

# ***Analysis of Fashion's Positive Role in Breaking Male Stereotypes***

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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore the positive role of fashion in the context of male gender stereotypes. Societal and cultural expectations related to an individual's biological makeup play a positive role, and the role also carries many gender stereotypes. However, individuals can use clothing styles to express their own desires, personality and self-awareness of gender, and some of them violate the aesthetic obligations issued by society. But in the fashion industry that has prevailed in recent years, stereotypes can be digested by fashion, because clothing is a direct way for a person to express what he wants to express. Fashion is an indispensable part of this framework, which reveals not only the external but also the internal renewal and changes of human beings. Fashion now also offers a form of self-expression that has nothing to do with people's biological sex. Many fashion brands conduct in-depth research on the concept of "gender-free" when preparing for fashion shows. Therefore, this study analyzes the role of fashion in breaking male stereotypes through the development trend of fashion and specific unisex styles. It turns out that embodying variability between men and women in fashion can help people develop a sense of commonality and give them the confidence to be themselves.

**Keywords:** fashion, male stereotypes, non-gender

## **1. Introduction**

Gender stereotypes are beliefs and values that are prevalent in individuals in order to be accurately described in a group, culture or religion, while gender stereotypes are stereotypes of the characteristics and abilities of men and women and how people should get along with each other. For example, men and women should be found between the office and the kitchen. In fact, such stereotypes can also cause discrimination, but what men and women wear are culturally determined by society. Aesthetics and expectations in society are closely tied to being male or female, but also to clothing, because clothing represents status. The very mention of clothing gives rise to the idea of fashion. The essence of fashion is change and innovation, and the Deschamps Twelve Vector fashion device is gender, social and normative. Even if the parameters are different, fashion is an important point. That is, if society changes and norms and non-norms change, fashion will change.

At present, there are many researches on fashion overturning gender stereotypes in the academic circle, but most of them focus on the changes of women's clothing. However, this paper will analyze the future trend of fashion from the perspective of male stereotypes in work, family and fashion, and

discuss the positive effect of fashion on breaking gender stereotypes with non-gender style as a special case.

## **2. Gender Stereotypes in Male Images**

Gender stereotype is the simple division of people into groups of men and women, high generalization of men and women within the group. There are indeed some differences between men and women. On the one hand, there are some physiological differences between men and women, but the gender culture formed by social culture is the main reason for such differences. Therefore, gender stereotype is an irrational cognitive way, which needs people to evade. Contrary to common sense, both men and women are victims of gender stereotypes. For example, male stereotypes suggest that men should be independent, self-reliant, responsible for women's consumption, and so on, all of which lead to the negative effects of men in society, thereby affecting their mental health.

In recent centuries, the definition of women and men has been very stable in society. In the field of family and career stereotypes, the qualities associated with women are "calm", "maternal", "empathic" and men are "strong", "professional", "delicate". Connecting different gender groups, occupations, families and areas of expertise to form a typical group representative that people know well and can share with them is the construction process of gender stereotypes [1]. Patternization is a generalization of a group of people. It treats a group as a whole, ignoring their individual differences. Stereotype is a cognitive way, which can effectively improve people's understanding of a certain kind of people or objects, and reduce the cognitive burden. However, excessive promotion of certain groups can lead to further negative consequences such as prejudice and discrimination.

### **2.1. Occupational Stereotypes of Males**

Occupational gender stereotype refers to the idea that men or women are better suited to certain jobs by gender. Occupational gender stereotype has two characteristics: descriptive occupational gender stereotype means that men or women have better occupational adaptability, while prescriptive occupational gender stereotype means that men or women cannot violate gender norms, cannot adapt to specific occupations [2].

However, women are not the only ones discriminated against because of occupational gender stereotypes. Men are also discriminated against in the workplace because of gender stereotypes. On the one hand, under the influence of traditional ideas, men who ask for leave because of illness or caring for their families are criticized more and punished more severely. On the other hand, those positions that tend to favor women's professional image also have high negative comments on men [3].

For both men and women, professional gender stereotypes lead to prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Males have a more obvious advantage in the choice of job content. The researchers surveyed occupational gender stereotypes, and people can intuitively see that men have more career tendencies than women. That said, some occupations are only for men, and there are more restrictions for women. In addition, in the position held by men, if the position held by women, it may have a "glass elevator" effect, that is, the position held by men in the position held by women, the rate of promotion than women [4].

### **2.2. Family Stereotypes of Males**

People's personality traits are critical to the success of a social role. When a social group plays a certain social role for a long time, its implicit personality characteristics must be closely related to the social group. According to the theory of social roles [5], roles and behaviors in groups play a significant role in the formation of stereotypes in groups. With the passage of time, the role of parents

in society has changed significantly, which makes people's cognitive characteristics of parents changed. Men showed no similar changes in cognitive characteristics, and male stereotypes were more negative than female stereotypes. Studies have shown that strengthening patriarchal relationships can change stereotypes. However, previous studies have only emphasized that the social role of the father is male, lacking a deeper and more essential portrayal. Therefore, a project based on the existing basis, using the method of questionnaire, investigated the influence of different types of father role priming on male stereotype.

According to Song Cuiping's research *The Influence of the Initiation Type of Father's Role on Male Stereotypes*, it shows that people prefer women to men. On the attitude and belief scale, the subjects rated women more comprehensively and positively than men. Although positive evaluations of women did not extend to their emotional responses, they did not show negative emotions in their emotional responses. Studies have shown that people respond faster to stereotypes about male roles than women, and that men are more biased than women. In addition, men also defend themselves against threats that are masculine (they believe they are "feminine"). Masculinity is an acquired temperament, which makes men self-defensive when threatened [6]. Therefore, it is difficult for men to change their characteristics as easily. Previous studies have shown that, after the formation of a social group, the resources possessed by one group and the behaviors, beliefs and values of its members threaten the survival, development and goals of another group. When the insiders feel threatened, it will have a negative impact on the outside group. Group threat directly leads to negative attitudes such as prejudices and stereotypes against strong groups (outsiders), and then leads to negative reactions such as discrimination, retaliation and retreat. As a result, male stereotypes are more rigid and difficult to change, and although they are related to positive factors such as social status and power, there are more negative factors. To study the effects of parental roles and gender on parenting and professional behaviour through "start"/"finish" tasks. Events confirmed the stubbornness of conventional wisdom. It's easier to think of lunch boxes and trolleys when people think of the mother, but when they think of father, the first thing is laptop and briefcase. Also, the concept of parenthood is more activated when you think about women than men. Among women, the word "mother" was more likely to be associated with, while the word "mother" was more likely to be associated with [7].

### 2.3. Changing Concepts in the Male Fashion Industry

In addition to male stereotypes at work and at home, there are also categories of masculine images in fashion. There is a classification of the male images in advertisements with eight types: struggling type, successful type, professional type, handsome type, handsome type, funny type, fashionable type, family type. In the Study of Men's Images on the Cover of New Weekly, Jin Zhengchao uses the method of content analysis to point out that under the background of globalization and market economy, the men's images on the cover of New Weekly have been influenced by more and more foreign cultures and concepts. Gradually, their images have changed. From the "masculine type" to the pluralism of later times, more and more good-looking men and women, and more and more young good-looking men and women, he believes that there are special political, economic, cultural and other reasons behind this change [8]. At the end of the article, he points out that people's anxiety and call for the gradual disappearance of the traditional "masculine" manhood.

Paul Forssell, a famous American literary critic, wrote in his book *Style*: "What is your body like? Weight is your status in society [9]." A hundred years ago, fat heads and big ears were a sign of success. But those days are over. Now, obesity has become a feature of the middle and lower classes. In this face of the times, a person's body, in fact, is a person's business card. It can reflect a person's character, a person's standard of living. A good figure, in fact, is a very luxurious thing, most of them are the monopoly of the rich [9]. For a long time, under the influence of feudal traditions and

stereotypes, in people's subconscious, the male image is usually tall, rough, not pay attention to details. But in recent years, this situation has greatly changed. People's impression of men has changed from the past "rough man" to the present man, more and more men have paid attention to their appearance [10].

The amount of revealing a person wears often reflects how civilized a society is. Dress appropriately on formal occasions. Don't dress appropriately and expose yourself. Wearing too little, too short and too tight is a basic requirement of social etiquette. Wearing revealing clothes is not only frivolous, but also disrespectful. Being well dressed is the most basic social norm in the world. This brings up another question, whether everyone is obliged to be responsible for the aesthetic needs of others, and when this aesthetic has exceeded the acceptable range of ordinary people, whether it should have aesthetic requirements raised to moral requirements. The research of Alfred Archer and Lauren Weir makes three points here: firstly, the existence of aesthetic obligations in ordinary life is reasonable and meaningful. Secondly, aesthetic duty cannot be singled out by aesthetic morality. Thirdly, there are examples of aesthetic transcendence, which is what this paragraph wants to discuss and support. Aesthetic transcendence is morally good behavior. Aesthetically it is not prohibited and is more than aesthetic minimum [11]. This also provides a moral dimension to the shift in stereotypical images of male fashion.

### **3. Discussion and Analysis of Breaking the Male Gender Stereotype**

#### **3.1. Design Orientation of Masculinity in the Fashion Industry**

The difference between the mixed masculine practice configurations is the degree of social identity of the male individual and occupation and the impact of such identity on his living environment. Although women are different in the constellation of gender privilege, but they are through the dress to strengthen male hegemony, access to social advantages, thus maintaining gender order. Failure to do so could put their personal and professional lives at risk [10]. It is a simple and direct choice to break through the social advantages obtained by male hegemony through clothing from the perspective of breaking through clothing design and changing aesthetic thinking.

Such as clothing eliminates masculinity through uniformity and unassuming masculinity, such as a dark square suit. Clothing, by contrast, is an expressive expression of marginalized gender, such as brightly coloured, close-fitting clothing. As early as the late 17th century, for example, high heels were not considered feminine or feminine. European men wore them as symbols of status, power and masculinity. As early as the 4th millennium BC, the ancient Egyptians began to wear high heels, a pair of shoes reserved for nobles and rulers. In ancient China, high heels were often used to bind ankles and restrict women's movements. In medieval Europe, high heels were considered a symbol of aristocratic status, a symbol of noble status. In contemporary Europe, high heels have become synonymous with fashion and fashion, and are indispensable fashion items for many women.

#### **3.2. Non-gender Clothing**

Since the Second World War, feminism has negated the dichotomy of gender, emphasized the neglect of gender difference, eliminated discrimination, advocated pluralism and difference, and jumped out of the traditional feminist framework of equal rights for men and women, committed to transforming male discourse into female discourse, and constructed it. The thought of undifferentiated gender has entered everyone's daily life and become a social phenomenon, which has triggered people's thinking about gender itself. Again and again in the "game", men and women between the "gender" opposition is gradually resolved, and in the ideological level, between men and women, "gender" gradually blurred. Human sex can be divided into three levels, namely the physical level, psychological level and social level. Human physiological sex is determined by chromosomes, genes and other

physiological factors, and psychological sex is formed by the embryonic period of their own gender identity. In his psychoanalytic theory, Jung mentioned the concepts of Henima and Henims, among which “Archetype of Henima” refers to the female side of man and “Archetype of Heniman” refers to the male side of woman. Psychologically, the theory confirms that human emotion and state of mind are compatible, which provides rationality for the existence of non-gender [12].

Different from neutral style clothing, non-gender clothing has no obvious gender characteristics, and does not show the same style of men and women in design. Kawabayoshi, Fukuyasu and Yoshiji Yamagi exhibit their clothes at the Paris Fashion Week, which had a single color and a broad shape. Their clothes were all designed to break the restraints of gender imposed by the human body, the skin and the odd lines. In every show, women tend to be handsome and neat, while the innovation and exploration of men’s clothing embodies the sense of gender mobility under non-gender style.

Moreover, Tom Brown can diagnose male models’ physical condition by putting them on a dress, a wedding dress and a dress. This is not only a matter of gender, but also a freedom. In recent years, asexual fashion has faded from the context of “high customization” and “minority” into the mainstream discourse of the fashion world. Fast-fashion brand ZARA launches a “gender-neutral” line of clothing, including a range of simple and practical base clothing, such as T-shirts, sweaters, sportswear, and sportswear. Converse has unveiled its first gender-neutral costume, called “SHAPES,” which is based on contour rather than gender. Other developing and developed countries are also striving to grasp this juncture. Young people’s aesthetic awareness, cultural self-confidence and national brand awareness have improved. Besides, Louis Gabriel Nucci, founded in Paris in 2017, brings consumers a new sense of elegance. He innovated on men’s clothing, and did not print women’s silhouettes on men’s clothing as before, creating a vague effect. The models he uses are different from models from other brands, all of which are shapely or slim, some of which have slightly more fat and thicker hair. Traditionally, the man’s triangle should be flat, but the designer did not shy away from depicting the man’s lower body.

#### 4. Conclusion

In summary, this study examines the fashion trends of the future from the viewpoint of male stereotypes in work, family, and fashion. It also discusses the positive impact of fashion on shattering gender preconceptions using non-gender style as an example. The significance of gender-free dressing to break the stereotype of men’s clothing are concluded into two aspects: firstly, it breaks the stereotype and refuse labeling. Stereotype refers to a generalized and fixed view that people form about a certain group, and then generalize this view to think that this group is the same. If people always use stereotypes to judge a person, it will be difficult for people to really know this person and discover the value and uniqueness he contains. Secondly, genderless clothing is the awakening of gender awareness. The brand Dolce&Gabbana once put forward the concept of “gender-free dressing”, advocating the same style of dressing for men and women, which is also telling those men who have not yet “awakened”: People are all the same, and they also have the right to choose the clothes they want to wear. However, this paper only analyzes from the relevant literature and phenomenon review, and future relevant studies may involve empirical studies to specifically analyze the change of gender stereotypes and the influence of fashion.

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