

Gender Stereotyping in Media

- Bias and Discrimination

Wanning Li^{1,a,*}

¹*College of Art, Media, and Design, Communication Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, MA, United States*

a. li.wann@northeastern.edu

**corresponding author*

Abstract: Gender stereotyping in media is a pervasive issue that refers to depictions of individuals or groups conforming to cultural expectations about gender roles and traits. Various forms of media, such as television, film, advertising, and social media, often present gender in stereotypical and limiting ways, perpetuating harmful societal norms. This perpetuation creates a cycle of gender bias and discrimination, affecting self-esteem, career opportunities, and overall well-being. These stereotypes can be damaging because they reinforce preconceived notions about masculinity and femininity. Efforts in the media industry aim to confront and modify these stereotypes through diverse and inclusive storytelling, promoting positive role models, and enhancing media literacy. Recognizing and challenging gender stereotypes in the media is crucial for promoting gender equality and dismantling harmful cultural practices. The article highlights the consequences of gender stereotyping in media, such as reinforcing traditional gender roles, objectification, and underrepresentation. It underscores the importance of media content creators, regulators, and consumers being aware of these biases and actively working toward more inclusive and equitable portrayals of gender.

Keywords: media, social media, gender stereotypes

1. Introduction

Awareness of gender stereotypes differs from person to person. Take movies and advertisements as examples, participants in these fields tend to be defined by gender. Men are frequently shown as domineering and aggressive, whilst women are expected to be attractive and emotionally quiet. Gantz displayed the effect of gender played in animated cartoons has been obvious [1]. The study states that male and female characters are linked to certain different professions. Male characters often show up as law enforcement or sports professionals, whereas female characters are more likely to be secretaries and housewives. In summary, stereotypes of gender have put characters into cages where their talents are limited.

As the primary source of information in this era, the media industry should be aware of the importance of being inclusive and embracing diversity. Every gender should be appropriately represented using media as a tool to shake off bias against genders so that equality can be established.

In their essay, Burgess stated that stereotyping is an assumption about groups that are assigned to individual members of that group just because they belong to that group, whereas gender stereotypes are generalizations about men's and women's traits [2]. This is most evident in Hollywood, where innumerable commercial blockbusters have been produced. Based on a 2019 Statista study, 37.3% of women aged 13 to 20 wore "sexy costumes" in the top-grossing films of 2018, compared to 25.2% of women aged 40 to 64. Older women were also less likely to be described as appealing. This gender diversity issue has been exacerbated in behind-the-scenes jobs, with just 19% of broadcast network shows employing female directors and three-quarters of writers being male.

2. Introduction to the Concept-Stereotypical Bias and Sex Discrimination

Before further discussion and research, people should first understand and know what stereotypes bias, and Sex discrimination are. According to Santoniccolo, stereotyped beliefs and the acceptance of gender-based prejudices relate to the tolerance of maltreatment and humiliation of the body, and exposure to and identification with characteristics associated with these representations can be harmful to physical and mental health [3]. Gender stereotypes are the attitudes and behaviors that are perceived to be ordinary and proper for men and women in any society. Among many sources, the media has a huge influence on gender depictions. The scientific community is interested in the media's pervasiveness, people's extended contact with it, and its influence in molding ideas, attitudes, and expectations. Gender depictions frequently span a wide range of characteristics of a person's personality, including appearance, personality traits, behavior, social positions, and occupations. Gender stereotypes are classified as descriptive, prescriptive, or prohibitive. Their substance varies based on the individual's reference culture, but frequent themes in Western culture include communication, agency, and competency stereotypes. Male stereotypes relate to agency or competence, whereas female stereotypes are related to communicative characteristics. If both men and women appear to breach these preconceptions, society may hold them both accountable. It's called Stereotypical bias. Sex discrimination is the idea that these concepts are viewed through a distorted and biased lens thinking about a trait or gender in a singular way leads to sexism. It leads to differentiation or unequal treatment of individuals or groups of individuals based on their sex and gender.

And the majority of those subjected to this attack are still women. The impact of the media on gender bias is not yet clear whether it is positive or negative. However, through Ahmad Muttaqin, it can be seen that the development and progress of the media must have played a role in the advancement of the status of women and that the internet and digital platforms have given women more opportunities to play their roles and express themselves and thus gained a greater sense of social acceptance [4].

3. The Impact of Media on Gender Bias and Some Idiosyncratic Manifestations of Gender Stereotypes Specific to Media Scenarios.

It is found that females' competence and leadership are being questioned and discriminated against only because of their gender. According to one study undertaken by the University of Southern California (USC) Marshall School of Business, gender discrimination lowers women's self-efficacy. The study's principal author, Leigh Tost, defines self-efficacy as a person's belief in their capacity to complete work responsibilities [5]. 'We discovered that the tales women talked about sexism were, at least in part, based on patriarchal ideas about women's lack of ability and inappropriateness for the workplace and leadership,' Tost explained. From one female survey participant, a boss stated that certain professional responsibilities should only be performed by men. Another female participant stated that male coworkers had told her that women should be cooking, cleaning, or raising children

at home rather than working. These are not isolated cases; many employees in the workplace are discriminated against and prejudiced because of their gender. The question is how people can further address these incidents and strengthen the gender equality perspective in society.

According to Meadline E, While gender stereotypes shouldn't be dismissed and their consequences shouldn't be understated, there are some minor signs that change is on the horizon [6]. Undoubtedly, people and organizations are more aware of some of the concerns we've covered, and work is still being done to combat the harmful impacts of gender stereotypes. When women are portrayed in the media, they unknowingly fall into the trap of "appearance anxiety" and are presented with restrictive standards of beauty, they are expected to be perfect by the outside world and by themselves. This definition of a gender's body image has far-reaching negative consequences. Instagram, one of the world's largest and most influential social media outlets, has countless female users, and it usually exhibits a confined view of beauty. Kim Kardashian, with more than 350 million followers on Instagram, is one of the most influential celebrities on this planet. Countless girls dream of having the same stunning appearance and curves as her. However, the truth is that getting that look requires countless amounts of money and time, even at the expense of health. The blind pursuit of other people's ideas of beauty reinforces the harmful stereotype that women must conform to beauty standards to be welcomed and valued by society. An article found on Girls Empowerment Network titled "Today's Media: The Unattainable Beauty Standard" discusses the impact of social media on women's self-image. It states, 'The media, according to 88 percent of the more than 1,000 young girls polled, puts a lot of pressure on them to be skinny.' This trend leads many young girls who are not psychologically mature enough to obsessively follow trends just to be popular will lead to dissatisfaction with themselves, disappointment in life, and even depression if their ideal expectations are not met. The definition of beauty has evolved into a tool for power, allowing one group to dominate another while maintaining the exclusivity of beauty standards.

One default rule that exists in social media is that what people share must be attractive to others. However, not every user can afford to follow this rule, and an attractive image of people is sometimes not their true self. Sharing posts and trying to be popular doesn't mean falsely chasing the beauty of others; finding what is suitable for people and respecting each person's definition of beauty is what ought to be the default setting. The standard of beauty should be subjective; therefore, it cannot be imposed on others by anyone.

It is worth encouraging that the media made some positive steps toward improving gender representation issues. In recent years, many female-driven movies and TV shows have become trendy, and the portrayal of female characters in them is seldom cemented by traditional thinking. 'The Devil Wears Prada', directed by Lauren Weinberger, tells the story of a young lady making her way in the fashion industry as an assistant to Miranda Priestly. Miranda, the ruthless and sophisticated executive of the Runway fashion magazine, challenges the stereotypical image of the typical gentle female boss as a key role in the movie. The movie was a box office hit, and Miranda's character was loved by the audience. Her image not only demonstrates the infinite possibilities of women as business leaders but also inspires young women to pursue their careers and break the limitations placed on people by outdated gender stereotypes.

Overall, the representation of gender in media has a powerful impact on how society perceives everyone, and the media industry needs to continue challenging the bias and leading people to foster a healthier gender perspective with the right approach. Gender equality should be promoted, cannot be defined with "yes or no", or "right or wrong". And at the same time, the talent of each gender should not be buried or confined. Everyone needs to look at the media and views of gender in the media more rationally instead of making judgments based on their gender for a brighter future.

4. Media and Gender-Based Cyber Violence

Another part of the media's gender perception that is worth discussing is gender-based cyber violence. Cyber violence has gradually become popular with the development of social media, and its negative consequences are well known. An unintentional comment on others on the Internet will have a lot of influence. And gender-based online violence means that malicious comments and opinions from others in the media are caused by gender, and most of this situation also comes from social media. According to Hesti Armiwulan, online assault against women and girls has become a global issue that severely influences society and a country's economy [7]. Women worldwide are victims of many types of online abuse, particularly those who belong to racial or ethnic groups, who identify as gay or straight, who have low socioeconomic positions, or who have impairments. Women aged 18 to 24 are especially vulnerable to all forms of Cyber-VAGW. VAWG appears as threatening and sexually explicit text messages, violent threats, emails, photographs, and videos. Many of the sender platforms are online dating and social networking pages, as well as message boards and services for instant messaging. Men are more inclined than women to encounter such bad situations among people of the same age range, demonstrating the global impact of such issues. Much rhetoric revolves around 'sex' to humiliate women, and this result is mainly due to the innate structure of men and women. Although individuals live in an environment that respects qualities and basic moral standards, it is still inevitable that women will be in the position of victims in the relationship between the sexes subconsciously. According to Donald Flywell Malanga, one in every three women worldwide has experienced some form of gender-based violence at some point in their lives [8]. The growing reach of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as social networking sites, mobile phones, and online communities has opened new avenues for combating violence against women. Women's experiences with cyber-harm include reputational damage, anxiety, despair, loss of income, self-harm, and other severe effects.

Every country around the world has noticed these phenomena in recent years and hopes to reduce and suppress the occurrence of female cyber violence through laws or some technologies. It is undeniable that if these methods are perfect, they will benefit the whole world, but from my point of view, it is not the fundamental problem.

As I said earlier, gender bias and sexism in media are basically gender inequality, but inequality does not just happen in the real world, it happens in the world of online media and all environments that people encounter. It is difficult to change the reality that the innate structure keeps women in a passive posture. On the premise of more laws to protect women, people should consider the status of both sexes more equitably. Subconsciously, women should tell themselves not to put themselves in the position of victims. Even if such consequences are unavoidable, if women do not fear the injustice brought about by gender, it is a kind of progress not to feel ashamed of their bodies.

5. Discussion and Suggestions

Through the research in this paper, although the analysis is in the media environment, what is reflected is the phenomenon in life, which is only expressed in the form of media, as Francimaria mentioned [9]. 'Sexism is typically based on the assumption that one sex or gender is superior to another.' Just like gender stereotypes, gender bias, and gender discrimination not only occur in the media environment but also in life. For example, gender discrimination in the work environment and gender bias in the family are not uncommon. Regardless of the form of media, TV, movies, or online social media are all the most powerful means of conveying social and practical issues, and humans relying on the media also hope to improve all negative issues related to gender. Obviously, in fact, all gender-related issues involve women as the victims. Whether it is cyber violence or sexist bias in the media, the most important thing is that women dare to resist traditional prejudice and implement feedback,

rather than simply discovering questions and escapism. Just like more and more female characters in film and television dramas are set as strong dominant personalities, women on social media are not afraid of so-called pornographic comments and harassment, and boldly be themselves.

The media deserves extensive research and analysis because no matter what kind of media it is, it has become a crucial thing in everyone's life, and the power of the media will have a more serious impact on teenagers than adults. After all, their minds and understanding of the ability are not enough to distinguish absolute right from wrong. Tom F. M. ter Bogt, 'Media may not only influence actions, but it may also have a significant impact on teenagers' general perceptions about romance, sex, and relationships.', This article shows how much influence the content and values spread in the media have [10].

In short, gender stereotypes in the media are still a pervasive problem that profoundly impacts society. Analysis cannot immediately improve all problems and may continue to perpetuate questions about what it means to be male or female. traditional and often harmful beliefs. These stereotypes present themselves in a variety of ways, ranging from traditional gender roles and appearance ideals to professional expectations and sexualization, and their impact on people and the community is profound and diverse. The mass media has a significant influence on societal attitudes and customs. When it reinforces gender stereotypes, it can lead to a range of negative consequences, including limiting opportunities and aspirations, fostering unrealistic beauty standards, perpetuating discrimination, and impacting relationships.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is that more people will realize the existence of gender stereotypes, bias, and discrimination in the media, and it is crucial to work hard to solve gender stereotypes in the media. These efforts include promoting more diverse and inclusive depictions of gender, challenging traditional gender roles in storytelling, and encouraging media literacy among viewers. Positive change can lead to a media landscape that reflects the complexity and diversity of human experience and helps break harmful stereotypes, ultimately contributing to greater gender equality and social progress.

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