

The Impact of Female Stereotypes on Career Development

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Abstract: Long-standing gender stereotypes and structural injustices still restrict women's chances, development, and career goals. These prejudices, which have their roots in historical, social, and cultural standards, reinforce the exclusion of women from leadership positions in male-dominated industries. This scoping review integrates findings from 9 research studies to investigate how stereotypes impact women's job development across life stages and circumstances. Three main areas are examined in this analysis: the ideas and behaviors of gender stereotypes, their particular effects on professional paths, and the profound systemic factors that underlie these biases. Female stereotypes shape expectations of women's responsibilities, frequently preventing them from high-status professions and relegating them to caregivers. These misconceptions have a big influence on self-efficacy, professional progression, and wages. Their persistence is a result of a combination of intersectional variables like race and class, early childhood impacts, cultural traditions, workplace arrangements, and the economic undervaluation of women's contributions. This review also explores practical approaches, such as gender-sensitive educational reforms, open workplace practices, and cultural changes brought about by media and legislative actions. Reducing these obstacles not only enables women to realize their full potential but also pushes social and economic advancement by encouraging variety and creativity. This review highlights the necessity of consistent efforts to challenge stereotypes and provide environments that support the achievements of women.

Keywords: Female stereotypes, Women, Career development, Job preference

1. Introduction

Long-standing gender inequalities and prejudices have influenced professional prospects, limiting women's options and goals. Biases in leadership, work, and education are sustained by these preconceptions, which are engrained in cultural, historical, and social norms. For instance, women are underrepresented in STEM fields and leadership positions. By restricting diversity and creativity in a variety of professional sectors, these prejudices impede not only personal improvement but also societal advancement [1,2].

The objective of this review is to analyze how gender stereotypes affect women's professional development, opportunities, and career goals. Stereotypes about women, which are frequently based on social and cultural norms, reinforce prejudices that prevent women from choosing areas that males dominate, prevent them from assuming leadership positions, and aggravate career disparities [3,4]. These preconceptions start in infancy, influencing how females view their own abilities, and they persist throughout adulthood, when they show up as implicit and explicit prejudices in recruitment,

education, and employment settings [5,6]. In order to fill in knowledge gaps, such as how gender, race, and class intersect to reinforce these biases, this study attempts to integrate previous research on how these stereotypes act in various situations and life stages [3,4]. Additionally, it also assesses programs that promote workplace fairness and challenge misconceptions about women. Though their efficacy varies greatly depending on the situation, strategies including educational reforms, inclusive hiring policies, and mentoring programs have shown promise in mitigating the influence of these prejudices [1,4]. For educators, policymakers, and organizations working to create environments that empower women and break down stereotypes, it is essential to comprehend these subtle differences in order to develop targeted policies that address the particular difficulties faced by women [6,7].

In order to find and combine insights from 9 papers, this review uses a systematic approach. To give a thorough grasp of the topic, a mix of qualitative and quantitative research was examined. Methods include case studies and synthesis of content.

This review addresses the gaps identified in existing research by examining two key questions. First, how are gendered career preferences shaped by childhood experiences and cultural norms? Second, what strategies have successfully mitigated the negative effects of stereotypes and improved equity?

Promoting workplace equity and professional diversity requires a focus on gender stereotypes and how they affect women's careers. According to [1] and [3], these misconceptions contribute to salary disparities, lower productivity, and systemic inequalities by frequently preventing women from pursuing leadership positions in male-dominated professions like STEM. In addition to improving workplaces via innovation and inclusiveness, removing these obstacles enables women to choose jobs that are aligned with their skills and enhances social outcomes. This will allow women to flourish and contribute to gender equity and economic prosperity [4,5].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concepts and Manifestations of Female Stereotypes

Female Stereotypes are socially formed ideas that define what constitutes appropriate behavior, roles, and abilities for women. These prejudices are widespread in many countries, impacting women's job choices and goals as well as expectations from infancy to maturity. For example, women are frequently seen as more emotional and compassionate which makes them associated with caregiver tasks while also keeping them out of technical and leadership posts [3]. These preconceptions reinforce prejudices that deter women from choosing particular job pathways and can take numerous forms, such as media representation, educational messages, and workplace interactions [1]. These behaviors not only constrain women's career goals, but they also erect structural obstacles that hinder their advancement in the workforce and representation in prestigious fields.

2.2. Specific Impacts of Female Stereotypes

Stereotypes about women have a significant effect on their careers, affecting them at every level of their professional development. The wage gap, in which women are frequently paid less than men for doing the same work, is one important area of influence. Stereotypes that diminish women's abilities and contributions, especially in fields where males predominate, are partially to blame for this discrepancy [3]. For instance, women have obstacles in STEM careers like less mentorship possibilities and fewer prospects for promotion because of beliefs about their lack of dedication or ineptitude [1,6].

The "glass ceiling," a metaphor for the imperceptible obstacles that limit women from rising to positions of high leadership, is another significant effect. Even when women perform on par with or better than males, preconceived notions about their leadership potential result in lower possibilities

for advancement [5]. These obstacles are made worse for working moms, who frequently encounter prejudices because of the apparent division of their time between work and home obligations [8].

Stereotypes also affect how women see themselves, influencing their confidence, sense of self-efficacy, and desired careers. Internalized prejudices might discourage women from pursuing demanding tasks or promotions by making them doubt their talents in competitive industries [7]. In STEM fields, where women frequently believe they must do better than male colleagues in order to overcome prejudiced expectations, this "stereotype threat" is especially noticeable [9]. As a result, many women leave these industries too soon, which causes the gender gap and reduces diversity in vital areas of development and innovation.

3. Deep Causes of Female Stereotypes

3.1. Childhood Influences

Gender norms, which specify what is suitable for males and girls, conditioned children from a young age. Parents and educators commonly push males to succeed in science and math while directing girls toward the humanities or caring [1,6]. Girls are less likely to be rewarded for STEM-related abilities in school contexts, for example, which fosters the idea that STEM is primarily a male domain [5]. Girls' long-term professional goals and sense of self-efficacy are greatly influenced by these early biases.

3.2. Cultural Norms and Traditions

One of the main factors sustaining stereotypes is cultural expectations about gender roles. Women are expected to put domestic responsibilities ahead of job goals in many countries, which inhibits their ability to advance in their careers [7]. Women are further marginalized in professional settings by these cultural standards, which are ingrained in conventional narratives that associate masculinity with leadership and femininity with nurturing [3]. By normalizing male dominance in decision-making positions, religious rituals and conventional family structures frequently serve to perpetuate these stereotypes [8]. Furthermore, these norms are maintained by cultural resistance to change, which makes it challenging for women to challenge what society expects without being criticized or alienated [9].

3.3. Workplace Structures

Policies and practices that support cultures dominated by males sometimes reflect and promote gendered prejudices in the workplace. Women who are viewed as less aggressive or authoritative are excluded from leadership roles since traits like assertiveness and competitiveness are frequently linked to these positions [8]. Women who demonstrate leadership qualities are often criticized in performance appraisals for being "bossy" or "unlikable," but males who do the same are commended [3]. Moreover, women are frequently left out of informal workplace alliances and networking opportunities, which reduces their visibility and potential for job success [6]. Women are underrepresented and undersupported in leadership pipelines as a result of this cycle.

3.4. Economic Factors

Economic undervalues female-dominated professions such as teaching and nursing, reinforcing the stereotype that women's contributions are worth less. Women are deterred from entering high-paying or leadership-oriented occupations since these sectors usually provide lower earnings and less prospects for promotion [5,7]. In addition, women are paid much less than males for identical jobs in the same professions, demonstrating that gendered pay disparities still exist [3]. The gender imbalance

gets worse by this financial inequality, which not only restricts women's freedom but also hinders young women from pursuing careers that are seen as low-paying [3]. Economic disparities are further upheld by government policies that fail to assist women in achieving a balance between work and family life, such as insufficient parental leave [7].

3.5. Intersectionality

Prejudices about women intensify when characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and class intersect. For instance, women of color have unique barriers to job advancement due to extra prejudices that mix gender and racial stereotypes [8,9]. For example, the stereotype of the "angry Black woman" frequently affects Black women, making it difficult for them to speak out for themselves in the workplace without fear of retaliation [1]. Similar to this, older women often face ageism, which is the belief that they are less competent or flexible, which limits their chances of developing in their careers [6]. These compounding prejudices further entrench systemic injustices, frequently placing underserved women in leadership positions [5].

4. Discussion

4.1. Educational Reforms

A crucial first step in addressing preconceptions is education. Since early experiences have a significant impact on future career goals, it is critical to start using gender-sensitive teaching methods early on [6]. For example, prejudices that link technical disciplines to males can be lessened by encouraging girls and boys equally in STEM-related activities. There is also potential for lowering gendered expectations in schools through teacher training programs that aim to eradicate latent biases [1]. According to [3], young girls may be encouraged to see themselves in traditionally male-dominated fields if they are exposed to female role models in STEM and leadership roles during their formative years.

Higher education may further advance equality by implementing inclusive lessons that showcase women's accomplishments across a range of disciplines. Research has indicated that university programs like scholarships and mentorship for women in STEM greatly increase representation and retention in these fields [5,8]. By normalizing female achievement in male-dominated fields, these policies not only support women academically but also erase social preconceptions.

4.2. Workplace Interventions

Establishing work settings where women may succeed professionally involves altering workplace regulations and practices. In order to address unconscious prejudices that frequently penalize women, it is essential that recruiting and promotion procedures be transparent [9]. Blind recruiting, for instance, have been demonstrated to improve the chances of employing women for leadership positions by concentrating only on credentials and experience [7]. According to [6], organized performance evaluations that utilize standardized criteria might also reduce subjective evaluations impacted by gender stereotypes.

Programs for sponsorship and mentoring are two more effective methods for resolving gender inequality in the work environment. Establishing official mentorship programs that connect women with senior leaders, particularly in fields where males predominate, can close this gap [3]. This gap can be closed by establishing official mentorship programs that link women with senior leaders, especially in fields where males predominate [3]. Additionally, companies that provide maternity leave and flexible work schedules help women balance work and family duties without compromising their career growth [5].

4.3. Cultural and Societal Shifts

In order to challenge deeply ingrained cultural norms, public discourse, policies, and the media must work together in concert. The way that women are portrayed in the media greatly influences how society views their roles and skills. Stereotypes that link STEM and leadership to males can be broken by increasing the visibility of women in these fields through media campaigns [1,9]. Initiatives like the "She Can STEM" campaign, as an example, have effectively highlighted the contributions made by women to science and technology, encouraging future generations to choose similar jobs [6].

Interventions in policy are equally crucial for promoting social transformation. Governments can establish measures to rectify societal injustices, such as requiring equal compensation for equal labor and setting quotas for the number of women in leadership positions [5,7]. In addition to providing women with immediate possibilities, these rules encourage companies to give diversity top priority in their recruiting and promotion procedures by illustrating a larger commitment to gender impartiality [3].

5. Conclusion

Female stereotypes still influence how society views them, which restricts their access to professional development, goals, and job opportunities. Cultural norms, educational practices, and working conditions ingrain these prejudices, reinforcing structural barriers that limit gender equity. This review emphasizes the urgent need for diverse initiatives, such as gender-sensitive education, fair employment standards, and more general cultural changes that go against conventional norms. Resolving these difficulties promotes variety, creativity, and economic progress, which helps women and enhances society as a whole. This review emphasizes how deeply ingrained prejudices about women influence on women's goals, opportunities, and professional advancement. These stereotypes reinforce systematic barriers that impede gender equity since they are embedded in cultural norms, educational institutions, and workplace structures. This study has significant limitations, even if current interventions—like gender-sensitive education, inclusive workplace regulations, and cultural changes—show promise. First, the results may not be as applicable as they may be since they are based on synthesized research, which does not provide meaningful comparisons across many cultural and professional contexts. Secondly, there are still gaps in our knowledge of the long-term effects of many intervention measures on reducing biases and advancing fairness since their effectiveness is still poorly understood.

By doing cross-cultural and industry-specific studies, future research should fill up these gaps and uncover the particular difficulties that women encounter in various settings. Furthermore, it is essential to assess the long-term effectiveness of initiatives including media campaigns, flexible work schedules, and mentorship programs. It will be crucial to examine how legislation, education, and technology may all work together to promote systemic change. The best methods for dispelling preconceptions may be revealed by longitudinal research on the effects of early exposure to female role models in male-dominated sectors.

Additionally, studies should focus more on intersectionality, examining the ways that gender interacts with race, class, and age to worsen inequality. By addressing these layers of complexity, the obstacles to women's career development will be better understood. Finally, this ongoing effort will provide a basis for creating innovative, empirically supported policies and procedures that support workplace diversity, empower women, and advance society as a whole. By doing this, we can build a more equitable society where people of all genders may prosper and promote social and economic change for the benefit of everyone.

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