

The Causes and Obstacles of Gender Differences in Social Norms and Impacts on Promoting Gender Equality

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Abstract:

Gendered social norms have long been a major barrier to achieving gender equality, affecting areas such as education, work, healthcare, and leadership. Even though this issue has received a lot of attention from researchers and the public, there is still limited understanding of why these norms persist. This paper looks at how gendered norms have developed and lasted over time. It also examines how these norms shape social behavior and institutional practices. The focus is on how traditional gender roles restrict individual opportunities, especially in recruitment, education, and the media. The analysis shows that addressing deeply rooted gender stereotypes is essential for achieving equality. It also highlights that changes in the media and education systems are important steps toward challenging these norms. Moreover, gender norms affect marginalized groups in a stronger and more harmful way, making their situation even more difficult. Based on these findings, this paper argues that future research should explore how gender interacts with other social factors, such as class, race, and ethnicity. It should also consider how international policies and local activist movements influence the reshaping of gender norms to support broad social and structural change.

Keywords: Gendered Social Norms; Gender Equality; Intersectionality; Media Influence; Education Reform

1. Introduction

In many societies, the gender differences within social norms pose significant obstacles to the realization of gender equality and development. These differences have deep roots at both the societal level and in the field of research. At the social level, people

tend to treat others differently based on their gender due to traditional gender roles and stereotypes. This type of inequality pops up in all sorts of different places, like education, getting jobs, how easy it is to get medical care, and being part of making decisions. Studies show these gender expectations are always reinforced by cultural customs, institutional regula-

tions, and systemic bias. So they actually make the overall gender gap worse.

Take the study of leadership effectiveness, for instance, where differences can be easily seen regarding gender. Eagly and Carlo noted that women were less common than men in leadership roles. When people think leaders are female, not male, the same leaders' actions are often seen as less good [1]. Successful women in areas considered successful for men are also often seen as contradicting gender norms and facing opposition [2]. This contradiction puts women in a "double bind" where women must swing like a pendulum between these two: either competent but unlikable, or likable but incapable. To get rid of this unfair idea, people must know where and how these bias against women is built into the society's traditions, find out where it comes from, and do something real to help break the conventional way of working and set new rules. Only in this way is it possible for people to truly achieve a fair and just society. Studies such as these are really helpful because they can cause complete creation, improve oppressed groups, and create a more fair and inclusive future for everyone.

2. Gendered Social Norms Serve as an Obstacle to Gender Equality

Looking historically, society has already established different things expected from men and women, which actually slows down the process of gender equality by telling people what they should be doing. and expectation, they limit the men to do their profession job and women to take care or raise the future generation, it will make the chances for educational work less and even for leading the society, and they remain the same as now and weak; the concept of intersectionality is troublesome for weak people.

To figure out why these inequalities keep happening, people need to look at how ideas about what it means to be a man or woman have changed through history and which parts of society help people follow those kinds of rules.

2.1 The Historical Evolution of Gender Social Norms

Social norms, especially gender norms, can influence people's ways of doing things and help maintain the current power structure. This makes it even more difficult to achieve gender equality worldwide.

These norms are informal and often imply behavioral rules to guide group activities. They are generated by the interactions between members and accepted by social relationships. The deep-rooted gender norms in societies

anywhere in the world still hinder the development of equality, forming stereotypes of male and female roles and expected behaviors, thereby reinforcing traditional power structures where one gender holds a higher status than the other.

Cialdini and Trost further refined it into general social expectations, individual norms, and subjective norms, each representing the expectations of people and society. These norms are influenced and limited by culture and history, imposing constraints on the desires and behaviors of men and women.

Challenging these gender norms will encounter resistance, which means that power imbalance perpetuates inequality and also affects the way people interact with each other, allowing these differences to persist over time due to social power structures [3].

Stewart et al.'s review suggests that the influence of gender stereotypes and norms is persistent and difficult to change attitudes or behaviors to achieve equality [4].

As time passes, changes in social norms related to gender provide valuable perspectives for the formation and continuation of traditional gender expectations. Understanding this helps to analyze the factors shaping efforts to promote gender equality. Through the exploration of the historical and cultural foundations of these norms, researchers are able to discover how gender roles, which have long existed and influenced social systems and individual behavior for many years, further exacerbate the unequal treatment and impede the process of equality.

2.2 The Impact of Traditional Gender Roles on Gender Equality

Traditional gender roles still control gender equality in different and various fields of society, especially the recruitment and employment. There are more and more gender-neutral language advertisements, which, to some extent, reflect that people can no longer accept that men and women should do different things. Changes in the kinds of jobs that men and women do would break the prejudice that has been there for many centuries, and it would make the company's recruitment system fairer and more acceptable.

Meanwhile, Andreas Kuhn's studies have shown a dramatic change in Switzerland's recruitment practices regarding gender norms. To be exact, the employment of gender neutral language in job advertisements increased significantly from 5% in 1950 to almost 95% in 2020 [5].

From the data, researchers can see that the more often the word gender equality appears in German text, the more likely they are to use gender inclusive recruitment. The data also gives researchers further proof that society is

moving more towards inclusive recruitment. Personal relationships and the changing of who I am are a part of breaking away from traditional gender roles and supporting gender equality, too [5].

It is also true that when a personal story goes through a transformation, gender-neutral recruitment is not very popular. There's something bigger going on behind this change. It is conversations around identity and equality. Kuhn focuses on how they arise and how people make gendering happen in the present era through social occasions. This is something that is constantly happening slowly.

2.3 Intersectionality: The Multiple Impacts of Gender Norms on Marginalized Groups

Traditionally, gender roles have had different expectations for men and women. Therefore, it hinders the realization of equality. These roles lead to many opportunities and unequal treatment in life.

Let's talk about traits like ability and competitiveness. People think they are male traits, while traits like empathy and understanding are female traits [4]. Social norms and community expectations help maintain the existence of these stereotypes, leading to power inequality and limiting everyone's opportunities to take action. When someone tries to challenge those stereotypes and encounters obstacles, this structure is reinforced, and the situation of inequality persists.

These issues may bring harm to the entire economy. Women who want to find a good job will encounter difficulties, which will involve their economic security and career development. The lack of representation in leadership positions makes it difficult for them to have much say in decision-making, and it is also difficult for women to start businesses and achieve economic independence if they want financial support.

Women have lower participation in green and digital industries, while they have higher participation in low-income industries such as healthcare and personal services [6].

Due to the interaction between different parts of identity, the theory of intersectionality was chosen as a reference. Understanding how these different races, ethnicities, socioeconomic statuses, and disability factors are intertwined with gender and sexual orientation, and gaining a clear understanding of the various issues faced by individuals in refugee communities, emphasizes the complexity of unequal relationships brought about by different social identities. The difference in identity makes analysis more difficult, as female refugees may encounter issues related to their gender and race, among others. The same applies

to the LGBTQ+community living in refugee camps, who may face special difficulties or challenges that can affect their other identities. Refugee women are likely to encounter specific challenges related to gender, while LGBTQ+ individuals will face more obstacles related to sexual orientation and gender identity [7].

3. The Determinants Influencing Gender Inequality in Social Norms

This article finds that there are two major reasons that lead to the difference between men's and women's standards. First, there is influence; first, the media affects it, and then it reinforces it. Then comes the education system; the long-term biases within the education system result in discrimination and inequality towards an individual based on their gender. These elements together have led to the persistence of and an increase in the different expectations of men and women in society. These factors interweave in various ways, shaping societal expectations and influencing people's opportunities and experiences in different life domains.

3.1 Media Influence and Reinforcement of Gender Stereotypes

Firstly, in today's society, the media plays a significant role in shaping people's thoughts and beliefs through various platforms such as television, videos, newspapers, movies, the internet, and social media. It conveys information, changes people's perceptions of things, and stereotypes about women are influenced by the media [8]. This affects people's perceptions of different genders and how they behave according to societal expectations, thus forming the concept of how men and women should behave. The behaviors seen on television, magazines, or news may be very dangerous or have social problems, but everyone considers them normal, which shapes people's habits and guides their daily performance, whether intentional or unintentional.

3.2 Education Systems and Gender Bias

The education system and gender bias lead to gender differences in social standards

Traditional beliefs influence how people view male and female roles. Due to gender bias, parents and teachers often underestimate girls' mathematical abilities, which can affect their understanding of their skills. This bias can weaken their confidence in choosing STEM careers, thereby reducing their interest and opportunities to engage in such work.

Chinese culture is influenced by collectivism and Confu-

cianism, and social norms place family above demanding industries such as STEM, which can affect women's career aspirations [9]. In STEM environments, women may feel unwelcome, which can affect people's expectations of their performance, as this situation goes against traditional gender norms. In such situations, women in STEM fields often face gender discrimination and unfair treatment.

4. Discussion on Addressing Gendered Disparities and Advancing Gender Equality

To solve the above problems, it needs to start from three aspects: challenging gender norms, overcoming stereotypes, and promoting gender equality.

4.1 Enhance Critical Media Literacy to Break Gender Stereotypes

Many methods include enhancing critical media literacy and breaking through gender stereotypes. The significance of CML lies in its ability to eliminate gender stereotypes by cultivating students' critical thinking and media analysis skills [10]. By teaching students how to criticize media content, CML encourages them to explore topics such as authority, gender roles, race, and social inequality, making students aware of the biases and stereotypes propagated by the media and how that information reinforces harmful gender norms. In this regard, chronic myeloid leukemia has a direct impact.

4.2 Reform the Education System to Promote Gender Equality

Teachers need to improve their education to make women and men more equal. It is really important to use critical learning when studying children's literature.

It makes students question theories, narratives in the media, to create their own perspectives and very different forms of storytelling [11]. The increasing diversity encourages students to think about problems as a whole and accept gender, and to search for different answers to the problem. It would force the education system to create some critical thinkers and give the kids the tools that they need to face the media and the ever-increasing gender norms in society.

4.3 Enhance Awareness and Take Action to Eliminate Gender Bias in Education

More so, CML helps students understand and examine media transmission content, arrangement, target, who is doing it, and what the purpose is. As a result, it helps students break away from the stereotypes and biases brought

on by media information spreading to improve their understanding [11]. Educators play a crucial role in guiding students to view social and moral issues that exacerbate gender stereotypes critically. By promoting the emergence of more equitable perspectives, educators can help students learn to question biased views and support gender equality. Consequently, it would contribute to creating a more inclusive and just world.

5. Conclusion

The article investigates the impact of social norms around gender on equality, how and when these appear, and how they affect society in all areas. It emphasizes that cultural and institutional conventions that limit opportunities have strengthened expectations for the formation of traditional gender roles, and it pays close attention to the effect on women and people who are marginalized. Discuss the current role of recruitment, education, media, and personal identity together, and also the persistence that remains in reality.

It concludes that deep-seated gender stereotypes need to be removed, and the changes made in education and media are an important action. To challenge old conventions, using gender-free language for recruitment and changing teaching methods creates a more inclusive environment and reduces stereotypes in terms of gender, bringing some advantages to everyone. The intersection also indicates that these norms have had a special and very powerful impact on those left behind, which will make their life even worse.

In the future, people also need to learn about how gender intersects with other social categories like race, class, sexual orientation, etc. They will see how those things make inequalities worse. After knowing how global policies, local suggestions impact gender rules, knowing how to achieve major reforms in systems.

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