

Development of a Feminist Literature Supported Continuum for Food Safety Research in Developing Nations



Bryanna Nelson, Dr. Hui-Hui Wang



Introduction/Need

- Through Feed the Future Innovation Labs and other research initiatives, the U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative, a sector of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aims to catalyze ongoing scientific innovation in agriculture and promote evidence-based research (Feed the Future, 2020).
- Research projects being conducted through USAID need to address cross-cutting themes such as environmental health, emerging pandemic threats, and gender equality. Falling under gender equality, is the advancement of women and youth within these systems.

- Currently, there are varying levels of quality, integration of gender, and findings that relate to the cross-cutting themes (Mulema et al., 2019).
- Despite a large array of data collection tools, few of the methods are aimed towards collecting data from women. There is a lack of consistency in evaluation and criteria for grant funded USAID projects that aim to promote gender and social equitable agricultural innovations.

- Many proposed projects featured superficial integration of women stating:
 - "51% of intern recruitment will be female"
 - "Female recruitment will be a priority before male recruitment"
- Others proposed using methods that may not be fully suited for research involving women
 - "Survey of how many women are involved in production"
 - "Survey of how many female poultry producers there are"

Methods

Some scientific methods typically employed by feminist scholars (Fanow et al., 2005)

- Action/participatory
- Discourse analysis
- Focus group
- Personal Narrative

The continuum was developed using and is supported by feminist literature. Beyond the research being aimed towards women, there was careful consideration of religion, historical context, political situations and current policies.

Implementation

- The continuum is broken down into three major sections; methodology, deliverable, and integration. The primary topics include several sub-topics to narrow down specific areas scientists may need to focus on for improvement.
- The sections for continuum were created from a synthesis of literature regarding instrument creation and educational programs.
- The continuum is broken down into stages to allow scientists to develop and grow over time.

Results to Date

- The table below demonstrates the continuum with three stages and all areas being critiqued.
- The proposals and were reviewed and assigned stages based on the continuum.
- Throughout project implementation, teams will work together to more advanced stages, creating more meaningful and rounded research.
- At the close of the first year, the continuum will be revised with the research team gender specialists and technical experts.
- Revisions and additional stages will be added to ensure relevancy throughout the project.

FSIL Continuum for Implementation Teams						
Primary Topic	Sub-Topic		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	N/A
Methodology (1)	Technical Research Methodology	Technical (methods, instrument, design)	Lack of technical design that supports the research	Some evidence of technical design that supports the research	Entire technical design supports the research	
		Gender Sensitive (methods, instrument, design)	Methods, instruments and design lack gender framework/support	Methods, instruments and design moderately gender framework/support	Methods, instruments and design have a gender framework/support	
			Method(s) focused on only quantitative methods and/or does not support feminine theory	Method(s) features some qualitative methodology, or methods more suitable for studying women	Method(s) and design clearly support exploring female farmers/entrepreneurs.	
Measurement (is it easy to measure) (2)	Deliverable	Educational/ Outreach Program	Lack of theory for gender specific strategies	Named gender specific strategy	Named and implemented gender specific theory	
		Educational Outreach Materials	Lack of gender sensitive outreach materials	Some gender sensitive materials OR gender sensitive materials are superficial	Has gender sensitive materials and is not superficial	
		Evaluation/ Research Tools	Lack of gender sensitive research tools	Tools/evaluation could be used for gender unsupported	Has gender research tools	
Integration	Integration—Efficacy (tech & deliverable)	Publications (posters, journal articles)—Did you disseminate your research?	Research was not disseminated	Research was disseminated but did not have gender in mind	Research was disseminated and had a focus of gender	
		Culture	Culture was not taken into consideration	Culture was present but not well integrated or played a small part	Culture was well integrated	
		Appropriate for gender	Gender was not taken into consideration	Gender was integrated or played a small part	Gender was well integrated	
1+2 (tech & deliverable)						

Future Plans

- The continuum is currently limited by three stages but has the potential to be further developed as it is part of a multi-year project.
- As the research grows and develops, further stages could be designed and implemented.
- As the continuum is geared towards the inclusion on women in a STEM related field, it is general enough to be used in other areas of agriculture such as agricultural education, extension, or other STEM fields. It is also well suited for this area due to the focus on program development.
- The continuum integrates women and culture, which will hopefully encourage new research where it is limited. By creating a publishable continuum, more meaningful integration can be conducted avoiding the inclusion of women through number or pure quantitative methods, but rather those that encompass the female experience in a given setting.

References

Fonow, M., & Cook, J. A. (2005). Feminist methodology: New applications in the academy and public policy. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(4), 2211-2236.

Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Food Safety. (2020, November 19). Retrieved December 06, 2020, from <https://ag.purdue.edu/food-safety-innovation-lab/>

Mulema, Annet A., W. Jogo, E. Damtew, K. Mekonnen & P. Thorne (2019). Women farmers' participation in the agricultural research process: implications for agricultural sustainability in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Agricultural Sustainability*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14735903.2019.1569578>

Specific references for the continuum are available upon request