused divergences of opinions for the same reason, as all other roles: single women unexperienced in family relationships were inclined to believe that "men are sources of all women problems"; married women disproved this stereotype, saying that women could create trouble sometimes more often than men.

Conclusion. Statistically, over the past few years the divorce rates have increased in Belarus. That is why it is very important to study an issue of distribution of family roles. It would subsequently help newly-married people, or those who are going to marry, to find an understanding of the forthcoming responsibility.

The purpose of our work was to compare the conception of distribution of family roles of those who were married and single.

We carried out the comparative analysis of conception of distribution of family roles of unmarried young women, female students of humanitarian and technical specialties, and of the married women who were married no more than 10 years. It was found that the conception of distribution of family roles of married and single women had no significant distinctions.

There will be new family roles because socioeconomic situation is constantly changing, and, therefore, it is necessary to look for new ways of adaptation of spouses to new roles. Moreover, some roles, on the contrary, can lose their relevance.

Today, modern life has changed the family structure a lot and family roles have been diverting from the traditional responsibilities. Now a young married couple should take decisions together, express opinions openly, criticize and encourage mutuality and yet be independent and responsible.

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