

NON-CONVENTIONAL GENDER ROLES IN RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION CURRICULA FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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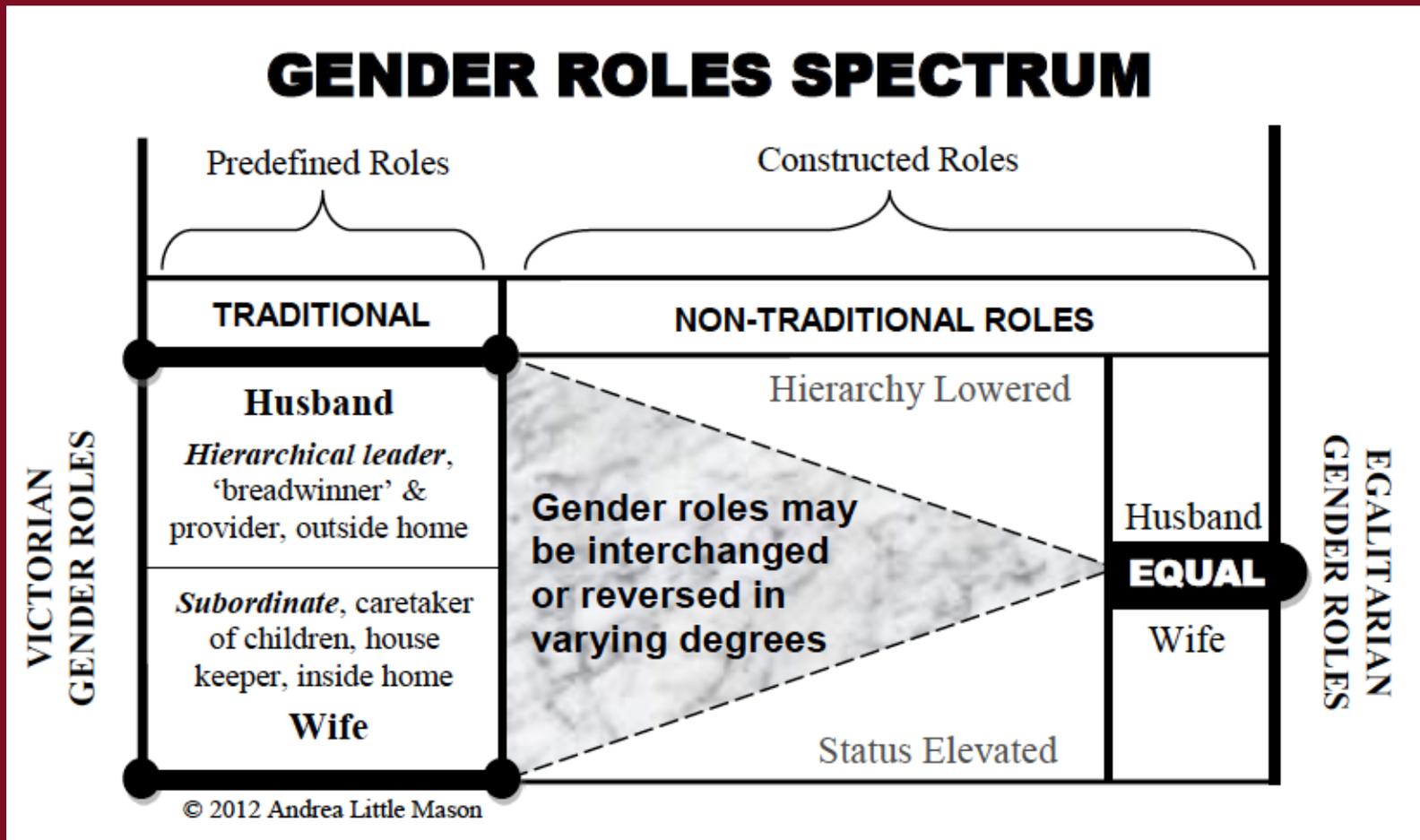
BACKGROUND

RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION

- Prevention not Intervention
- Intended to enhance relationships and marriage outcomes by equipping couples with skills in:
 - communication
 - problem solving
 - conflict resolution

BACKGROUND

Gender roles have been foundational to historical contexts of marriage and affect how couples interact.



BACKGROUND

- Non-traditional gender role expectations impact African Americans choices to marry (Holland, 2009).
- Egalitarian gender roles are characteristic of stable and enduring marriages among African Americans (Cook, Brashier, & Hughes, 2011; Cutrona, Russell, Burzette, Wesner, & Bryant, 2011; Dixon, 2009; Hill, 2006; Marks et al., 2008).

PROBLEM

Egalitarianism has long been an indicator of happy and satisfying marriages among African Americans (Marks et al., 2008; Cutrona et al., 2011).

However:

- There was no known exploration of gender roles within relationship education curricula designed for African Americans.
- It was unclear how relationship education curriculum developers depict non-conventional gender roles in curricula.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this content analysis study was to explore three relationship education curricula targeted toward African American communities to consider how curricula developers *explicitly* and *implicitly* depict non-conventional gender roles within the curricula.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Central Research Question: How do curricula developers address non-conventional gender roles in relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans?

- **Research Sub-Question 1:** Considering the manifest messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the explicit curricula of the written text of the lessons?
- **Research Sub-Question 2:** Considering the latent messages within the curricula, how do developers of relationship education curricula targeted toward African Americans address non-conventional gender roles within the implicit messages of the video lessons?

THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- **Postmodernism**--a blend of many cultures (Forzani, 2011); paradigms that promote diverse beliefs that undergird various gender role traditions among America's heterogeneous population (Coleman & Franiuk, 2011)
- **Constructivism**--supports individuals' internal construction of reality rather than predetermined and established by external forces (Hamat & Embi, 2010); expectations to expand and develop new knowledge and skills by using their existing understanding and experiences (Barrett & Long, 2012)
- **Deficit model**--suggests a single standard toward which all are expected to aspire (Welch, 2011)

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

100 curricula promoted in the relationship education field

- Population--Six widely publicized relationship education curricula for African Americans
- Sample--Three curricula: *Basic Training for Couples (BTC)*, *For Christian Lovers Only (FLCO)*, *Program for Strong African American Couples (ProSAAM)*
 - **included both written lessons and video lessons**
 - included the complete curricula materials provided for both facilitators and participants
 - were developed between 2001 and 2010
 - involved African American contributors in development
 - expressed intent for use in religious environments

DATA COLLECTION

Content Analysis is a methodology which allows for exploration of written and recorded documents to gain insight about people, their beliefs and actions (Nagle, 2004; Krippendorff, 2004).

- **Explicit written curricula (manifest messages)--** identification of occurrences of gendered terms *man*, *woman*, *husband*, *wife*, *male*, and *female* in the written curriculum based on PIES model
- **Implicit hidden curricula (latent messages)--** examination of the presenters' words, tone, and body language in the video presentations based on the PIES model

PIES MODEL

PIES DIMENSION	DESCRIPTIONS	TRADITIONAL EXPECTATIONS
Political Dimension	Positioning in power and decision making	Hierarchal male leadership decision making; wives support
Intercultural Dimension	Views about manhood and womanhood	Innate differences between men and women in specific roles
Economic Dimension	Attainment of education, employment, and income	Husband: financial provider, higher education, & outside employment
Social Dimension	Contributions to domestic roles and responsibilities	Husbands handle business; wives- housekeeping, meals, and childcare

The PIES Model is based on the analysis methodology of the SPELIT Power Matrix (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007).

DATA ANALYSIS

Explicit Curricula (written text)

- **Phase 1:** Conceptual analysis—counted gendered terms
- **Phase 2:** Relational analysis—coded gendered terms using the PIES model w/ written descriptions of manifest messaging in the gendered references
- **Phase 3:** Relational analysis—coded gendered terms based on conventional and non-conventional gender role descriptions

Implicit Curricula (video)

- **Phase 4:** Content analysis—written narrative descriptions of latent messaging based on the PIES model

FINDINGS

CURRICULUM * CorNC * PIESDIMENSION Crosstabulation

StatisticsCount

PIESDIMENSION			CorNC			Total
			C	NA	NC	
E	CURRICULUM	BTC	5		2	7
		FCLO-M	0		4	4
	Total		5		6	11
I	CURRICULUM	BTC	56	24	3	83
		FCLO-M	75	10	4	89
		FCLO-W	17	1	2	20
		ProSAA	1	0	0	1
	Total		149	35	9	193
P	CURRICULUM	BTC	3	4	3	10
		FCLO-M	9	2	0	11
		FCLO-W	0	0	3	3
	Total		12	6	6	24
S	CURRICULUM	BTC	5		1	6
		FCLO-M	33		8	41
		FCLO-W	1		0	1
	Total		39		9	48
Total	CURRICULUM	BTC	69	28	9	106
		FCLO-M	117	12	16	145
		FCLO-W	18	1	5	24
		ProSAA	1	0	0	1
	Total		205	41	30	276

E = 4%

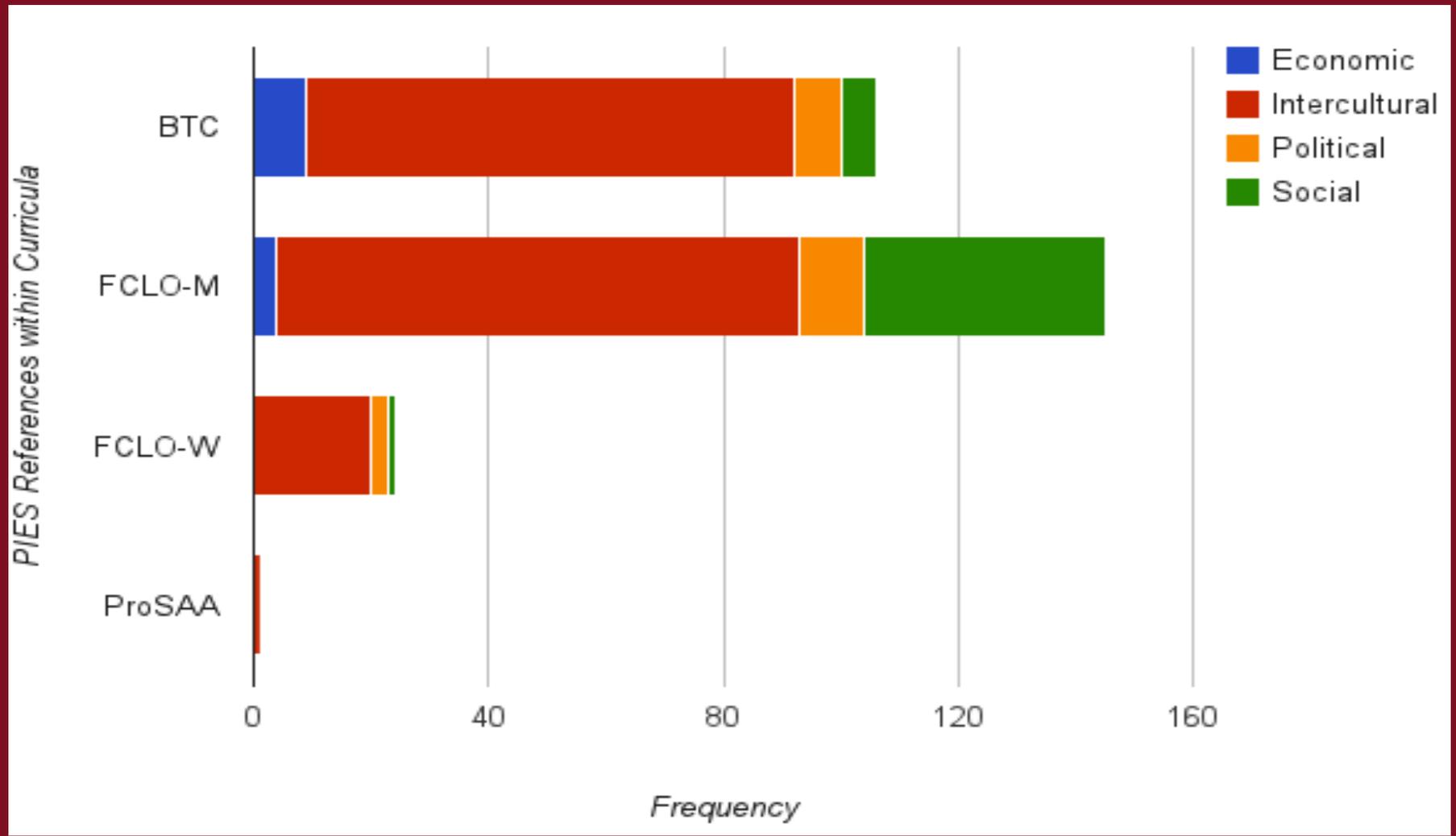
I = 70%

P = 9%

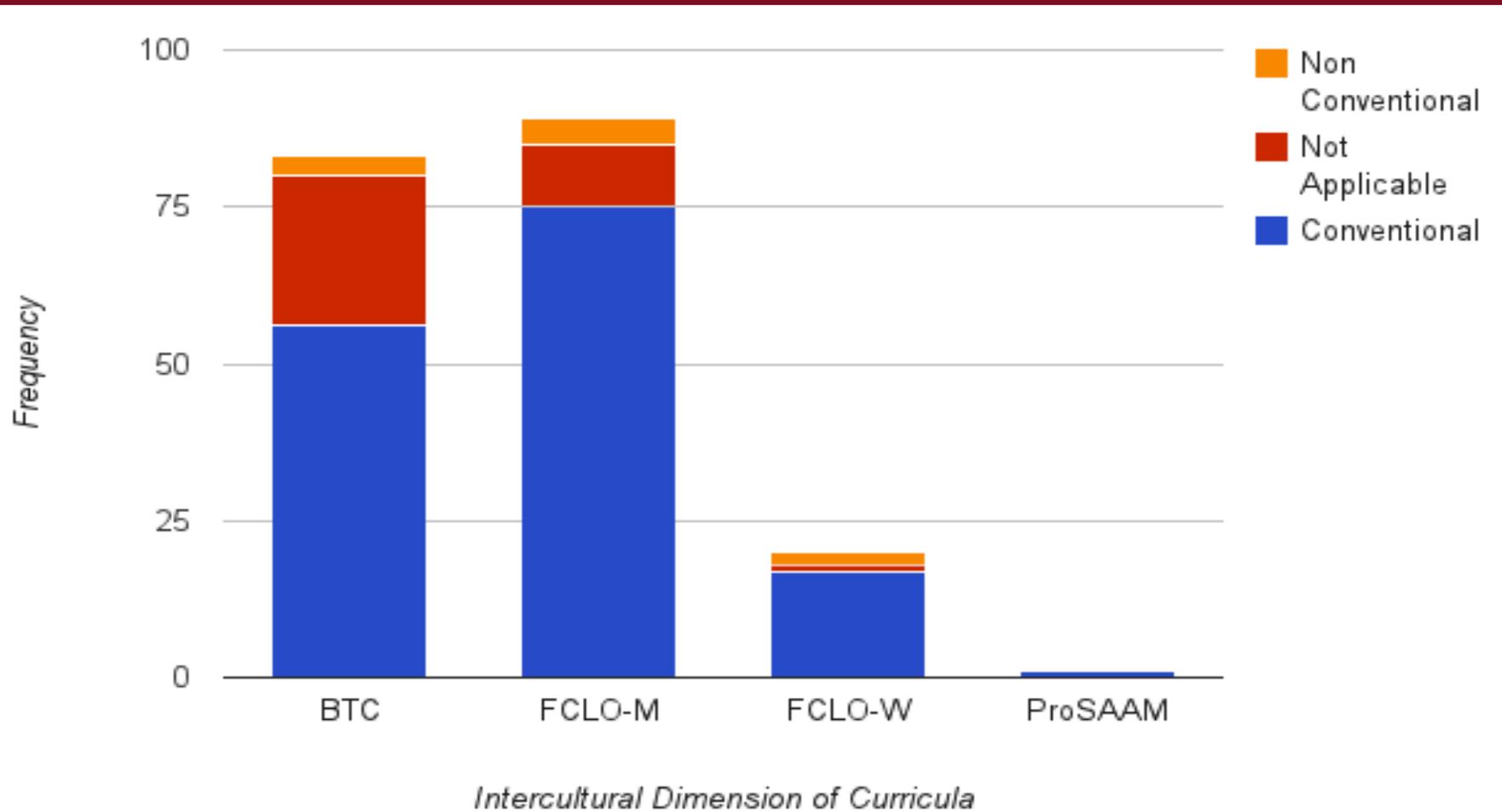
S = 17%

C = 74%

Findings



Findings



CONCLUSIONS

- The curricula were based on a deficit model that may not recognize diverse ontological perspectives with or experiences about gender roles.
- Explicit efforts are necessary to depict non-conventional gender roles more effectively when targeting African Americans that extend beyond the repackaging of general relationship education materials.
- The findings indicated that instruction about male headship within households was not based on alignment between the traditional constructs of the political, intercultural, economic, and social dimensions of the PIES model. (CONFUSION BREEDS CONFLICT)

PIES Model Based in Leadership Contexts

	Traditional Hierarchal	Hybrid Titular	Interdependent Egalitarian
Headship Construct	Headship means leader, commander, supervisor; the one who is "in charge"	Nominal headship that may exclude duties; husband perceived to have innate and intrinsic leadership abilities	Independent; flexible; head viewed anatomically as a metaphor for the husband as the "head" and the wife as the "body"
Leadership Style	Hierarchal leadership	Servant leadership	Co-leadership or Shared leadership
Political Dimension	Husband makes decision	Decisions may be made together with greater weight on the husband's perspective	Both husband and wife are decision makers
Intercultural Dimension	Man and women innately created to fulfill predetermined roles	"God-given" or innate characteristics of male headship/leadership	Emphasizes mutuality and partnering that highlights spouses' strength while acknowledging physical differences
Economic Dimension	Husband holds economic responsibility for the household	Husband may or may not be the financial provider	Male and/or female may contribute to household finances
Social Dimension	Husband focuses outside home, wife in charge of domestic	Husband may or may not assist with household responsibilities	Domestic responsibilities likely based on the strengths, abilities, time, etc. of spouses
Pros	Hierarchal leadership pre-established and fixed gender roles; when both spouses willingly accept roles conflict about marital roles may be reduced	Reduces conflict about leadership positions in the home	Allows each spouse to operate in his or her strengths to function within the household; allows compromise and flexibility about marital roles
Cons	Husband and/or wife may not naturally fit or be equipped to fulfill the traditional expectations of the gender role	Potential conflict about expectations for leadership duties; dependent upon wife's compliance to view husband as the leader of the home	Requires continual communication and problem solving to maintain agreement and make adjustments to marital roles

SIGNIFICANCE

This research emphasized the need for relationship education curricula to meet the needs of couples in a postmodern constructivist context, hence:

- Constructivist approaches are important to help resolve diverse marital challenges among African Americans and resolve cognitive dissonance based on non-conventional gender roles in couples' relationships.
- Explicit instruction about diverse gender role constructions in satisfying marriages may increase effectiveness of relationship education.
- The addition of the PIES model to relationship education curricular development could address a need for relationship education to provide instruction that equips couples to uniquely construct gender roles to fit their families' needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR CURRICULA DEVELOPERS:

Reframe discourse about gender roles within relationship curricula.

Use the PIES model in curricula development.

For Future Research:

Conduct content analyses of other curricula based on the PIES model.

Conduct survey research based on the PIES model.





Questions?



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