

Relationships among Social Dominance Orientation, Masculinity Ideology and Gender Attitudes: A study among Adult Nagas

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The relationships of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO), Masculinity Ideology (MI) and gender attitude was examined on a sample of 696 adult Nagas. The study found significant negative correlation between SDO and gender attitudes, significant negative correlation between MI and gender attitudes and significant positive correlation between SDO and MI. Regression analysis indicated SDO and MI to be significant predictors of gender attitudes accounting for 22% variance. Levels of SDO and MI were found to be moderately high and gender attitude was positive in general. Significant main effects for gender and age was found on SDO, MI and gender attitude, however the main effect for educational attainment was found only on SDO and MI. A significant interaction effect of gender, age and educational attainment was found for MI and gender attitude. Findings have been discussed in the light of existing literature and the cultural context of the Nagas. The study has implications for understanding the system of gender and gender inequality.

Keywords: Social dominance, Masculinity ideology, Gender attitude

Social Dominance Orientation

Studies have found the versatility and usefulness of SDO in understanding intergroup behaviour, generalised prejudice, and socio-political and policy preferences (Ho et al., 2012, Ho et al., 2015). Broadly, SDO is considered to have two distinct but strongly related sub-dimensions, namely, SDO-D (dominance sub-dimension) and SDO-E (anti-egalitarianism sub-dimension). The SDO-D reflects support for group-based dominance, and it is found to predict aggressive intergroup behaviours and conflicts and old-fashioned racism (Ho et al., 2012). The SDO-E reflects opposition to group-based equality, and it is found to predict subtle forms of intergroup bias such as perpetuation of group-based inequality (Ho et al., 2012). Studies have demonstrated that the two dimensions of SDO relate differentially to intergroup behaviour (Kugler et al., 2010; Ho et al., 2012; Ho et al., 2015). Where SDO-D implies support for oppression or overt intergroup aggression and hostility, SDO-E is more related with support for social hierarchy through legitimising myths such as symbolic racism which may imply that certain groups have the legitimacy to control

access to resources, thus reflecting opposition to social policies that are aimed at equality. SDO-D and SDO-E are two conceptually different but related dimensions of SDO and these dimensions predicts qualitatively different intergroup phenomena.

All human societies are structured as systems of group-based social hierarchies. The system of gender or patriarchy is one form of this group based hierarchy where men are found to have disproportionately more social, economic and political power, compared with women, in most societies. In the recent times, women's status has been elevated to a great extent in an effort to bring about a more democratic society and respect for human rights, however, gender inequality is still very much prevalent with women still being dominated in most spheres of the society by men. Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is an important construct used to understand the extent to which an individual desires and support group-based hierarchies and inequalities (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) including gender-based hierarchies and gender inequality. Regardless of an individual's membership within the group based hierarchy,

SDO reflects the person's attitude towards and desire to maintain hierarchy and can have implications for the distribution of social value between social groups (for instance, between men and women) in a society by influencing the attitudes and behaviours of individuals. The dynamics of any group based social hierarchy in any given society can be understood by exploring the intensity and distribution of SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

Individuals are said to differ in their levels of SDO. A number of factors including situational contingencies, socialization experience and temperament can influence the individual's level of SDO. Regardless of any group based social hierarchy, members of dominant groups are found to have higher levels of SDO compared with members of subordinate groups (Guimond et al., 2003; Pratto et al., 2006). Studies that have looked at the role of demographic variables have shown that SDO is higher among males (Genol et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2015; Sidanius et al., 2006) and the lesser educated (Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Ho et al., 2015; Villano and Zani, 2007). Findings on the effect of age on SDO is inconsistent. While some studies reported that SDO is negatively related with age (Duriez & Van-Heil, 2002; Graham-Kevan, 2011), there are other studies that reported otherwise (Villano & Zani, 2007).

Masculinity Ideology

Research on gender has also indicated the role of masculinity in guaranteeing the legitimacy of patriarchy and the dominant position of men in the society (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Masculinity can be understood as an internalized role or identity that reflects the norms and values of a given culture. Research on masculinity has further led to the development of the concept Masculinity Ideology (MI) - a belief in the importance of men adhering to culturally defined standards of behaviour (Barron, 2011). MI as a construct can be used to understand the societal attitudes of a society regarding what it means to be a man. The extent to which males attempt to fulfil traditional role expectations is affected by MI held by the individuals in a society. Existing research shows that MI is higher among individuals with high ethnic belongingness

(Abreu et al., 2000), males (Levant et al., 2003; Martinez & Paterna-Bleda, 2013), older adults (Abreu et al., 2000; Levant & Richmond, 2007; Levant et al., 2021) and the lesser educated (Turkoglu, 2013).

Gender attitude

Gender attitude refers to the belief about the roles of men and women and it offers a window to understanding gender inequality. A person can have a traditional or an egalitarian gender attitude (Helgeson, 2012). The traditional gender attitude often associates men with work outside the home and women with work inside the home, and with men having control over women. Whereas, the egalitarian gender attitude emphasises equal distribution of power between women and men. It is said that most people hold a gender attitude that lies between an egalitarian and a traditional gender attitude, which Hochschild called the transitional gender attitude (1989, as cited in Helgeson, 2012, p. 68). The transitional gender attitude attributes sharing of work between men and women inside the home as well as outside the home, however women are associated with holding more responsibility at home and men with more responsibility outside the home. Research shows that in recent times people's gender attitude have become more egalitarian (Auletto et al., 2017; Brewster & Padavic, 2000). Women (Auletto et al., 2017; Lizotte, 2018; Si, 2022;), educated (Auletto, et al., 2017; Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004) and younger people (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Singh et al., 2013) have been found to hold more gender egalitarian attitudes..

The Nagas

The Nagas in Nagaland belong to the Mongoloid racial group with 17 major tribes coexisting together. Nagaland has been given a special constitutional provision under Article 371(A) of the Indian Constitution through which it enjoys special powers and autonomy in relation to its customary laws (Achumi, 2017) that are deeply woven into the fabric of the society and which are viewed by some as having implications for women's rights (North East Network Nagaland, 2016). The Naga society is patriarchal and patrilineal with the father of the

family holding supreme authority. Traditionally women had been treated unfairly compared with men especially with respect to decision making, property inheritance, etc. In fact, women are still denied the right to inheritance especially for immovable property, to initiate a divorce and to have custody over children (Ovung,2009) and they are still excluded from the apex decision making bodies of the Naga society such as the village council. Although the status of women in Nagaland can be said to have changed over the recent years, this is mostly so in terms of education and economic empowerment. There is still a lot of discontent among at least certain sections of Naga women regarding the status of women in the Naga society which is becoming more palpable in recent years. In the backdrop of this unique cultural milieu of the Naga society, it is important to understand gender attitudes and how the constructs SDO and MI might contribute to the existing gender attitudes in the society.

There are very few existing studies that have explored the relationship among gender attitudes, SDO and MI (For eg., Levant & Richmond, 2007; Martinez & Paterna-Bleda, 2013; Sibley et al., 2007). Besides, not a single study has reported about gender attitudes, SDO and MI among the Nagas. This study, therefore, aims to explore the existing gender attitudes and the levels of SDO and MI among adult Nagas and also to see the predictive role of SDO and MI on gender attitudes. Further, as an extension to the studies carried out in other cultures, the present study also aims to examine the role of demographic variables in SDO, MI and gender attitudes so as to better understand the gender dynamics among adult Nagas.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The sample for the study included 696 adult Nagas from two cosmopolitan districts of Nagaland, namely Dimapur and Kohima. Participants were above 18 years of age with a mean age of 35 years. Participants were selected using quota sampling technique. The sampling distribution is shown in table 1. Participants were met personally and were asked to participate in the study.

Measures

Social Dominance Orientation Scale (SDO-7): The SDO-7 scale developed by Ho et al. (2015) was used to assess SDO. The SDO-7 is a 16-item questionnaire scored on a 7-point Likert scale from strongly agree-1 to strongly disagree-7. The total score on the SDO-7 is calculated by working out the mean of all the 16 items. Higher score indicates greater SDO and a lower score indicates lesser SDO. In this study sample, the Cronbach's alpha for the SDO-7 was found to be .70.

Male Role Norms Inventory-Short Form (MRNI-SF): The MRNI-SF was developed by Levant et al. (2013) and it assesses the general construct MI. The MRNI-SF is a 21 item questionnaire scored on a 7 point Likert scale from strongly agree-1 to strongly disagree-7. The score on the MRNI-SF is calculated by working out the mean of all the 21 items. Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of traditional MI and lower scores indicate lesser endorsement of traditional MI. In this study sample, the Cronbach's alpha for the MRNI-SF was found to be .84.

Table 1. Quota Sampling by Age, Gender and Level of Education.

Age Groups	Level of Education	Males	Females	Total
Older adults (41 years and above)	Class 12	58	58	116
	Graduate	58	58	116
	Post-Graduate and above	58	58	116
Younger adults (18 to 40 years)	Class 12	58	58	116
	Graduate	58	58	116
	Post-Graduate and above	58	58	116
TOTAL		348	348	696

Gender Attitude Scale-Nagaland (GAS-N): GAS-N developed by Khieya & Longkumer (2020) was used to assess gender attitude. GAS-N is an 11 item questionnaire scored on a 5 point Likert scale from strongly disagree-1 to strongly agree-5. Negative items on the scale are reversed scored. The gender attitude score on the GAS-N is calculated by summing up the responses. Higher score indicates greater support for rights of women and lower score indicates lesser support for rights of women. The Cronbach's alpha of the study sample on GAS-N was found to be .78.

Ethics

The study has the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Psychology, Nagaland University. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants.

Result and Discussion

A preliminary analysis of the data portrayed that the data sets met the normal distribution and homogeneity of variance assumptions. Descriptive statistics, three-way ANOVA, Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used in analysing the data.

Social Dominance Orientation Among Adult Nagas.

The mean SDO score was found to be 3.30 (SD = 0.73) which is higher than what was reported of other cultures in other studies (Ho et al., 2015; Quist & Resendez, 2010; Schmitt & Wirth, 2009; Zakrisson, 2008). According to the Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius and Pratto, 2001), discrimination causes and is caused by social hierarchies. Fischer et al. (2012) in a cross-cultural analysis of 27 societies found that societies that were more traditional and dominated by men were associated with higher levels of SDO. The observed SDO among adult Nagas in the present study can be used as a measure of the extent of their endorsement for gender-based hierarchies and inequalities and is an important indicator of the existing gender dynamics in the Naga society that has deep rooted patriarchy and where men enjoy more privileges as compared to women.

A three-way ANOVA was used to examine the effect of gender, age and educational

attainment on SDO (Table 2). The results of the three-way ANOVA indicated a main effect of gender on SDO, with males on average having higher SDO (M = 3.39, SD = 0.73) compared with females (M = 3.23, SD = 0.71). This finding is consistent with the findings in other cultures (Genol et al., 2022; Ho et al., 2015; Sidanius et al., 2006). Males occupy a relatively more dominant position in the Naga society and so this finding that adult Naga males have higher SDO as compared to adult Naga females further strengthens the observation from previous research that SDO is higher in members of the dominant group in the society. A significant main effect of age on SDO was found with older adults (M = 3.47, SD = 0.65) on average having higher SDO compared with younger adults (M = 3.14, SD = 0.75). Sidanius and Pratto (1999) had reasoned that because societies privilege the older adults over younger adults and children, older people can be expected to have higher SDO than younger people (as cited in Worley, 2022, p.1-2) and it had been so observed in other previous studies as well (For eg., Villano & Zani, 2007). A significant main effect of educational attainment on SDO was also found in the study in line with findings from other studies (Ho et al., 2015; Duriez & Van Hiel, 2002; Villano & Zani, 2007). Post hoc comparison using Tuckey HSD test indicated that the mean score of SDO for those with post-graduate and above educational attainment (M = 3.19, SD = 0.75) was significantly different from SDO levels of those with lower educational attainments – i.e., graduate educational attainment (M = 3.38, SD = 0.71) and class 12 educational attainment (M = 3.35, SD = 0.70). The finding that the more educated had lesser SDO implies the role that education can play in SDO. There were no significant interaction effects of gender, age and educational attainment on SDO.

Masculinity Ideology Among Adult Nagas

The mean MI score was found to be 3.74 (SD = 0.83) which was higher compared with studies on other cultures (Levant et al., 2003; Levant & Hall, 2013; Martinez & Paterna-Bleda, 2013). The high endorsement of MI in the study sample may have something to do with the culture and ethnicity of the Nagas. Ovung (2009) had stated that traditional values and practices

Table 2. Results of three-way ANOVA on SDO, MI and Gender attitude scores.

Grouping variables	SDO			MI		Gender attitude	
	Df	F	P value	F	P value	F	P Value
Gender	1,694	9.23	.002**	73.39	.001**	70.81	.001**
Age	1,694	38.37	.001**	13.16	.001**	27.79	.001**
Educational attainment	2,693	5.01	.007**	11.84	.001**	3.05	.048*
Gender*Age*Education	2,693	1.33	.265	11.38	.001**	5.57	.004**
Gender*Age	2,694			.08	.779	3.89	.049*
Gender*Education	2,693			7.05	.001**	3.86	.021*
Age*Education	2,693			3.40	.034*	2.00	.136
Age (Gender*Education)	2,345			18.89	.001**	13.12	.001**
Gender (Age*Education)	2,345			13.45	.001**	7.62	.001**

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

act as barriers to empowerment of women in Nagaland. The present day Naga society, even though modernised to a great extent, also has strong adherence to customs and traditions and perhaps has strong ethnic orientation. Abreu et al. (2000) had reported ethnic belongingness as one factor that can lead to increase in MI. Future studies may therefore explore the possible role of culture and ethnicity in the endorsement of MI particularly in the Naga context.

The results of the three-way ANOVA (Table 2) indicated a significant main effect of gender on MI, with males ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.83$) on average having higher MI compared with females ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 0.75$). This finding is consistent with the reports from other cultures (Levant et al., 2003; Martinez & Paterna-Bleda, 2013). A significant main effect of age on MI was also found. Older adults ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.84$) on average had higher MI compared with younger adults ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.81$). This finding is consistent with the reports by Abreu et al. (2000), Levant & Richmond (2007) and Levant et al. (2021). A significant main effect of educational attainment on MI was also found. This finding that education affects changes in MI supports the finding by Turkoglu (2013). Post hoc comparison using Tuckey HSD test indicated that the mean score of MI for those with up to class 12 educational attainment ($M = 3.93$, $SD =$

0.94) was significantly different from those with higher educational attainments- i.e., graduate ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.79$) and post-graduate ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.69$) educational attainments. However, no significant difference was found in the mean score on MI for those with graduate and post-graduate educational attainment. The findings show that endorsement of MI is highest among individuals with lower educational attainment.

The results of the three-way ANOVA also indicated a significant interaction effect of gender, age and educational attainment on MI (Table 2). Education was found to have significant interaction effects with both age and gender. After compartmentalizing age, the interaction effect of gender and educational attainment on MI was significant only among older adults ($F(2,345) = 18.89$, $p < .001$). The plot for interaction between gender and educational attainment among older adults is displayed in figure 1. Among older adult males, MI was least among participants with post-graduate and above educational attainment and it was highest among those with the lowest educational attainment in the study. Among the older adult females, however, educational attainment did not have much impact on MI. After compartmentalizing gender from the effects of age and educational attainment on MI, the interaction effect of age and educational attainment on MI was significant

only among males ($F(2,346) = 13.45, p < .001$). The effect of educational attainment on MI was more among older adult males compared with the younger adult males. The plot for interaction between age and educational attainment among males is displayed in figure 2. It may be noted that older adult males enjoy certain status in the Naga society as in the village administration, which is the unique social fabric of the Naga community. Against this cultural backdrop, the finding that older adult males who have higher levels of education show least endorsement of MI, as compared to their counter parts, can be counted as a significant contribution that highlights the potential role that education can play in reducing MI.

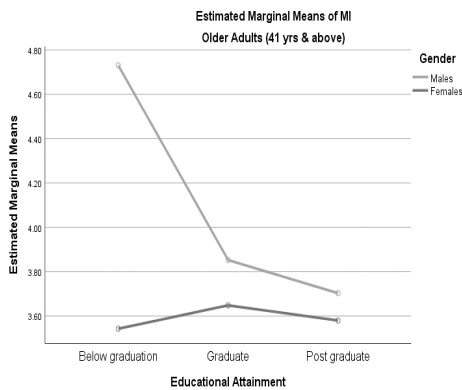


Figure 1. Interaction effect for gender and educational attainment on MI among older adults.

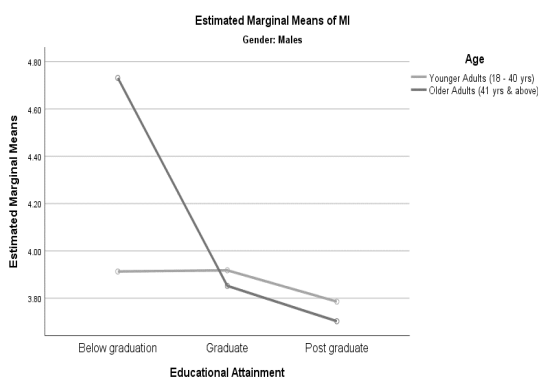


Figure 2. Interaction effect for age and educational attainment on MI among males.

Gender attitude among adult Nagas.

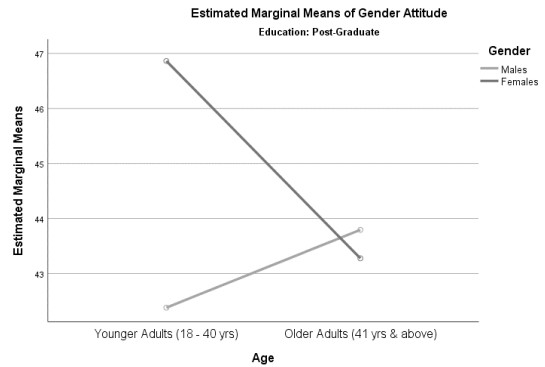


Figure 3. Interaction Effect for Gender and Age on Gender Attitude among post-graduate and above educational qualification.

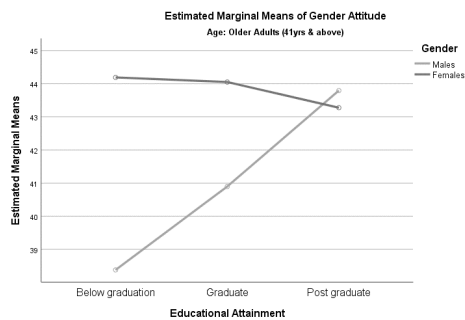


Figure 4. Interaction Effect for Gender and Educational Attainment on Gender Attitude among older adults.

Correlations among SDO, MI and Gender Attitude

Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the linear relationships among SDO, MI and gender attitude. There was a positive correlation between SDO and MI, $r(694) = .33, p < .001$, indicating that higher level of SDO was associated with higher level of MI. This shows that the more dominance oriented an individual is the more they endorse traditional masculinity. Social dominance is believed to be a valued aspect of masculinity in Asian cultures (Liu & Chang, 2007, as cited in McCreedy, 2019, p. 11) and is reported to provide opportunities for traditional masculinity (McCreedy, 2019). Consistent with findings from other cultures (Fischer et al., 2012; Sibley et al., 2007), there

was a negative correlation between SDO and gender attitude, $r(694) = -.34, p = .001$, with higher level of SDO corresponding with lesser support for rights of women. There was also a negative correlation between MI and gender attitude, $r(694) = -.44, p = .001$, indicating that endorsement of more traditional masculinity ideology was related with lesser support for rights of women. Similar finding has also been reported by studies on other cultures (Levant & Richmond, 2007; Martinez & Paterna-Bleda, 2013).

SDO and MI as Predictors of Gender Attitude

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine if gender attitude can be predicted by SDO and MI. Firstly in order to use multiple linear regression analysis, the data was first checked to meet the assumptions of multiple linear regression analysis. There was no multicollinearity between the predictor variables. The values of the residuals were found to be independent and normally distributed. The variance of the residuals was homogenous. Cooks Distance values were calculated to ensure that no influential cases were biasing the model. All values were below one suggesting that no cases were biasing the model.

A multiple linear regression analysis was carried out using the stepwise method by regressing gender attitude on SDO and MI. The regression analysis produced two models. In the first model MI significantly predicted gender attitude $F(1,694) = 161.69, p < .001$, explaining 18.9% ($R^2 = .189$) of the variance on gender attitude. MI contributed significantly to the first model ($B = -3.28, t = -12.72, p < .001$). In the second model both MI and SDO also significantly predicted gender attitude $F(2,693) = 103.18, p < .001$, explaining 22.9% ($R^2 = .229$) variance on gender attitude. Both MI ($B = -2.74, t = -10.27, p < .001$) and SDO ($B = -1.84, t = -6.04, p < .001$) contributed significantly to the second model. This finding indicates that MI and SDO can play a significant role in predicting gender attitude.

Conclusion

The study has explored the SDO, MI and existing gender attitudes among adult Nagas and has highlighted more or less egalitarian

gender attitudes but moderately high levels of both SDO and MI. Consistent with findings in other cultures from other studies, age, gender and education were found to have significant effects on the SDO, MI and gender attitudes of adult Nagas. Of particular interest was the finding that older adult males with higher levels of education demonstrated lesser MI and more egalitarian gender attitudes compared with their lesser educated counterparts. The finding that MI and SDO were both found to predict gender attitudes is another important contribution of the study. The study has implications towards understanding gender relations in the Naga society. To bring about gender equality, interventions should be aimed at affecting changes to the psychology of dominance and also conformity to traditional masculinity norms with special emphasis focused on older male adults with lesser education.

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