

'Have Conjugal roles changed in Britain over the last 50 years?'

Design Section

The question I will be investigating is 'Have conjugal roles changed in Britain in the last 50 years?' I have chosen this coursework title because I'm interested in the results I could get from it and it would be interesting to see what conclusion could be drawn from it.

My aim is to see if conjugal roles have changed in Britain in the last 50 years. To do this I will carry out six interviews of three different couples who have been cohabiting for approximately fifty years, twenty-five years and only a few years, I will then ask them the same questions about conjugal roles to then compare their answers.

I hypothesise that conjugal roles have changed in Britain over the last fifty years. I think that conjugal roles of the cohabiting couple of approximately fifty years will be more 'traditional' with the man working and earning the income and the woman sticking to the more stereotypically feminine household chores- cooking and cleaning etc. I think this because the couple of fifty years would have very segregated conjugal roles perhaps because they would be sticking to the conjugal roles that were traditional of their generation. Whereas the younger cohabiting couple of only a few years I think would tend to have shared conjugal roles, because in our current society it isn't uncommon for both partners to have a career and it's most likely that they would both have a job. This might effect the tasks they carry out in the home as they may have equal time in the home. I think that conjugal roles would have changed in Britain over the last 50 years because society has changed greatly in the last 50 years and so I think this would have had an impact on conjugal roles within cohabiting couples, and this is what I am going to investigate.

I collected my own primary data to ensure that my results would be reliable and so I could use secure evidence for my hypothesis. I choose the method of interviews because for my particular question it was more accurate so that I could plan my interviews to get the respondents to be of the ages I needed for valid results. If I used the method of questionnaires there could have been a strong chance that my results may not have included people of the ages that I needed for my investigation. By carrying out interviews I used the idea of 'qualitative data' because I was concerned with the feelings and views of my respondents on the particular issue. It was important in my interviews for me to encourage my respondents to express their opinions when answering some of the questions, to do this I included some open question in my interviews so they could elaborate their answers. However it was also important that I included closed questions, for example- "Do you do the majority of the household cleaning?" because then I could get clear answers which I could interpret into results to help me prove or disprove my hypothesis. I tried to keep my interviews fairly structured because then the questions I asked were the same to each respondent to make my results as fair as possible and to avoid the problem of interviewer bias which is where the interviewer can ask questions leading to a particular result. For example a respondent may adapt his or her answer according to how the interviewer may have phrased the question. Also an interviewer may give the impression of wanting to hear a certain answer so the respondent could try to impress the interviewer by saying what they would like to hear rather than their opinions. So by keeping my interviews as structured as possible I could avoid this. Some strengths of using interviews was that they were reliable because I knew who I was interviewing and once an interview was arranged I knew I would definitely get some results from it. However with questionnaires there was a chance people may not have completed them, leaving me with no results. Also there is more flexibility with interviews than with questionnaires because if the respondent didn't understand the question I could explain it to them. However some limitations of using interviews are that because they are quite time consuming to carry out and arrange I could only carry out six interviews. This meant a

smaller sample size that could mean my result aren't representative of a population, which makes it hard to draw a completely reliable conclusion from. Also, however I tried to avoid it there was always a chance of interviewer bias, which could have also caused my results to be less reliable.

I kept my investigation valid by asking both genders from three couples covering a 50-year period. (The 50 years couple, 25 years couple and only a few years' couple.) My method was also kept reliable by selecting the people I was going to interview carefully and not at random. Therefore I knew that the people I was interviewing were of the ages that I needed for my investigation.