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**THE INFLUENCE OF TRADITIONAL BELIEF ON GENDER ROLES  
AND DEVELOPMENT AMONG GRADE 5 LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on determining the influence of traditional beliefs on gender and development among grade 5 learners. The study was limited to selected grade 5 learners from a chosen public elementary school during School Year 2025-2026. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the influence of traditional beliefs on gender and development among Grade 5 learners. Through the use of survey questionnaires, data were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation. The result revealed the level of learners' traditional beliefs towards gender roles in terms of gender-based task assignments, career role expectations and emotional expression norms, interpreted as high level. Moreover, the level of gender and development among grade 5 learners in terms of gender identity, social interaction & peer relationships, interpreted as very high level. The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the influence level of learners' traditional beliefs and the level of gender development among Grade 5 learners. This indicates that gender roles, career expectations, and emotional expression directly affect learners' gender identity, social interactions, and peer relationships. Since there is a significant relationship between learners' traditional beliefs and their gender development, interventions should focus on reducing restrictive gender stereotypes while promoting equality. Schools should integrate gender-responsive education into the curriculum, including activities that encourage learners to question and reflect on traditional roles and beliefs. Teachers should model equitable behavior and create opportunities for learners to engage in non-stereotypical roles in both academic and social settings.

**KEYWORDS:** *traditional beliefs, gender roles, gender-based task assignments, career role expectations, emotional expression norms, gender and development, gender identity, social interaction, peer relationships.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditional beliefs are deeply rooted in many communities and continue to shape how individuals perceive roles, responsibilities, and behavior. Among school-aged children, particularly those in Grade 5, these beliefs may begin to influence their understanding of gender roles and expectations. This thesis seeks to explore how traditional cultural norms and beliefs affect the development of young learners in terms of their gender identity, self-esteem, social interactions, and future aspirations. Understanding the early impact of these influences is crucial for educators and policymakers aiming to promote gender equity and inclusive development in the classroom.

Recent studies have underscored the ongoing impact of cultural traditions on the educational and social development of children. Scholars like Nanda (2023) and Ochieng (2022) have emphasized the persistence of gender stereotypes in classroom settings, particularly in communities where traditional norms dominate. According to UNICEF's 2024 report, societal expectations based on gender continue to limit opportunities for children, especially girls, in many parts of the world. These proponents argue that unless these beliefs are addressed early in a child's educational journey, they may reinforce inequality and restrict holistic development.

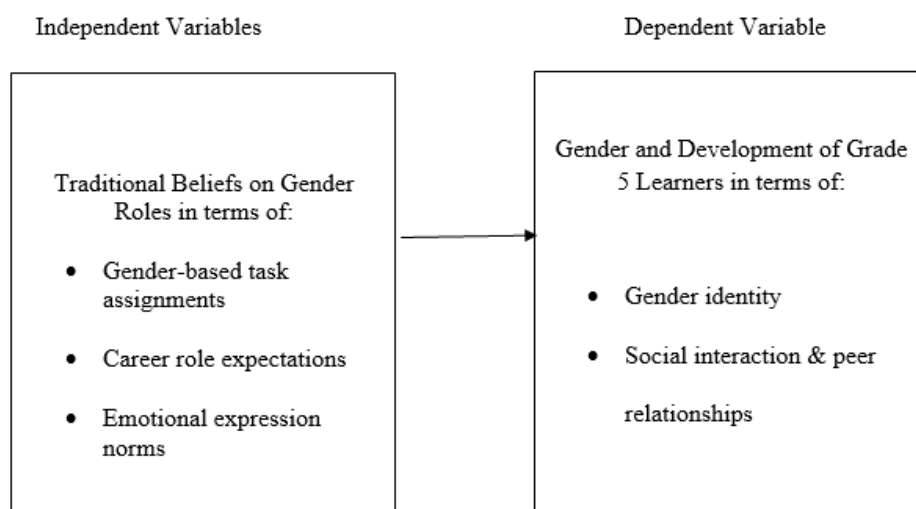
This study focuses on two main variables: traditional belief and gender and development. Traditional belief refers to long-standing cultural ideas and customs passed down through generations, often dictating gender-specific roles and behaviors. Gender and development, on the other hand, involves how children grow and adapt socially, emotionally, and academically in relation to their gender. It includes the way children view themselves and others, how they perform in school, and how they envision their future roles in society. By examining these two variables, this research aims to identify patterns and implications that can help create more supportive, equitable learning environments for all pupils.

### ***Conceptual Framework***

This study is grounded in the theories of Albert Bandura (1977) and Sandra Bem (1981), which explain how children learn and internalize gender roles through social and cultural

influences. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, children acquire behaviors by observing and imitating role models such as parents, teachers, and peers. In environments where traditional gender roles are emphasized, children are more likely to adopt behaviors that align with these expectations. Complementing this, Bem's Gender Schema Theory suggests that children actively construct mental frameworks about gender based on societal cues. These schemas guide how they interpret experiences and behave, often reinforcing stereotypes such as boys being assertive and girls being nurturing. Over time, these learned behaviors and cognitive frameworks influence children's interests, confidence, and future aspirations.

Traditional gender beliefs significantly shape the development of Grade 5 learners, particularly in areas such as identity formation, task assignment, career expectations, emotional expression, and social interaction. Children often internalize gendered expectations through everyday experiences, such as being assigned specific chores or observing gendered professions, which can limit their perceived abilities and opportunities. Emotional norms further reinforce these roles, with boys discouraged from expressing vulnerability and girls encouraged to be more passive, affecting peer relationships and communication. In classroom settings, these beliefs may result in unequal participation and reinforce gender hierarchies. However, promoting gender-sensitive practices in schools can challenge these stereotypes, fostering inclusivity, mutual respect, and balanced development. Overall, addressing traditional gender norms is essential to support equitable growth and broaden opportunities for all learners.



**Figure 1. Schematic Presentation Showing the Relationship Between the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study.**

### ***Statement of the Problem***

This study raised concerns about how deeply traditional beliefs are influencing the development of children in school settings. Understanding the nature and impact of these beliefs is necessary to support inclusive, development-focused education for all learners.

To guide this study, the following research questions were posed:

1. What is the influence level of learners' traditional beliefs towards gender roles in terms of gender-based task assignments, career role expectations and emotional expression norms?
2. What is the level of gender and development among grade 5 learners in terms of gender identity, social interaction & peer relationships?
3. Is there a significant relationship between influence level of learners' traditional beliefs and the level of gender development of Grade 5 pupils?

### ***Delimitation of the Study***

This study focused on determining the influence of traditional beliefs on gender and development among grade 5 learners. The study was limited to selected grade 5 learners from a chosen public elementary school during School Year 2025-2026. It does not include other grade levels or private school learner to maintain focus and consistency in developmental and educational context. The research is confined to assessing learners' gender identity, social interaction and peer relations, excluding broader societal or adult perspectives.

### **Review of the Literature**

#### ***Level of Traditional Beliefs About Gender Roles***

Traditional beliefs about gender roles strongly influence how students perceive and perform tasks in school and at home. According to Alice H. Eagly et al. (2019), gender roles are socially constructed expectations that often assign physically demanding or leadership tasks to boys and nurturing or domestic roles to girls, limiting equal participation. Similarly, Sandra Bem (2020) explained that children internalize cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity, shaping their understanding of which tasks are appropriate for their gender. Studies by Auwal Mohammed et al. (2018), Cecilia Ridgeway et al. (2020), and Becky Francis et al. (2019) further revealed that teachers, parents, and social expectations reinforce these stereotypes, affecting students' confidence, participation, and willingness to explore non-traditional roles. Overall, these findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive teaching practices to ensure fair and inclusive task distribution.

Traditional gender beliefs also shape students' career aspirations and emotional development. Jacquelynne Eccles (2020) emphasized that boys are often guided toward science, technology, and leadership careers, while girls are steered toward caregiving roles, limiting their future opportunities. Supporting this, studies by T. D. Callaghan (2024), E. M. Benjamin et al. (2022), Campbell Leaper & Christia Spears Brown (2017), and Ann Meier & Mara Brendgen (2019) showed that family, school, and media reinforce gendered career expectations, leading to occupational segregation. At the same time, emotional expression is shaped by norms that encourage girls to be expressive and boys to suppress vulnerability, as discussed by Daniel Solórzano & María Bernales (2018), Verónico Tarrayo (2021), Emerson A. Delavina (2020), and Marvin A. A. Pedragoza (2023). Reports from UNESCO (2019) further confirm that these differences are socially constructed rather than biological. Together, these studies stress the importance of promoting gender-inclusive education and emotional equity to support balanced development among students.

### ***Level of Gender and Development***

Understanding gender identity among students is essential in examining gender and development in schools. Studies by Gary T. Martin et al. (2024) show that children actively construct their gender identity through self-socialization, influenced by peers, adults, and cultural norms. When traditional beliefs dominate, students tend to internalize rigid ideas of masculinity and femininity. Similarly, UNICEF (2018) emphasized that children model behaviors from their environment, reinforcing gender-typed expectations. Research by Susan D. Egan et al. (2021) further revealed that pressure to conform to gender norms can lower self-esteem and increase social anxiety. In addition, Christia Spears Brown & Steven Jones (2019) explained that children form in-group and out-group identities based on gender, influencing peer behavior and participation. Meanwhile, Hyde Janet Shibley (2017) argued that most gender differences are socially constructed, highlighting the importance of inclusive environments that support diverse gender expressions.

Social interaction and peer relationships play a vital role in shaping students' gender development. Campbell Leaper (2023) found that children often form gender-segregated peer groups that reinforce stereotypes, with boys encouraged toward dominance and girls toward cooperation. Similarly, Barrie Thorne (2025) described how "borderwork" in schools subtly maintains gender divisions through activities and language. Research by Solbes Canales et al. (2020) and Marion K. Underwood highlighted differences in communication styles shaped by

cultural expectations, which can lead to misunderstanding and exclusion. Studies by Harriet Tenenbaum et al. (2022) and Sarah Meek et al. (2022) further showed that gender norms influence friendship patterns, collaboration, and academic motivation. Additionally, Amanda J. Rose et al. (2020), Jeffrey G. Parker et al. (2019), Michael Kimmel et al. (2019), and Kenneth H. Rubin et al. (2021) emphasized that peer relationships reinforce gender norms but can also promote empathy and cooperation when inclusive practices are encouraged.

Traditional beliefs significantly influence pupils' overall gender development, affecting their self-perception, academic choices, and social behavior. Studies by Okeke Chinyere et al. (2019) and Aina Olatunji (2018) showed that cultural norms prescribe specific behaviors for boys and girls, limiting participation and confidence. Similarly, Eze Nnamdi et al. (2020) and Adeyemi Kolawole (2017) found that gender expectations shape academic and career preferences, reinforcing inequality. Adebayo Adeola (2018) and Nwankwo Chinedu (2017) highlighted the role of family and community in transmitting these beliefs through daily practices. However, Smith John et al. (2021) and Oladele Samuel (2019) demonstrated that gender-sensitive education and inclusive programs can challenge stereotypes and promote equality. Overall, while traditional beliefs strongly shape gender development, proactive educational strategies can foster more equitable opportunities and holistic growth among pupils.

### **Research Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the influence of traditional beliefs on gender and development among Grade 5 learners. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to describe the existing conditions and examine the degree of relationship between the variables without manipulating them. Specifically, the study sought to identify how traditional beliefs about gender roles such as gender-based task assignments, career role expectations, and emotional expression norms relate to the pupils' level of gender and development in terms of gender identity, social interaction, and peer relationships. Through the use of survey questionnaires, data were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

### **Findings**

Presented below are the findings derived from this study.

The result revealed the level of learners' traditional beliefs towards gender roles in terms of Gender-based task assignments, Career role expectations and Emotional expression norms, interpreted as high level.

The level of gender and development among grade 5 learners in terms of Gender identity, Social interaction & peer relationships, interpreted as very high level.

There is a significant relationship between influence level of learners' traditional beliefs and the level of gender development of Grade 5 pupils. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated "There is no significant relationship between influence level of learners traditional beliefs and the level of gender development of Grade 5 learners" was rejected.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Drawing from the study's findings, the following conclusions can be made:

The study concluded that Grade 5 learners hold a high level of traditional beliefs regarding gender roles, particularly in terms of gender-based task assignments, career role expectations, and emotional expression norms. This indicates that learners still strongly associate specific responsibilities, occupations, and emotional behaviors with either boys or girls.

The study concluded that Grade 5 learners demonstrate a very high level of gender and development in terms of gender identity, social interaction, and peer relationships. Learners show strong confidence and pride in their gender identity while respecting and valuing the identities of others. They actively engage in collaborative activities and communicate effectively with both boys and girls, demonstrating inclusive social behaviors.

The study concluded that there is a significant relationship between the influence level of learners' traditional beliefs and the level of gender development among Grade 5 learners. This indicates that learners' perceptions about gender roles, career expectations, and emotional expression directly affect their gender identity, social interactions, and peer relationships.

Derived from the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

To address the high level of traditional beliefs regarding gender roles, schools should implement programs that promote equal participation in tasks and responsibilities regardless

of gender. Activities and lessons should challenge stereotypes about household chores, career choices, and emotional expression by encouraging both boys and girls to explore diverse roles. Teachers can use role-playing, collaborative projects, and discussions to reinforce the idea that abilities and responsibilities are not limited by gender.

Given the very high level of gender and development among Grade 5 learners, schools should continue to nurture learners' gender identity, social interaction, and peer relationships through inclusive and collaborative learning environments. Programs should reinforce respect for differences, teamwork, and empathy among classmates. Teachers should design group activities that encourage equal participation from both boys and girls, allowing learners to practice inclusive communication and cooperation. Classroom discussions on self-expression and identity can strengthen learners' confidence in themselves and respect for others. Schools should also recognize and celebrate diversity in abilities, interests, and perspectives. These approaches will sustain and enhance learners' positive gender development.

Since there is a significant relationship between learners' traditional beliefs and their gender development, interventions should focus on reducing restrictive gender stereotypes while promoting equality. Schools should integrate gender-responsive education into the curriculum, including activities that encourage learners to question and reflect on traditional roles and beliefs. Teachers should model equitable behavior and create opportunities for students to engage in non-stereotypical roles in both academic and social settings. Families should reinforce the same messages at home by encouraging children to explore all types of activities and careers regardless of gender. Educational campaigns and storytelling that showcase diverse role models can strengthen these efforts. Such initiatives will ensure that students develop balanced gender perspectives while maintaining strong social and emotional skills.

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