
THE INEQUALITY OF INFIDELITY TOWARDS MEN AND WOMEN IN GHANA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOCIETAL ATTITUDES

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ABSTRACT

Infidelity remains a deeply contested social issue, shaped by cultural norms, gender expectations, and moral judgments. In many societies, including Ghana, infidelity is not evaluated uniformly across genders; rather, men and women are often judged differently for similar behaviours. This study examines the inequality in societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana, with a focus on how cultural values, gender norms, and moral expectations influence public perceptions. Drawing on existing literature, infidelity among men is frequently normalised or excused, while women who engage in similar behaviour are more harshly judged, stigmatised, or sanctioned (Ampofo, 2019; Boakye, 2023). Using a comparative analytical approach, the study seeks to explore how infidelity is socially constructed, justified, or condemned across gender lines within Ghanaian society. By examining societal attitudes toward male and female infidelity, this study contributes to broader debates on gender inequality, morality, and social control, and provides context-specific insights relevant to family studies, gender policy, and social development in Ghana.

KEYWORDS: Infidelity, gender inequality, societal attitudes, marriage, Ghana.

1. INTRODUCTION

Infidelity, commonly understood as the violation of emotional or sexual exclusivity within an intimate relationship, has long attracted moral, cultural, and social scrutiny. While infidelity is widely condemned across societies, the manner in which it is judged often differs significantly between men and women. In many patriarchal contexts, male infidelity is tolerated, rationalised, or even normalised, whereas female infidelity is treated as a serious moral transgression with far-reaching social consequences (Connell, 2005).

In Ghana, societal attitudes toward infidelity are deeply embedded in cultural traditions, religious teachings, and gendered expectations of marriage and sexuality. Men are often socialised to view sexual assertiveness as a marker of masculinity, while women are expected to embody fidelity, chastity, and moral restraint (Ampofo, 2019). These expectations shape how communities respond to infidelity, influencing blame, forgiveness, and social sanctioning.

Existing studies in Ghana and across sub-Saharan Africa suggest that men who engage in extramarital affairs are frequently excused on the basis of biology, cultural norms, or economic power, while women who commit infidelity face stigma, social exclusion, and in some cases marital dissolution (Dako-Gyeke, 2018; Boakye, 2023). Such unequal treatment reflects broader gender inequalities that extend beyond intimate relationships into social, legal, and economic spheres.

Despite the relevance of this issue, empirical research examining **comparative societal attitudes toward male and female infidelity in Ghana** remains limited. Much of the existing literature focuses on marital stability, divorce, or sexual behaviour without explicitly interrogating the gendered double standards that govern moral judgment. Understanding how infidelity is differently perceived across gender lines is, therefore critical to advancing discussions on gender equity, family cohesion, and social justice.

This study seeks to examine the inequality of societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana, highlighting how gender norms and cultural expectations shape moral evaluation and social response.

2. Statement of the Problem

Although infidelity is generally regarded as a breach of trust within intimate relationships, societal responses to infidelity in Ghana are not gender-neutral. Men and women who engage in similar acts of infidelity are often judged differently, with women facing disproportionately harsher moral condemnation and social consequences. This unequal treatment reflects deeply entrenched gender norms that privilege male sexual freedom while policing female sexuality (Ampofo, 2019).

In Ghanaian society, male infidelity is frequently rationalised as natural, culturally acceptable, or economically driven, whereas female infidelity is interpreted as moral failure, disrespect, or betrayal of family honour. Women accused of infidelity may face public shame, marital breakdown, loss of social support, or even violence, while men are more likely to be forgiven or socially excused (Dako-Gyeke, 2018; Boakye, 2023). These double standards

reinforce gender inequality and sustain power imbalances within relationships and communities.

Despite these realities, there is limited empirical research that systematically compares societal attitudes toward male and female infidelity in Ghana. Existing studies often address infidelity indirectly or treat it as a neutral behaviour without examining how gender shapes moral judgment and social response. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to inform policy discussions, gender advocacy, and family intervention programmes.

The problem addressed by this study is the lack of a clear, comparative understanding of how Ghanaian society perceives and responds to infidelity among men and women. Without such understanding, efforts to promote gender equality and fair treatment within intimate relationships may remain ineffective.

3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana, with a focus on identifying gender-based inequalities in moral judgment, social acceptance, and condemnation.

4. Objectives of the Study

4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study is to examine the inequality in societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana.

4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- examine societal perceptions and moral judgments associated with male infidelity in Ghana;
- examine societal perceptions and moral judgments associated with female infidelity in Ghana;
- compare the social consequences and levels of acceptance associated with infidelity among men and women; and
- explore the cultural, religious, and gender norms that shape unequal attitudes toward infidelity in Ghana.

5. Theoretical Review

This section outlines the theoretical perspectives that guide the examination of unequal societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana. Given the study's focus on gendered moral judgment, cultural norms, and social sanctioning, the analysis is anchored in Sexual Double Standard Theory, Gender Role Theory, and Social Norms Theory. These theories collectively explain how infidelity is differently interpreted and evaluated across gender lines.

5.1 Sexual Double Standard Theory

Sexual Double Standard Theory explains how societies apply different moral standards to similar sexual behaviours based on gender. Traditionally, male sexual activity outside marriage is tolerated, excused, or normalised, while female sexual activity is strictly regulated and morally condemned (Crawford & Popp, 2003). This theory is particularly relevant to the study, as it directly addresses the unequal moral evaluation of infidelity among men and women.

In the Ghanaian context, the sexual double standard manifests through cultural narratives that portray male infidelity as natural or inevitable, while framing female infidelity as immoral, shameful, and destructive to family honour (Ampofo, 2019). Women who engage in infidelity are often subjected to social stigma and harsher sanctions than men. Sexual Double Standard Theory therefore provides a critical lens for understanding why societal attitudes toward infidelity remain gendered and unequal.

5.2 Gender Role Theory

Gender Role Theory posits that individuals' behaviours and social evaluations are shaped by culturally prescribed expectations associated with masculinity and femininity (Eagly, 1987). Men are often socialised to embody dominance, sexual assertiveness, and autonomy, while women are expected to demonstrate fidelity, modesty, and moral restraint.

Within Ghanaian society, marriage and sexuality are strongly gendered institutions. Women's identities are often closely tied to marital fidelity and respectability, whereas men's identities are less constrained by expectations of sexual exclusivity (Dako-Gyeke, 2018). When these expectations are violated, women face more severe judgment because their actions are seen as deviating from socially prescribed roles. Gender Role Theory helps explain how deeply embedded cultural norms sustain unequal responses to infidelity and reinforce patriarchal power relations.

5.3 Social Norms Theory

Social Norms Theory focuses on how shared beliefs about acceptable behaviour influence individual attitudes and collective responses (Cialdini et al., 1990). Norms are reinforced through social approval, disapproval, and sanctioning mechanisms, shaping how behaviours such as infidelity are interpreted within a community.

In Ghana, social norms around marriage, sexuality, and family honour influence how infidelity is perceived and responded to. Community reactions, gossip, religious teachings, and family interventions play significant roles in reinforcing acceptable behaviour. Social Norms Theory is useful for understanding how unequal attitudes toward infidelity are maintained through collective expectations and how deviation from these norms—particularly by women—attracts stronger sanctions.

6. Empirical Review

This section reviews empirical studies on societal attitudes toward infidelity, focusing on global, African, and Ghanaian contexts. The review highlights patterns of gender inequality in moral judgment and identifies gaps that the present study seeks to address.

Global studies consistently demonstrate the existence of a sexual double standard in attitudes toward infidelity. Research conducted in Europe and North America shows that men's infidelity is often perceived as less serious and more forgivable than women's infidelity (Marks & Fraley, 2005). Women who engage in infidelity are more likely to be labelled as immoral, untrustworthy, or irresponsible, while men's behaviour is frequently rationalised as biologically driven or situational. Studies also reveal that religious beliefs, cultural values, and traditional gender ideologies strongly influence how infidelity is judged (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Even in societies that promote gender equality, subtle biases in moral judgment persist, indicating the deep-rooted nature of gendered sexual norms. In many African societies, empirical research highlights strong gender asymmetries in attitudes toward infidelity. Studies from Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa report that male infidelity is often socially tolerated, particularly when men fulfil economic and social responsibilities, while female infidelity attracts severe condemnation (Adebayo, 2016).

African studies further show that infidelity is often framed within cultural narratives of masculinity, power, and control. Women who engage in extramarital relationships may face divorce, loss of custody, or social exclusion, whereas men are more likely to experience minimal social consequences (Silberschmidt, 2011). These findings underscore the intersection of patriarchy, morality, and social control in shaping responses to infidelity. In

Ghana, empirical research confirms the presence of unequal societal attitudes toward infidelity. Ampofo (2019) notes that cultural and religious discourses often excuse male infidelity while portraying female infidelity as a serious moral failure. Women accused of infidelity may face public humiliation, marital breakdown, or family intervention, while men's behaviour is frequently treated with tolerance or silence. Dako-Gyeke (2018) found that societal responses to infidelity are strongly influenced by gender norms, with women bearing greater social and emotional consequences. Boakye (2023) further observed that women's sexual behaviour is more closely monitored and judged, reinforcing unequal power dynamics within intimate relationships. Despite these insights, most Ghanaian studies examine infidelity indirectly, often within broader discussions of marriage or divorce. Few studies adopt a comparative approach that explicitly examines how societal attitudes differ between male and female infidelity. This gap limits understanding of the mechanisms through which gender inequality is reproduced within intimate relationships.

The empirical literature reveals several gaps. First, there is limited comparative research in Ghana that systematically examines societal attitudes toward male versus female infidelity. Second, existing studies often focus on behavioural prevalence rather than moral judgment and social response. Third, few studies explicitly integrate theoretical frameworks to explain why these inequalities persist. These gaps justify the present study, which adopts a comparative analytical approach to examine societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana. By grounding the analysis in established theories and contextual empirical evidence, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of gender inequality in moral evaluation and social norms.

7. Methodology

7.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the inequality in societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana. A mixed-methods design was considered appropriate because societal attitudes toward infidelity are both measurable and deeply interpretive, requiring numerical comparison as well as contextual understanding. The design enabled the study to capture patterns of gendered attitudes while also exploring the meanings, justifications, and cultural reasoning that underpin those attitudes.

Specifically, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected during the same phase of the research,

analysed separately, and then integrated during interpretation. This approach allowed for triangulation of findings and enhanced the credibility and depth of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

7.2 Research Approach

The quantitative component of the study followed a descriptive and comparative approach, aimed at identifying differences in societal attitudes toward male and female infidelity. The qualitative component adopted an interpretive approach, focusing on how individuals explain, justify, or condemn infidelity within cultural, religious, and gendered frameworks.

Together, these approaches allowed the study to address not only whether inequality in attitudes exists, but also why such inequality persists within Ghanaian society.

7.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in selected urban communities in Ghana, including Accra and other major urban centres. Urban areas were selected because they bring together diverse populations with varying educational backgrounds, religious affiliations, and exposure to both traditional and modern value systems. These settings provided a suitable context for examining how societal attitudes toward infidelity are negotiated within contemporary Ghanaian society.

7.4 Study Population

The study population comprised adult men and women aged 18 years and above residing in urban Ghana. Participants included married and unmarried individuals, as societal attitudes toward infidelity are shaped not only by personal marital status but also by shared cultural and moral beliefs.

For the qualitative component, key informants included individuals with lived experience or informed perspectives on marital relationships, such as married adults, religious leaders, counsellors, and community opinion leaders.

7.5 Sampling Techniques

For the quantitative component, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure fair representation of both men and women. Stratification by gender allowed for meaningful comparison of attitudes toward male and female infidelity.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich and reflective insights into societal norms and moral judgments surrounding infidelity. In some cases, snowball sampling was used to reach participants who were willing to discuss sensitive issues related to relationships and morality.

7.6 Sample Size and Justification

The quantitative component involved 200 respondents, consisting of equal numbers of men and women. This sample size was considered adequate for descriptive and comparative analysis of societal attitudes.

The qualitative component involved 15 in-depth interview participants, selected to ensure diversity in gender, marital status, age, and religious background. The qualitative sample size was guided by the principle of data saturation, where no new themes emerged from additional interviews.

7.7 Data Collection Methods

Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires designed to measure societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women. The questionnaire included Likert-scale items assessing moral judgment, social acceptance, perceived severity, and consequences of infidelity for each gender.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, which allowed participants to discuss their views on infidelity, gender expectations, cultural norms, and moral reasoning in their own words. Interviews provided space for participants to explain why male and female infidelity are judged differently within Ghanaian society.

7.8 Data Collection Instruments

The quantitative instrument was a self-administered questionnaire developed based on literature on infidelity, gender norms, and sexual double standards. The questionnaire was pretested to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness.

The qualitative instrument was an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions and probes. The guide explored perceptions of infidelity, gender differences in judgment, cultural explanations, and the role of religion and tradition in shaping attitudes.

7.9 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, to summarise societal attitudes toward infidelity. Independent samples t-tests and comparative analysis were conducted to examine differences in attitudes toward male and female infidelity. Statistical analysis was carried out using appropriate statistical software.

Qualitative data were analysed thematically following a systematic process of transcription, coding, and theme development. Transcripts were read repeatedly to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and explanations related to gendered perceptions of infidelity. Themes were interpreted in relation to Sexual Double Standard Theory, Gender Role Theory, and Social Norms Theory.

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred during interpretation, where results were compared and contrasted to provide a comprehensive understanding of societal attitudes.

7.10 Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

For the quantitative component, reliability was ensured through pretesting of the questionnaire and consistency checks of scale items. Content validity was established by grounding the instrument in existing literature. For the qualitative component, trustworthiness was enhanced through prolonged engagement, rich description, and careful documentation of analytic decisions. Triangulation of methods strengthened the overall credibility of the study.

7.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review body prior to data collection. All participants provided informed consent and were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Given the sensitive nature of discussions on infidelity, interviews were conducted respectfully, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Pseudonyms were used in reporting qualitative findings, and all data were securely stored to protect participants' identities.

8.1 Quantitative Analysis of Societal Attitudes Toward Infidelity

8.1.1 Descriptive Statistics of Societal Attitudes

Quantitative data were analysed to examine societal perceptions and moral judgments regarding infidelity among men and women. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements related to acceptance, blame, forgiveness, and social consequences of infidelity for both genders using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 8.1: Descriptive Statistics of Societal Attitudes Toward Infidelity by Gender. (n = 200)

Statement	Male Infidelity Mean	Female Infidelity Mean
Infidelity is morally unacceptable	3.21	4.38
Infidelity can be forgiven	3.74	2.41
Infidelity brings shame to the family	2.98	4.45
Infidelity justifies divorce or separation	3.12	4.26
Society is more tolerant of this behaviour	3.89	2.17

Interpretation

The results in Table 8.1 clearly demonstrate unequal societal attitudes toward infidelity based on gender. Female infidelity is consistently rated as more morally unacceptable and socially damaging than male infidelity. Respondents strongly associated female infidelity with shame and marital breakdown, while male infidelity was viewed as more forgivable and socially tolerated.

For instance, the mean score for moral unacceptability was substantially higher for female infidelity (Mean = 4.38) than for male infidelity (Mean = 3.21), indicating harsher moral judgment toward women. Similarly, infidelity was more likely to justify divorce when committed by women (Mean = 4.26) compared to men (Mean = 3.12).

These findings quantitatively confirm the presence of a gendered moral double standard in Ghanaian society.

8.1.2 Comparative Analysis (Gender Differences)

To further examine differences in societal attitudes, an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare attitudes toward male and female infidelity.

Table 8.2: Independent Samples t-Test Comparing Attitudes Toward Male and Female Infidelity.

Variable	t-value	p-value
Moral condemnation	9.42	0.000
Social acceptance	-8.31	0.000
Likelihood of forgiveness	-7.86	0.000
Perceived social consequences	10.15	0.000

Interpretation

The t-test results show statistically significant differences in societal attitudes toward male and female infidelity across all measured dimensions ($p < 0.001$). This means that the differences observed are not due to chance but reflect deeply entrenched gender norms.

Female infidelity attracted significantly stronger condemnation and social sanctions, while male infidelity was associated with greater tolerance and forgiveness. These results empirically support the Sexual Double Standard Theory and the Gender Role Theory, which argue that societies apply different moral standards to similar behaviours based on gender.

8.2 Qualitative Analysis of Societal Attitudes Toward Infidelity

Qualitative data from in-depth interviews were analysed thematically. Four major themes emerged, offering nuanced explanations for the quantitative patterns observed.

Theme 1: Normalisation of Male Infidelity

Participants commonly described male infidelity as expected, natural, or culturally normal. Many justified male infidelity using biological, cultural, or economic arguments.

“A man can make mistakes, but it doesn’t define him. It’s something society has accepted over time.” (Participant 6)

This theme aligns with Gender Role Theory, where masculinity is associated with sexual freedom and dominance.

Theme 2: Moral Policing of Female Sexuality

Female infidelity was framed as a severe moral failure and a violation of womanhood, marriage, and family honour.

“When a woman cheats, it is seen as disgrace. People don’t forgive easily because she is expected to be faithful.” (Participant 11)

This theme reflects Sexual Double Standard Theory, highlighting how women’s sexuality is tightly regulated and monitored.

Theme 3: Infidelity, Shame, and Social Sanctions

Participants reported that women face stronger social consequences, including public shaming, marital rejection, and loss of respect.

“A cheating woman can lose everything—her marriage, her respect, even her family support.” (Participant 3)

Men, by contrast, often face minimal social repercussions.

Theme 4: Role of Culture, Religion, and Tradition

Cultural and religious teachings strongly shaped participants’ attitudes, often reinforcing unequal moral expectations.

“Religion teaches forgiveness, but society applies it more to men than women.” (Participant 9)

This theme aligns with Social Norms Theory, which explains how collective beliefs sustain unequal standards.

The integration of findings reveals strong convergence between quantitative and qualitative results. While the quantitative data statistically demonstrate unequal attitudes toward male and female infidelity, the qualitative findings explain why these inequalities persist.

Quantitative results show higher condemnation and lower forgiveness for female infidelity, while qualitative narratives reveal cultural beliefs that frame women as custodians of morality and family honour. Male infidelity, although morally acknowledged as wrong, is often excused through social narratives that protect male privilege. Together, the findings confirm that societal attitudes toward infidelity in Ghana are deeply gendered, rooted in patriarchal norms, reinforced by cultural traditions, and sustained through everyday social interactions.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined the inequality in societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana, using a mixed-methods approach to capture both measurable patterns and deeper cultural meanings. The findings reveal a clear and persistent gendered double standard in how infidelity is judged, justified, and sanctioned within Ghanaian society. This discussion interprets these findings in relation to the study's objectives, theoretical frameworks, and existing literature.

The quantitative findings demonstrate that female infidelity is viewed as more morally unacceptable, more shameful to the family, and more likely to justify divorce or separation than male infidelity. In contrast, male infidelity is more likely to be forgiven and socially tolerated. These results strongly support the Sexual Double Standard Theory, which argues that societies apply different moral standards to identical sexual behaviours based on gender. The statistically significant differences observed in moral condemnation, forgiveness, and social acceptance indicate that these unequal attitudes are not incidental but deeply entrenched within social norms.

The qualitative findings provide insight into the cultural logic that sustains these inequalities. Participants frequently described male infidelity as “normal,” “expected,” or “natural,” often invoking biological explanations or cultural traditions to excuse men's behaviour. This aligns with Gender Role Theory, which posits that men are socialised into roles associated with dominance, sexual assertiveness, and autonomy, while women are expected to demonstrate restraint and loyalty. In this context, male infidelity is framed as a personal weakness or mistake, whereas female infidelity is constructed as a fundamental violation of womanhood and marital duty.

The strong moral policing of female sexuality that emerged from the qualitative analysis further illustrates how women's identities in Ghana are closely tied to ideals of fidelity, respectability, and family honour. Women who engage in infidelity are perceived as

disgracing not only themselves but also their families and communities. This explains why female infidelity attracts stronger social sanctions such as public shaming, marital rejection, and long-term stigma. These findings are consistent with Ghanaian and African studies that highlight how women bear disproportionate social consequences for sexual transgressions (Ampofo, 2019; Dako-Gyeke, 2018; Boakye, 2023).

The role of culture, religion, and tradition emerged as a critical factor in shaping societal attitudes. Participants acknowledged that religious teachings often condemn infidelity in general, yet societal application of these teachings remains gender-biased. Forgiveness and reconciliation are more readily extended to men than women, reflecting how Social Norms Theory operates in practice. Shared beliefs about acceptable male and female behaviour are reinforced through community reactions, gossip, and informal sanctions, ensuring that women who deviate from expected norms face harsher judgment.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings highlights a strong convergence between what people believe and how they explain those beliefs. While survey data reveal the extent of inequality in attitudes, interview narratives explain how these attitudes are rationalised and sustained. Together, the findings suggest that societal responses to infidelity in Ghana are less about the act itself and more about who commits it. This reinforces broader patterns of gender inequality and social control within intimate relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the inequality in societal attitudes toward infidelity among men and women in Ghana. The findings clearly demonstrate that infidelity is not judged equally across gender lines. Women who engage in infidelity face stronger moral condemnation, greater social sanctions, and fewer opportunities for forgiveness than men who engage in similar behaviour. Male infidelity, although acknowledged as morally wrong, is often excused, normalised, or tolerated within cultural and social discourse.

By combining quantitative evidence with rich qualitative insights, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how gender norms, cultural expectations, and social values shape moral judgment in Ghanaian society. The findings confirm the relevance of Sexual Double Standard Theory, Gender Role Theory, and Social Norms Theory in explaining why unequal attitudes toward infidelity persist despite social change and modernisation.

Overall, the study contributes to gender and family studies by foregrounding infidelity as a site where broader gender inequalities are reproduced and legitimised. Understanding these

dynamics is essential for promoting fairness, mutual accountability, and gender equity within intimate relationships and society at large.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that public education and social discourse in Ghana actively challenge gender-biased attitudes toward infidelity and morality. Awareness campaigns led by civil society organisations, faith-based institutions, and media platforms should emphasise fairness, shared responsibility, and mutual accountability within relationships, rather than reinforcing stereotypes that excuse male behaviour while condemning women.

There is also a need for gender-sensitive relationship counselling and family intervention programmes that address unequal moral expectations and promote dialogue between partners. Marriage counsellors, religious leaders, and community mediators should be trained to recognise and confront sexual double standards in their guidance and decision-making, ensuring that moral judgments are applied consistently across gender lines.

Educational institutions should incorporate discussions on gender equality, relationships, and social norms into curricula at various levels, fostering critical reflection among young people on how cultural beliefs shape attitudes toward sexuality and marriage. Early engagement with these issues can help shift deeply rooted norms over time.

Finally, future research should expand this line of inquiry by examining attitudes toward infidelity in rural communities, exploring generational differences, and including the perspectives of couples rather than individuals alone. Longitudinal and comparative studies would also help to track changes in societal attitudes over time and assess the impact of interventions aimed at promoting gender equity in intimate relationships.

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