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THE PERCEPTION OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN TODAY'S LIFE

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Abstract

*Between men and women, there are so many differences. To some dimension, the differences captured in the stereotypical images between those two genders. Stereotypes about the way men and women behave and think are shared extensively. Despite, stereotypical forecasts not only reflect actual differences, but also impact how they define themselves and how they are treated by others. The purpose of this study is to examine the general perceptions of Malaysians regarding **Gender Stereotypes** between men and women towards their roles in everyday life. To examine whether the roles of men and women disputed or not from the selected sample, an online form from Google Online Survey has been distributed to all social medias' platform from various people from various age to gain the perception of Malaysians regarding the gender stereotypes and it involves 633 respondents. In order to collect the data, researchers have referred to Krejcie and Morgan table (1970), 30 million population in Malaysia or 12 million respondents can be equivalent to 384 sample of respondents with 95% confidence to represent the data. The findings were discussed in relation to socialization, values and norms of the Malay society. In the end, researchers knew that the people's perception of gender stereotypes in today's life is no longer relevant and must be re-looked in order to live in a harmony and peaceful life. Overall the results showed that respondents believed that men and women should be treated equally ($M=3.56$) Additionally, respondents also strongly disagree with gender stereotypes among men nowadays ($M=1.63$) and gender stereotypes among women in today's life ($M=1.49$)*

Keynote : gender, roles, Gender Stereotypes, men, women

INTRODUCTION

The word gender alludes to the socially and culturally built among females and males found in the importance, convictions and practices related with "femininity" and "masculinity". Despite of many role men and women play in today's world, some people still judge others based on how they think males and females 'should' act. Stereotypes reflect general expectations about members of particular social groups. However, even if there is an overall difference between these groups, not all individual in these groups will necessarily differ from each other. For example, on average, men are taller than women, but we all know individual men and women for whom this is not true or for whom the difference is even reversed. Yet the stereotypical perception that a particular feature characterizes membership of a specific group typically leads people to overemphasize differences between groups and underestimate variations within groups (Ellemers 2017).

The phrase "Women are from Venus, men are from Mars" is often used to explain observed differences in the way women and men think, feel, and act. It conveys the likely of such differences by suggesting that men and women originate from planets that are millions of miles apart, implying that they are as inherently different from each other as they would be if they were separate creatures (Ellemers 2017). The tendency to perceive individuals as representatives of different social groups has been documented for a variety of groups in a range of contexts. Research has also revealed that the impact of this social categorization on the assignment of traits and features to members of particular groups can be changeable depending on the situation (Oakes et al 1997).

However, such stereotype fluidity and context dependence are much less likely to emerge in relation to gender categorizations and gender stereotypes. Gender is considered a primary feature in person's perception. Children and adults immediately and implicitly cluster unknown individuals by their gender, even when this categorization is not relevant to the situation and has no informational benefits (Bennett et al 2000, Ito & Urland 2003). Furthermore, even though we already know examples of gender bending, gender continues to be seen as a binary categorization, in which we tend to compare women to men and vice versa, anchoring any differences in terms of a contrast between them. Thus, gender categorizations are immediately detected and are easily polarized. This contributes to the formation and persistence of gender stereotypes and reinforces perceptions of differences between men and women.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Gender stereotypes are when a person is expected to act in a certain way based on society's expectations related to their traditional gender roles. People who are born males were expected to be strong and aggressive, not emotional and love sports. Meanwhile, as stated by Amaze (2018), people who are born females were expected to be kind and nurturing emotional and domestic. They were all supposed to be able to cook and clean. Gender stereotypes, also affect people's understanding of who is beautiful and who is not. Additionally, strict stereotypes about gender

please people's emotions that women are not expected to show their anger and also men are not supposed to emphatic nurturing or vulnerable. However, gender stereotypes have become issues in our society and is seen as continuing conflict in this era of globalization especially with the existence of social media. Nowadays the roles of both genders must be reconsidered. Especially at present, more women are working to cover the cost of living to be compared to women in the past who was only a housewife. According to Marina Mahathir (2018), society must relook the gender roles. In order to have a greater peace and harmony at home, men and women that is married need to recalibrate gender home. The only real solution is that, we must treat men and women as equals, who are able to pursue their own opportunities, thus greater potential. The issues cannot be done overnight, it needs to start from young age that girls and boys should be treated as equals and gender stereotypes discouraged. For instance, boys should be able to cook while girls are allowed to play football and both of them must do house chores.

Research Questions

- a) What is the level of Malaysians perception that men and women should be treated as equal in today's life?
- b) What is the level of acceptance of Malaysians that society must relook men stereotypes in today's life?
- c) What is the level of acceptance of Malaysians that society must relook women stereotypes in today's life?

Research Objectives

- a) To study the level of perception of Malaysians that men and women should be treated as equal.
- b) To study the level of acceptance of Malaysians that society must relook men stereotypes in today's life.
- c) To study the level of acceptance of Malaysians that society must relook women stereotypes in today's life.

Gender Roles

According to Zevallos (2014), the sociology of gender examines how society influences our understandings and perceptions of differences between masculinity and femininity. Gender roles in society implies how we're expected to act, talk, dress, groom, and behave dependent based upon our assigned sex. For instance, girls and women are commonly expected to dress in ordinarily feminine ways and be well mannered, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are commonly expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold. Every society, ethnic group, and culture has gender role desires, but they can be very different from group to group. They can also change in the similar society after some time. Moreover, pink used to be considered a masculine color in the U.S. while blue was considered feminine.

Gender Stereotypes

A stereotype is a broadly acknowledged judgment or bias about a person or group even though it's overly simplified and not always accurate. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and out of line treatment in view of an individual's gender. This is called sexism. There are four essential sorts of gender stereotypes:

- a) **Personality Traits.** According to Diener et al. (2019), personality traits reflect people's characteristic patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors. For instance, women are often expected to be accommodating and emotional, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive.
- b) **Domestic Behavior.** Some people expect that women will deal with the kids, cook, and clean the home, while men take care of finances, work on the car, and do the home repairs as stated by Hillin (2016).
- c) **Occupations.** Quinn et al. (2017) mentioned that men are more assertive, and women are more compassionate. Because of that characteristic make certain occupations more suitable for men or for women. For example, some people are quick to assume that teachers and nurses are women, and that pilots, doctors, and engineers are men.
- d) **Physical Appearance.** According to Bandura (1999) in Social Cognitive Theory, behavioral change is made possible by a personal sense of control. People are likewise expected to dress and get ready in habits that are suitable to their gender (men wearing jeans and short hairdos, ladies wearing dresses and make-up. For instance, women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular.

Occupational Roles

Men and women also tend to work in different occupations and take on different care-taking roles. Social survey and census data show that, across 30 industrialized countries, there is a clear segregation according to gender in occupational roles. Certain occupations such as policing are dominated by men, whereas other occupations such as nursing are dominated by women as mentioned by Jarman et al. (2012). Women across different countries and cultures spend more time on household activities than men do, regardless of their employment status.

Educational Context

In educational contexts, Leslie et al. (2015) stated that gender stereotyping causes female students to be less talented than male students in all areas of science. For instance, in biology, male students are seen to excel even when their female classmates have higher grades said Grunspan et al. (2016). Experimental studies further reveal that an identical CV (Curriculum Vitae) and application letter results in different perceived competence levels and job offers depending on whether the applicant is identified as John or Jennifer (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012). Additionally, as mentioned by Proudfoot et al. (2015) imaginary differences in perceived skill have also been documented in the

evaluation of creative products, such as the design of a house, depending on whether it carried the name of a male or female architect. Individuals who clearly disconfirm stereotypical expectations tend to be devalued. We conclude that they are not representative for their gender group rather than revising stereotypical expectations. For instance, it happens for women working in male dominated jobs, who are unfeminine and for professional women who are seen as members of a specific subtype of women that is high in competence but low in warmth just like men (Fiske et al., 2002)

Behavioral Context

According to Fisch (2014), men grow up with the conviction that crying is an indication of shortcoming. While grown-ups will regularly say alleviating things to a crying youngster to get them to quiet down, young men are bound to be told by guardians, instructors and their companions that they shouldn't cry and that they should suck it up. This leads young men to contain their feelings and shields them from overcoming them effectively and since it's consummately adequate for young ladies to cry, numerous men partner crying with womanliness and shortcoming. But in reality, the bottom line is crying is a normal human emotion that doesn't need to be associated with a weakness for any gender or gender non-conforming person "7 Positive Phrases We Should Be Teaching About Masculinity, "Regardless of this social generalization, science demonstrates that crying manages enthusiastic pressure and is broadly viewed as a sound outlet".

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researchers used two method to study the Malaysians perception that men and women should be treated as equal and to study the level of acceptance that society must relooked gender stereotypes in men and women in today's life. An online survey (Google Docs) has been used to collect data. The study involves 633 respondents. The questionnaire is divided into four parts which is part A, part B, part C and part D. Part A will be focusing on respondents' demographics. Part A consists of 15 questions. Meanwhile in part B, the questions focus on respondents' perception that men and women should be treated as equals. Followed by part C and D about respondents' perception about gender stereotypes for both genders must be relooked in today's life. There are five items in each part B, C and D. To present the data, researchers referred to Krejcie & Morgan table, 30 million population of Malaysians can be equal to 384 respondents with 95% confidence (Ridzuan, Ridzuan and Ridzuan, 2018). In this study, the questionnaire was conducted to find the objectives of the research as stated in the problem statements. The questions that were asked in the survey are simple and can easily be understandable by the respondents. The questions in the questionnaire are closed questions which are handed to the respondents to choose from a four scale to answer the questions regarding the topic in the google form (Abdul Rauf Ridzuan et al., 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a) Profile of the Gender Stereotypes Perception

Table 1 below shows the profile of respondents from Gender Stereotypes Perception in Malaysia. Based from the findings, most of the respondents who answered the questionnaires are female (65.1%), aged between 20-29 (73.5%), Malay Ethnic (87.5%), single (86.1%), Islam (88%), Central Region (27.7%), bachelor degree holder (44.2%) and most of them are students (70.6%). Most of them experienced gender stereotypes (52.3) they agreed that gender stereotypes are supported through society (68.7%) and family (53.4%). They disagreed that children are encouraged to follow gender stereotypes (69.5%) and also, they do not support gender stereotypes in today's life (77.1%).

Table 1: Distribution of Gender Stereotypes Perception by Profile (n=633)

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	221	34.9
Female	412	65.1
Age		
Under 20	100	15.8
20-29	465	73.5
30-39	34	5.4
40 years and above	34	5.4
Ethnic		
Malay	554	87.5
Chinese	40	6.3
Indian	23	3.6
Others	16	2.5
Status		
Single	545	86.1
Married	88	13.9
Religion		
Islam	557	88
Buddha	38	6
Christian	13	2.1

Hindu	21	3.3
Other	4	0.6
State		
Northern Region (Penang, Kedah, Perlis, Perak)	259	41
Central Region (Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan)	175	27.7
Southern Region (Malacca, Johor)	131	8.4
East Coast (Kelantan, Pahang, Terengganu)	53	
Sabah	10	1.6
Sarawak	5	0.6
Education		
SPM	129	20.4
Diploma	196	31
Bachelor Degree	280	44.2
Master	26	4.1
PhD	2	0.3
Occupation		
Student	447	70.6
Employed	145	22.9
Unemployed	25	3.9
Retired	26	2.5
Experience Gender Stereotypes?		
Yes	331	52.3
No	302	47.7
Gender Stereotypes Are Supported Through Society?		
Yes	435	68.7
No	198	31.3

Gender Stereotypes Are Supported Through Family?		
Yes	338	53.4
No	295	46.6
Children Are Encouraged/Supposed to Follow Gender Stereotypes?		
Yes	193	30.5
No	440	69.5
Gender Stereotypes Are Stronger to Male or Female?		
Male	119	18.8
Female	148	23.4
Both	366	57.8
Support Gender Stereotypes in Today's Life?		
Yes	145	22.9
No	488	77.1

b)The Level of Acceptance Men and Women Should Be Treated as Equals

The data from Table 2 showed that both genders can achieve high grades in academics (M=3.82). This shows that people nowadays agreed that men and women both can actually score or achieve high grades in academics. According to Miller (2017), stereotypes shouldn't determine how far they can go. The goal of education should be to maximize all students' potential and remove obstacles in their way. As for the next data, which shows the majority of the respondents agreed that both genders should do the house chores (M=3.68). The perception was supported by McKnight (2018), both males and females should share all house chores equally. Everyone should share equally and fully in the things that running the household requires. Overall, the data showed that people nowadays especially in Malaysia agreed that both men and women should be treated as equals in today's life with the overall respondents agreed (M=3.56).

Table 2: The Acceptance of Women and Men Should be Treated as Equals

Men and Women Should Be Treated as Equals	Mean
Both genders can achieve high grades in academics	3.82
Both genders should do the house chores	3.68
Both genders can have the same professions nowadays	3.57
Men and women should be treated as equal	3.41
Both genders are capable to be a leader	3.33
Overall	3.56

c)The Level of Acceptance Towards Men Stereotypes

The data from Table 3 showed that respondents disagreed with men's stereotype saying that men must be rich, fit and have a toned body shape (M=1.93). The perception was supported by Zuboff (2018), community must be together as a whole to eradicate this type of thinking. Nowadays, we must think outside the box when it comes to gender stereotypes will make our children healthier adults and might just save a life. Respondent also disagreed that men cannot be over-emotional or to be exact, real men don't cry (M=1.77). Baker (2018) said that we need to stop reinforcing the stereotypes that cause unnecessary suffering for men. He also mentioned that men can cry even though many men have friends that would support them, but this doesn't completely solve the problem. Stereotypes can do us harm. Overall, the data showed that people in today's life disagree with gender stereotypes among men in today's life with the overall respondents disagreed (M=1.63)

Table 3: The Acceptance Towards Men Stereotypes

Gender Stereotypes Among Men	Mean
Men must be rich, fit and have a toned body shape	1.93
Men cannot be over-emotional (real men don't cry)	1.77
Men cannot wear pink	1.57
Men cannot do the housework and take care of the children	1.46
Men cannot work as teachers and nurses	1.43
Overall	1.63

d)The Level of Acceptance Towards Women Stereotypes

Table 4 showed that majority of the respondents disagreed that women must look flawless and thin (M=1.67). There is no such thing as a perfect body. The concept of perfection is in itself a flawed concept. Real beauty comes from within. The most beautiful people in the world are those who have a good heart according to (Birla,2018). As for the next data, respondents disagreed that women are not allowed to play football (M=1.6). This perception was supported by Rayburn et.al

(2015) in his journal by saying that it is important not to let those stereotypes defeat them, but to use them as motivators to change society's perceptions. Female participation in sports like football should be a means for them to break off inaccurate stereotypes and prejudices, build their body, skills, confidence and self-esteem. Overall, the data showed that people nowadays disagreed with gender stereotypes among women with the overall respondents disagreed (M=1.49)

Table 4: The Acceptance Towards Women Stereotypes

Gender Stereotypes Among Women	Mean
Women must look flawless and thin	1.67
Women are not allowed to play football	1.6
Only women should do the house chores	1.4
Women cannot work as an engineer, architect	1.39
In today's life, women should not work and should stay at home	1.38
Overall	1.49

CONCLUSION

Overall result from the survey shows (M=3.56) which means it is more than average that people in Malaysia agreed that both men and women should be treated as equal in today's life. According to Gallup (1993), only four in ten Americans say that society generally treats men and women equally but that attitudes have changed considerably in this regard over the past 20 years. There is a widespread perception among the public that full equality between men and women remains a goal and now society generally treats men and women equally. Overall result from the survey shows (M=1.63) which means people in today's life disagree with gender stereotypes among men. Approaches from the social identity and self-categorization tradition Turner et al. (1987) view gender as a social identity. This convention contends that notwithstanding one's close to home character, diverse social gatherings are coordinated into the self-idea, framing social personalities. The strength of the identification with one's gender as well the salience of this identity in any given context determine the extent to which the self-concept is affected by gender stereotypes and in turn the extent to which gendered patterns of behavior are displayed. Overall result from the survey shows (M=1.49) which means people nowadays disagreed with gender stereotypes among women. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) hosts clarified that States Gatherings are required to modify or change "hurtful sex generalizations" and "kill improper sexual orientation stereotyping". In our daily life, try to compliment people differently. Individuals utilizing compliments that are not just about their appearance (especially for ladies) or their quality (for men) however perceive individuals for their attributes past any gender roles. In a nutshell, the researchers think that gender stereotypes are not relevant nowadays in order to live in a harmony and peaceful country.

Table 5: Overall Perception of Gender Stereotypes in today's life

Gender Stereotypes	Overall Mean
Men and Women Should Be Treated as Equals	3.56
Gender Stereotypes Among Men	1.63
Gender Stereotypes Among Women	1.49

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