

Gender Communication Stereotypes: A Depiction of the Mass Media

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Abstract: *The authors carried out an analysis of literature on gender stereotypes in communication processes among the males and females in context of existing societal views held by different proponents. The article specifically looks at how gender stereotypes are developed and manifested at the work place, social places, media, and literature and in the home environment. Stereotypes can influence people's self-concept and world view. Although stereotypes mainly project issues in a negative way, the paper gives an objective assessment of the gender stereotypes in an attempt to unpack their multifaceted nature. From a communication's perspective, stereotypes ought to be seen beyond the humour which manifests itself on the surface hence misleading or misrepresenting how people relate or view other persons. Gender stereotypes continue to shape the roles and positions that women and men take up in society. Women are seen as the weaker sex, easily dominated by masculine men who are physically strong, emotionally restrained and who are also able to provide for their families. Gender stereotypes fall along distinct lines which are predetermined by race, age, nationality social-class and levels of education among other factors. Within the African context, gender stereotypes are also reinforced by cultural and socio economic features as depicted in the mass media.*

Key words: *Communication, Gender Stereotypes, Media, Stereotypes*

I. Introduction

GENDER STEREOTYPING IN COMMUNICATION

According to [1] in "Verbal Styles of Gender expressions," communication contains reflections of both our personal identities of males or females as well as our cultural views of gender and gendered interactions. This assertion therefore underscores the pivotal role that communication – as a tool – plays in the analysis of gender stereotypes. On the other hand, [2] looks at a stereotype as a thought that may be adopted about specific types of individuals or certain ways of doing things. In addition, [3] argues that these thoughts or beliefs may or may not accurately reflect reality. However [4] cautions that stereotyping is only a fundamental psychological definition which spans across other disciplines, there are different conceptualizations and theories of stereotyping that provide their own expanded definition. Some of these definitions share commonalities, though each one may also harbor unique aspects that may contradict the others.

Therefore, stereotypes can be described as qualities assigned to groups of people based on their race, nationality and sexual orientation, just to name but a few. Because they generalize groups of people in ways that lead to discrimination while ignoring the diversity within groups. Gender stereotyping refers to preconceived assumptions in which individuals are assigned characteristics and roles assumed common to males or females. To her, a gender stereotype is a thought that may be adopted about specific types of individuals or certain ways of doing things [5] therefore, gender stereotypes are simplistic generalizations about the gender attributes, differences, and roles of individuals and/or groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, but they rarely communicate accurate information about others and thus, when people automatically apply gender assumptions to others regardless of evidence to the contrary, they are perpetuating gender stereotyping. Many people recognize the dangers of gender stereotyping; yet continue to make these types of generalizations.

DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER STEREOTYPES

Theories like Gender Schema theory for example, formally introduced by [6] as a cognitive theory explain how individuals become gendered in society, and how sex-linked characteristics are maintained and transmitted to other members of a culture. To her, gender-associated information is predominantly transmitted through society by way of schemata, or networks of information that allow for some information to be more easily assimilated than others. She argues that there are individual differences in the degree to which people hold these gender schemata.

These differences are manifested via the degree to which individuals are sex-typed. According to [6], core gender identity is tied up to the sex typing that an individual undergoes. This typing can be heavily influenced by child rearing, media, school, and other forms of cultural transmission. She refers to four categories where an individual may fall: sex-typed, cross-sex-typed, androgynous, and undifferentiated. Sex-

typed individuals process and integrate information that is in line with their gender. Cross-sex-typed individuals process and integrate information that is in line with the opposite gender. Androgynous individuals process and integrate traits and information from both genders. Finally, undifferentiated individuals do not show efficient processing of sex-typed information.

However, gender schema is a theory of process and not content, this theory can help explain some of the processes through which gender stereotypes become so psychologically ingrained in our society. Specifically, having strong gender schemata provides a filter through which we process incoming stimuli in the environment. This leads to an easier ability to assimilate information that is stereotype congruent, hence further solidifying the existence of gender stereotypes. Within adolescent development [6] hypothesizes that children must choose among a plethora of dimensions, but that gender schemas lead to the regulation of behaviors that conform to the cultural definition of what it means to be male or female. Additionally [6] asserts that there is also a heterosexuality subschema, which is likely to encourage the development of gender schemas. Most societies treat exclusive heterosexuality as the benchmark for proper masculinity and femininity where heterosexuality becomes the norm. Furthermore, the heterosexuality subschema asserts that men and women are supposed to be different from one another. It is hypothesized that's why cross-sexed interactions are likely to be coded sexually. Sex-typed individuals have a general readiness to invoke the heterosexuality subschema in social interactions, behaving differently towards individuals of the opposite sex that they find attractive versus unattractive. This theory is therefore a guide to understanding the reason behind persistence of the stereotypes despite the numerous efforts put in place to curb negative stereotyping.

II. Common Gender Stereotypes In Our Culture

Women's and men's gender identities follow from their specific female or male bodies. Such a distinction between sex and gender accounts for differences in the notion of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' in different cultures over time and space. The different views of how men and women behave in different cultures show that gender difference and identity is given not only determined by our biology but also from the views of our society. Gender views may change, while physiologically being male or female doesn't.

Within African culture gender roles manifest themselves from birth where subtle stereotyping begins. For a boy child, conscious and unconscious motives of having the family race continue through him bring joy. Guns and cars are bought for him, preferably blue and never pink! While growing up, boys are expected not to cry like girls. He perhaps learns to suppress his emotions as he thinks that crying is associated with girls. It's likely that he'd be encouraged to act strong, brave and tough.

Developing the 'right male interests' like sports, taking care of the outdoor work, managing money, learning to ride/drive, fixing the bulb, looking after domestic animals among others will most likely be encouraged in him. He would perhaps be discouraged from cooking and serving food. He is likely to have fewer restrictions while going out. While choosing a career, he would be encouraged to be ambitious. He is likely to be discouraged from choosing careers that are deemed to be soft in nature like teaching and counseling as they are seen to be 'softer' career options meant for girls. The question of balancing home & family may not arise for him as it is assumed that his gender defines his primary role as a bread winner.

On the other hand, girls are viewed differently because at birth, her room is perhaps decorated with the supposed feminine colour pink and dolls are bought for her. In many communities in India, a girl child could be considered inferior to a boy child. Conscious and unconscious motives of someday 'giving her away' and 'saving for her dowry/marriage expenses' may bring despair. While growing up, she will be allowed to cry and express herself emotionally. 'Good manners' like talking & laughing gently and not loudly, being delicate, being submissive to elders, and not 'fighting like boys' are likely to be taught to her which affects the way they communicate later as adults. Developing the 'right interests' like cooking, dancing, singing, tidying up the house and serving meals will most likely be encouraged in her. She may not be encouraged to go out as often as her brother and is likely to have many more restrictions. While choosing a career, she is likely to be discouraged from choosing careers such as civil services or defense services as it is thought that she will not be able to 'balance' family & home later on. It is most often assumed that her gender would define her roles functions primarily as a home maker and mother.

III. Communication Gender Stereotypes/Assumptions

Women talk more than men

It is actually a common assumption that men talk less than women. However, social linguist [7] "Gender and Discourse" suggest that the opposite is true. [8] In "understanding the sender differences in amount of talk", notes that men talk more than women. They confirm that men use more words than women do per utterance especially if they are giving a negative feedback. [9] Affirms it by arguing that women talk for longer periods of time. However, [1] observe that while men may talk more in public situations, women may carry the burden of sustaining the conversation when the context changes to a private one.

Women interrupt others more than men

Research indicates that men dominate women by interrupting them in conversation such as from men to women, father to mother, and probably boys to girls. However [1] posits, that women talk or interrupt –along the speaker’s argument while males tend to use the interception as a control function or for power play, which is evident in political circles such as where men use the platform to settle scores.

Men are dismissive of women’s feelings

When disappointed, women would naturally expect men to communicate with them and to offer a shoulder to lean on a shoulder to lean on in hard times. Studies indicate that women will feel bad based on the nature of response to expressed their disappointment for example men may not be sympathetic to the women but will simply suggest how to tackle the problem instead of crying and empathizing with them.

Men and women agree on the purpose of talk and in relationship and development

Research points out that women have different ideas about building of relationships while men typically think that if a relationship does not experience any problem then there is no need to talk about it. Women on the other hand think a relationship is doing fine as long as they can talk about it. This is true in most cases when called to “meet and talk” men normally expect that maybe an issue has cropped up, only to be surprised that the women had “nothing” in particular.

IV. Do Stereotypes Have A Function?

This is the biggest question one always asks every time they come across stereotypes. Early studies suggested that stereotypes were only used by rigid, repressed, and authoritarian people. This is true within African context where women are perceived to be a weaker sex by the men. However, this idea has been refuted by contemporary studies such as [10] who suggests that the ubiquity of stereotypes as collective group beliefs, meaning that people that belong to the same social group share the same set of stereotypes. Modern research asserts that full understanding of stereotypes requires considering them from two complementary perspectives: as shared within a particular culture/subculture and as formed in the mind of an individual person.

Examples of gender stereotypes include comments such as ,men are insensitive, All men love sports and sex, do dirty jobs, men are good at math and that men do not cook, sew, craft and neither do they do housework among others. On the other hand, examples of stereotypical statements about women include, “women are bad drivers, do clean jobs, responsible for raising children, all women love shopping and gossiping”. These comments are often heard across various cultures. Some people may feel angry when gender based comments are made, while others may conform to these comments as genuine differences between the sexes. Therefore these stereotypes influence the way men and women communicate or express themselves both verbally and non- verbally.

V. Stereotyping At The Work Place

Just as stereotypes are at times harmful and unfair in everyday life, they can quickly wreak havoc on morale and productivity in the workplace. Stereotypes can be extremely harmful because they can cause a person to mistreat others based on preconceived notions that are untrue. Research indicates that most people are not aware of how stereotyping automatically influence their thinking and, therefore, believe that their perceptions are based on objective observations [11]. Varying degrees of stereotyping occur in workplaces. Employers should ensure that gender stereotypes do not affect work output / performance negatively.

Despite the advancement of women in the workplace over the last several decades, stereotypes about women are prevalent in many offices. Common examples that border on physical appearance include descriptive statements such as “women with blonde hair are unintelligent and thus cannot fulfill simple tasks, or that attractive women who get promoted must have flirted or slept with the supervisor.

The negative effect that stereotyping has on women at the workplace is that it often leads to discrimination. Gender discrimination has many severe consequences ranging from unequal pay for women for equal work, lack of promotions, to sexual harassment. These negative effects are still very prevalent in the workplace despite the many laws that have been implemented to prevent the discriminatory effects of gender stereotyping, and court systems that are supposed to uphold those laws. Accordingly, other measures need to take place in order to rectify the problem.

The paper majorly focuses on the implications of both the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of gender stereotypes for women and men in the workplace. [5], observes that gender stereotyping can limit the development of the natural talents and abilities of boys and girls, women and men, as well as their educational experiences and life opportunities. This is evident in the way women have to contend with assumptions held by

potential employers that “they” are going to settle down and leave the workplace to have children, even when this is not necessarily the case.

In Kenya for instance, this is a common phenomenon for example in the teaching profession where employers consider that a female teacher will have to transfer to live with their spouses as opposed to a male colleague moving to join his partner. The sex-role stereotypes concerning men’s and women’s language usage affect the behavioural characteristics we attribute to them. These stereotypes have long been held such that male news anchors previously dominated news-broadcasting because most Africa societies it was believed that women were there to be seen and not to be heard and in event they do, it was not likely to be a “serious thing” or news [1].

This is affirmed by discourse analysts who reveal that women rely on different conversational strategies; while male speech tends to be dominant, straight-forward and attention commanding & wait to see if someone will challenge them, female speech tends to be gentle, friendly and accommodating. And therefore males are perceived to be in control. Females on the contrary are perceived to be less powerful, more submissive and less willing to take a stand on issues and display the desire to foster connections, support and understanding. This therefore affects the genders at the managerial levels and therefore it is assumed that women are not serious in most of the tasks given and as a result are less likely to be taken seriously. However, linguist [12] argues that not every female speaks in a particular way though, she calls for attention to the possibility that speech variation occur along gender lines pointing out same characteristics.

Women often end up in lower-paying, less-respected jobs than their male counterparts. Women are considered to be nurturing and sensitive, which reinforces the stereotype that they are perfect to take on ‘caring’ roles within society. Men, on the other hand, are perceived as rational and decisive, which makes them perfect to get involved in the world of business or politics. When women succeed in male-dominated industries they have to fight off the stereotype ‘tag’ that they are just a pretty face in order to be taken seriously, though there is a good chance they will be passed over for promotion in favour of their male colleagues, anyway. Men can also face difficulties when they decide to pursue stereotypically female jobs, such as nursing, often encountering discrimination and assumptions about their masculinity.

Stereotypes not only affect men and women in the workplace, they can also influence their social lives. Men are portrayed as either being confident, sex-obsessed and promiscuous, which is somehow considered ‘normal’, or as being passive, weak and useless with members of the opposite sex. Similarly, women are either not much interested in sex or it is all they are interested in. Unlike in the case of men, though, promiscuous women tend to be cast in a more negative light.

VI. The Problem Of Positive Stereotypes

While it is obvious how a negative stereotype can be a problem, many people are under the mistaken impression that a positive stereotype, such as the statement that members of a particular ethnic group are smart, is a good thing. Yet, that very stereotype can cause people to place unreasonable expectations on members of that particular ethnicity, which in turn can lead to undue pressure and/or positive stereotypes can create false impressions upon certain individuals.

On the contrary, men also face gender stereotyping and discrimination; in particular, homosexual men have faced a significant amount of discrimination, [13] argues that homosexuals have suffered a lot of criticism for not acting “masculine enough. Gender stereotyping has led to wage discrimination. According to [14], on average women’s wages are only 81 percent of men’s wages These statistics do not derive from various salaries from different job positions that men and women hold; instead, they come from a survey of salaries that men and women earn for the exact same job position and for similar job responsibilities. One of the reasons women are paid less money for the same work, is that women are paid based on gender stereotyping.

The most common workplace gender stereotypes is that “women don’t need equal pay because they are married.” The husband is often thought of as the breadwinner and the wife’s salary is often seen to be complementing the husband’s salary, and is thus justified to be a lower amount. While causes of the gender pay gap are complex and also include work and family choices (such as women choosing to take time off to raise children), data on the dramatically lower recognition of women in domains where their talents and achievements are equal to men’s imply there is a tendency to undervalue a woman’s work and contributions. In a study of more than 900 senior-level women and men from Fortune 1000 companies, [15] found out that women and men have equal desires to hold senior jobs such the position of the Company Chief Executive Officer.

Gender stereotyping also leads to resulting discrimination in employer hiring, firing and promotional practices. A recent study shows that one of the reasons why women do not get promoted to such powerful professional positions is because stereotypes in the workplace pose “serious challenges to women’s career advancement. In [16], Stereotypes that impede women’s advancement include “a woman’s job is only supposed to supplement a man’s,” “women are not aggressive enough,” and “women are not as good at problem solving.”

Further, studies show that women are often stereotyped as the ones who “take care” while men are stereotyped as the ones who “take charge,” the latter being a notion which is more connected to prerequisite behaviors for top-level job positions. However, in an analysis based on over forty (40) studies, leadership researchers have found that very little differences actually exist between women’s and men’s leadership and that These stereotypes are holding qualified women back from taking up positions that they deserve and would succeed in.

Gender stereotyping also leads to sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual conduct on the job that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment. A common stereotype is that women are viewed as sexual objects and types of harassment include offensive sexual innuendos, misogynist humor, physical encounters, and even rape. These types of behavior can lead to discomfort, job loss and forced resignation.

Another way to help reduce gender stereotyping in the workplace is to implement objective performance evaluation standards. It is also proper to implement a system of “checks and balances” to help reduce gender stereotyping and discrimination. For example, giving raises, promotions and hiring decisions should not be based on the opinion of a single person and should be checked by others.

Finally, gender stereotypes can be reduced by portraying images that foster improved work performance as opposed to those gender stereotypes leads to discrimination against women at the workplace. The mass media can be utilised to project messages on human resource best practices and positive images of work culture where hard work is recognized and rewarded regardless of one’s gender. This article acknowledges that gender stereotypes exist at work but mass media can be used to tap positive attributes that foster fairness at work. Developing and retaining the best talent is key to remaining competitive in the global business world. There is need to address gender stereotyping, in order to optimize the potential of all employees at the work place.

VII. Gender Stereotypes At Home

Gender stereotypes also exist at home. The ways through which parents handle children of different sexes could help ingrain gender stereotypes in children early in life. In a research conducted by [17] to assess gender roles, it was found out that fathers model higher levels of instrumental and assertive behavior, whereas mothers model higher levels of facilitative or cooperative behavior. According to the study, fathers issue more imperatives (such as "Put the toy in the bag") and polite commands ("Why don't you try pushing that") than mothers, who give more play leads, such as "Wanna look at the book?" or "Let's see what's in this bag". In responding to children's initiatives mothers were more likely to comply than fathers, whereas fathers were more likely to reject or ignore children than mothers (17).

These subtle gender differences between how mothers and fathers act could be imparting important lessons to children about what it means to be male and female. The kids pick up on the fact that fathers are more assertive while mothers are more passive and over time children start to incorporate them into their own behavior. Thus such differences may teach children indirect lessons about gender roles and reinforced gender typed patterns of behavior that they then carry into contexts outside of the family.

According to [18], gender stereotypes at home are also learned through the gender stereotypes that parents themselves carry. If a mother is a stay at home mom, then it is more likely that her children will believe that women should stay at home and take care of cooking, cleaning, and the kids. However, if a mother has a job outside of the home, then it is more likely that her children will not hold as tight to traditional gender stereotypes because their mother has a job that contributes to the family income. Fathers can influence the view of gender stereotypes through their role in the home. The more time the father spends doing household chores and helping with child care, the less likely typical gender stereotypes will develop with his children. If parents want to raise their children in an egalitarian home the most important factor is the actions that they perform. If a mother works outside of the home and if a father helps contribute to chores and child care, then their children will not be as likely to conform to typical gender stereotypes.

According to [19], gender stereotypes are ingrained in children at a very early age. By pre-school most children can tell what behaviors are appropriate for their sex. Recent studies have on gender stereotype beliefs among adolescent children in relation to their household chores reveal that household chores is an area where parents tend to promote traditional gender stereotypes. In most families the girls will be found cooking and cleaning while the boys will be assigned chores outside the home such as mowing the lawn and taking out the trash. It has been found that applying these gender stereotypical chores to adolescents will contribute to gender stereotypes that will shape performance of duties in the home. One way of promoting an egalitarian home is to distribute the chores among children regardless of their sex. It is through such distribution/ assignment roles that children of different genders can demystify these gender stereotypes and be able to cope with them later on in life [19].

To fully understand the influential capabilities that toys have on our children today, it will be important to look at gender socialization and what goes into it. Human beings are not born with any pre-existing gender schemas. Gender schemas are learned through processes such as socialization. With this idea, we can see why the first interactions with family can be so important. Beginning at birth with hospitalization, blue or pink caps are placed on the children with a bow on girls and not on boys. These actions reinforce gender stereotypes from this early age as images of either being a boy or girl start to form in minds of children.

Sexism in toys is very prominent in US culture. Simply walking through a toy aisle will show you the major differences in boys' and girls' toys. Girls toy aisles are filled with pink ponies, fairies, barbies, make up kits and kitchen set ups while boy's toy aisles are more blue in tone with hot wheels, tool sets, dinosaurs and trains [19]. The waves of generalized gender tones in children's toys can have serious ramifications, teaching children that there is only one way to be. We have seen a movement from sexism in sports equipment, to less sexism in those types of items. Another issue that we have to look at is that it is widely more accepted for girls to play with boys toys than vice versa: for boys to play with girls toys.

VIII. Media And Gender Stereotypes

For many years, Disney films have been popular sources of entertainment for children. However, their family friendly stories, especially those of princesses, reinforce age old gender stereotypes. Most Disney films, especially the ones produced in earlier years, depict traditional gender roles. Men are often depicted as adventurous, physically strong, and brave, whereas women are typically shown to be physically attractive, affectionate, and even troublesome.[20] adds that in more recent years, Disney has produced princess characters that are more assertive and independent, however, these characters do still fit within some stereotypes. For example, the character of Belle in *Beauty and the Beast* is intelligent, but she is also viewed as strange because of her intelligence and her love for books. Furthermore, she is sought after by the character of Gaston only because she is the most beautiful girl in town. This leads us to the greatest point of contention in Disney films today, the equalization of women. However notes that female characters in the films are beautiful, but overly sexualized. They have small waists and fully developed breasts that are shown off by accentuating clothing [20]. This over-sexualization of females is emphasized. Male characters, such as Gaston, will stare at women and will use objectifying terms in reference to them, such as baby doll, cutie, sweet cheeks, and so on which stereotype women as sexual objects [21].

In the media therefore, not only are the bodies of female Disney princesses a source of debate, but their behaviors are also stereotypical. Many of the female characters were displayed in motherly or domestic positions. *Snow White* and *Cinderella* are some of the films that come to mind because both characters perform a great deal of house work and also take up responsibilities similar to those of a mother. In more recent years, female characters have ventured outside the home. However, almost all of the princesses ended the story by marrying the prince. For most of the princesses, their marriage to the prince are their ultimate goal and highest achievement, in a study examining the nine staple princess's films, the researchers found that not a single princess executed the final rescue on her own [20]. Not to say that none of them performed the final rescue, but those who did only did so with the help of the prince. This lack of being able to rescue other characters completely on their own continues to imply certain helplessness in women.

IX. Gender Stereotypes In Literary Genre

Literature as well projects some elements of gender stereotypes. The authors of this paper focused on the African literary work and how gender stereotypes feature in this genre.[22] highlights four key attributes of "True Womanhood" by which a woman judges herself and is judged by her husband, neighbors, and society; these four cardinal virtues include ; piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. Women's magazines and religious literature of the 20th century also provide empirical evidence of the society's emphasis on these four areas. The Cult of True Womanhood holds that the combination of these characteristics provided the promise of happiness and power to the Victorian woman, and without which women's life could have real meaning.

The first virtue is piety, which originates from society's view of women as being naturally pious than men. Women's natural superiority also appear in their refinement, delicacy and tender sensibilities. Religious studies and other humanities are seen to be compatible with femininity and deemed appropriate for women, whereas other fields of studies or professions such as engineering are not believed to fall within feminine arenas. These other ways of acquiring information include reading romantic novels—either of which might lead women to ignore religion, become overly romantic, and lose their virtue or purity. According to him, women who read (listen to or watch) highly romantic texts like Achebe's *A man of the people* can become 'immoral'. Although women may appear to be disinterested in sex, they may become vulnerable to seduction as seen from characters like Liza and Daldain the Peter Abraham's *Mine Boy* in Peter Abraham's novel *Mine Boy* were vulnerable and helpless.

The loss of the second virtue, purity, is a “fate worse than death.” Having lost her purity, a woman is without value or hope: “Purity is as essential as piety to a young woman; its absence is regarded by the society as unnatural and unfeminine. Without this, a woman is viewed a member of some lower order.” This is how extreme stereotypes against women are in most texts except those that purely take a sexist dimension [22].

Men, on the other hand, are not naturally religious and thus not expected to be as virtuous as women. According to this view of “True Womanhood”, men are, at best, prone to sin and seduction, and at worst, equated to brutes. “True Women” would withstand the advances of men, dazzling and shaming them with their virtues. Men are supposed to be both religious and pure, although not to the same extent as women, and through association with “True Women”, men could increase their own virtue. Welter, further gives the third virtue of which he calls the “Cult of True Womanhood” also viewed as submissiveness, a characteristic not true of and not desirable in men. According to this virtue, women are expected to be weak, dependent, and timid, whereas men are supposed to be strong, wise, and forceful.

In most texts (video, novels, poems) the ideology is that dependent women want strong men, not sensitive ones. These couples form families where husbands are unquestionably superior and the wives would not question their authority. This ideology is upheld in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo, a male character is portrayed as being a strong man who beats his subjects leaving them without giving them the opportunity to seek for redress or to express dissatisfaction.

The last of the four virtues [22] projects is domesticity, which is connected to both submissiveness and to the “Doctrine of the Two Spheres”. True Women according to this virtue are concerned with domestic affairs such as making a home and having children: “The true woman’s place is at the fire place as a daughter, sister but most importantly as wife and mother. These domestic duties include cooking and nursing the sick, especially sick husband or child. These gender stereotypes create an imagery where women as those serving the men who are seen to figuratively occupy the position of the masters.

Children’s books are also a major source of gender stereotyping as a medium. Not only are female characters under-represented in the title and pictures, but their characters are built upon traditional gender roles and stereotypes. According to [23], females will be drawn wearing a dress or a skirt. Furthermore, they occupy domestic or traditionally feminine positions. For example, they may be a mother, teacher, or even a secretary. Typically, these are positions in which the female is meant to be submissive to a male character. Not only are women submissive, but they are also dependent on men because women are emotional, irrational, and clumsy [23].

In summary, literary creations being a reflection of the society, project the stereotypical elements that are common in the society. Visual, audio-visual, poems, novels and even canonical texts reinforce the stereotypes which could explain why a work of art is likely to reveal the gender identity the author as either a male or female. Therefore as attempts are made to curtail negative gender stereotypes in the media, attention should be extended to include creative works of art as form of media with the potential for promoting gender stereotypes.

X. Gender Stereotypes In Social Places

To understand how gender stereotypes manifested in social setting, itself in social setting, it is fair to acknowledge that men and women are worlds apart given their genetic component that determines whether one is physiologically male or female. Though gender refers to the “socially learned behaviors and expectations associated with being female or male can also be understood to mean “a cultural and psychological concept reflecting one’s subjective feelings of being female or male”. Davidson and Moore highlight four distinctions that determines how male female interact in the social spheres

In most cultures--but not all and at all ages - men tend to be more aggressive than women, a factor which is related to male hormones. However, Davidson/Moore found that in aggressive cultures were the opposite of Western norms. [23], cites examples of children whose mothers were given male hormones during pregnancy to prevent miscarriages and these children scored significantly higher on standard aggression tests than did siblings who were not exposed to these hormones

Secondly, men and women differ in cognition: men excel at spatial thinking while women do well in verbal communication. According to the findings of a mapping of brain electrical activity of two neuropsychologists as cited by [24] it was found out that women and men process information in different parts of the brain males in frontal cortex and females in the central cortex.

According to [24], biologically-based differences between men and women indicate that men are less sensitive to heat, but more to cold, than females. They further established that females have better hearing, taste, and touch while men have better daylight vision and poorer night vision than females.

Finally Davidson and Moore found out that men are more curious women are more attentive to people and social relationships.

XI. Are Gender Roles And Stereotypes Changing?

Gender stereotypes are changing in most cases for the better and good of the society. The reason for the change can be looked at from [25] views that:

- The realization that many of the traditional characteristics of "masculinity" and "femininity" are culturally conditioned, not inherent in the composition of male and female. The social sciences have demonstrated this.
- The explosion of technological culture, which has placed more of a premium on intellectual and interpersonal skills than on manual labor. [26], argues that conditions of modern life have removed most of the necessity for a sex-based division of labour.
- The development of contraceptives which can be attributed to technological advancement which gave women the freedom to plan for careers and family. The Pill provoked profound social change. It helped lower the birth rate and end America's baby boom in 1964. It spurred sexual frankness and experimentation. [27] adds that it allowed women to think seriously about careers because they could postpone childbirth. And it sparked the feminist and pro-choice movements; once women felt they were in charge of their own bodies, they began to question the authority of their husbands, their bosses, their doctors and their churches" and Anthropologist Joke Schrijvers as cited in [28] notes that one way to evaluate the place of women in a culture would be through interrogating the extent to which women have some control over their own sexuality and fertility.
- Because of the high level interest generated by this issue, [28] argues that when commentators lament the collapse of traditional family commitments and values, they almost invariably mean the uniquely female duties associated with the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women" *The Way We Never Were*. Women's roles in the family "have historically mediated the worst effects of competition and individualism in the larger society." Those who lament the collapse of family commitments usually "do not envision any serious rethinking of the individualistic, antisocial tendencies in our society. Rather, they continue to seek ways in which women can continue to compensate for individualism and men's failures in the society.

XII. Conclusion

Understanding gender differences is critical for the success of any communicative approach. Gender stereotypes have been assessed in this paper in terms of how they affect the verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication between men and women in different social arenas such as at the workplace, in social relationships, at home and within different cultural set up. Stereotypes affect aspects of communication such as speech where women speak faster, interrupt more often as compared to males who speak less and are dominant in conversations. The authors concluded that mass media can equally be used to positively manage stereotypes by projective positive and objectives images of individuals even amid the naturally existing physiological differences; sex patterns. Organizations can as well develop performance assessment tools and mechanisms for managing gender diversity at the workplace for optimum performance and better interpersonal relationships and communication.

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