

Gender is the Original Sin: Research on the Dilemma of Female Leadership Acquisition in the View of Gender Stereotypes

——Field Survey based on the Mass Media Industry

Weiye Yang

The University of Melbourne,
Victoria, 3010, Australia.

Abstract:

Gender stereotype has been regarded as a common social psychological phenomenon, which mainly refers to the fixed expectations that people in society have for the personality and behavioral characteristics of men and women respectively. For example, women are often expected to be docile, do full-time housework, or play a supporting role. In the professional field, the impact of gender stereotypes is more direct and specific. Gender stereotypes in the industry will greatly affect and even limit an individual's career identity and occupation planning. In addition, gender stereotypes also play an important role in the construction of leadership. According to former research, men are more likely to gain authority recognition in leadership positions. However, when women show talent in leadership skills, their behavior will be seen as violating gender expectations. In the mass media industry, gender stereotypes have a significant impact on women's career development, promotion, and leadership acquisition. Although contemporary women have accounted for a certain proportion in office, gender stereotypes still hinder their career advancement and leadership. This article explores whether the media industry provides a workplace environment suitable for women's career development, especially how gender stereotypes affect women's career advancement and leadership development in the media industry. This study will provide a new perspective for understanding the complexity of gender bias and women's career development in the mass media industry.

Keywords: Gender stereotypes; Women; Leadership; Media industry.

1. Introduction

Gender stereotypes are considered to be a common social psychological phenomenon, that is, people have relatively fixed expectations of men or women in terms of character and personality traits. For example, women must be docile, passive weak, or lack creativity. Anti-gender stereotypes are completely the opposite, meaning that men or women do not conform to general gender stereotypes in gender construction, and violate society's expectations of gender (Liu & Zuo, 2006a). In the construction of occupational gender temperament, the influence of gender stereotypes is more direct and specific, such as male nurses, female football players, and so on. According to research on occupational gender stereotypes of male nurses, it revealed that occupational gender stereotypes will greatly affect students' occupational identity and career planning, hindering individuals' choices for the future (Lan et al., 2020). Occupational stereotypes also include discussions on gender authority. In some existing research, men are demonstrated to be more likely to gain authority in the process of leadership construction, that is, men as authoritative leaders are more likely to satisfy their subordinates (Rudman & Kilianski, 2000). In contrast, in some social discourses, if women are so ambitious to have high achievement or leadership ability, they will be regarded as queer who would break against gender stereotypes.

When a woman is willing to be a leader or to gain leadership, is it first necessary to break through the constraints of gender stereotypes? Gender stereotypes are implicit in social life and have an important impact on decision-making (Wang, 2002). The activation effect of gender stereotypes has also received a full concentration in analyzing the mechanism of gender stereotypes. With the construction of gender stereotypes of women being docile, the passive quality is inseparable from a set of patterned stimulus-response mechanisms. Gender stereotypes will restrict the career development of different genders and lead to a series of problems (Wang et al., 2010). In the shaping of professional image, stereotype activation is a cognitive process that occupies a key position in social perception. In the process of constructing gender stereotypes, social groups with different enthusiasm and abilities need to deal with the construction logic of gender stereotypes and analyze the manifestation of their behavioral patterns. Based on this, the main research question of this article is to start from the actual situation and practical difficulties of women's career development in the mass media industry, which could respond to the key issues of women's career development with the help of in-depth interviews and participatory observation. Then, it is determined whether women in the workplace environment such as media or-

ganizations are affected by gender stereotypes and find it difficult to break through male hegemony.

2. Literature review

2.1 Gender stereotype

As the social gender perception of male and female roles becomes more solidified, the relatively stereotyped results of social gender cognition constitute the main content of gender stereotypes (Liu & Zuo, 2006b). In the process of forming gender stereotypes, mass media promotes the reproduction of gender stereotypes in the processing of advertising information, providing conditions for the implicitness of gender stereotypes. In the process of completing the construction of stereotypes, it has the attributes of both controlled processing and automated processing, that is, after the audience is exposed to the information released by mass media, they will fall into the process of stereotype reproduction (Wang & Sun, 2005). The activation of stereotypes is a rapid and automatic cognitive process. According to ERP research, the activation of stereotypes involves multiple stages. This suggests that stereotypes not only affect behavior but also involve deep neural processing (Wang et al., 2010). In addition, when discussing gender stereotypes, more attention is paid to gender conflicts between men and women, and less attention is paid to the particularities of the problems faced by women.

Gender stereotypes are prevalent in society, while scholars' discussions on gender stereotypes mainly focus on the conflict between men and women. However, the specific challenges and structural problems faced by women in gender inequality may be overlooked. Former research tends to depict that the coexistence of differences and similarities in the behavior of both sexes is due to the influence of gender stereotypes. This conclusion is mainly inferred from the observation of social roles. For example, women may be regarded as caregivers by the family. The physical gender differences between men and women interact with the social and cultural environment to jointly shape stereotyped gender roles. In the process of socialization, integration affects the behavior of different genders. These phenomena can be re-verified from the construction of traditional gender roles. Former research also revealed that in the long duration, gender stereotype beliefs will directly affect individual behavior and social attitudes (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

2.2 Female leadership

Female leadership itself does not constitute an independent academic concept with clear boundaries and a com-

plete core. However, influenced by gender stereotypes, women's construction of authority is suppressed, so the discussion on female leadership is typical. In the field of human resource management research, leadership generally refers to a type of talent that managers should have. When female leadership appears as a term, it is often accompanied by concepts such as flexible management (Wang, 2007). Women's professional advantages are reflected in the construction of leadership. Especially under the perspective of globalization, the discovery of women's leadership is of great significance in promoting career development and optimizing the workplace environment (Shi, 2008; Dong, 2009).

According to former empirical research, the addition of female leaders can bring about diversified decision-making and improve team effectiveness. Compared with single-sex teams, gender-diverse leadership teams are more competitive in dealing with complex problems and formulating strategies. Female leaders usually have excellent communication skills and show a gentler communication style. When interacting with the public, they could construct strong interpersonal communication and public relations advantages within the team or other external entities, which could perform better in flexible management. However, in the dilemma of building female leadership, some non-institutional dilemmas mainly come from social doubts about women taking on authoritative work (Chen & Zhang, 2010). This doubt itself is part of the gender stereotype, so it is necessary to boost the confidence of female leaders and stimulate their willingness to participate in leadership work (Li, 2012).

The current study explores how society forms gender stereotypes through fixed patterns of gender cognition. It also explores how the construction of female authority is often suppressed under the influence of gender stereotypes, as the inequality and ethical thinking caused by this. However, in the current research, few literatures can comprehensively explore how gender stereotypes and gender bias are faced by female practitioners in job promotion in a specific media industry. To fill this research gap, this article will take the mass media industry as the background to explore the gender stereotypes shaped by the media industry and the dilemma of building an environment for women's career development. At the same time, from a comprehensive perspective, it will deeply research the gender bias and female leadership issues caused by gender stereotypes in this industry.

3. Entering the field: Is the media industry a suitable field for women's career development?

In China, the gender ratio of the media industry is relatively dominated by female workers, while female reporters and anchors might occupy certain leadership positions. Although there is no clear statistical data to support this, the image of women in the media professional environment is still impressive in some film and television dramas. This research conducted an in-depth interview survey on the media industry, as it also collected necessary qualitative research data through interviews.

3.1 Media workplace: interviewee screening and snowball sampling

To accurately capture the samples that meet the requirements, this article defines and screens the qualified respondents according to the research purpose and questions. For example, different female employees and female students who work in the media industry or have just entered this industry, such as journalists, account operators, and media account managers. Based on the research objectives of exploring gender stereotypes shaped by the media industry and the career development of women in the media industry, this research set screening criteria for respondents, such as years in the media industry, years of work/study, specific occupations, and media types (traditional media or new media). This is to ensure that the basic background of the respondents can reflect the comprehensiveness and diversity of this research. During the screening process, the sample group of interviewees was gradually expanded through the 'snowball sampling' sampling method. When employing participants, a wide range of women in the media industry at different stages were selected, such as students/interns who were just entering the industry, female practitioners with stable jobs, and female workers with senior industry experience. This method helps capture hidden groups or hard-to-reach female individuals within the media industry. Through research screening, the four final female respondents were confirmed through email, social media, and phone calls. They were invited to participate in the interview study and all respondents met the research criteria. To answer the above research questions, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with four female industry workers/students (see Table 1).

Table 1: List of basic information on research subjects

Number	Name	Gender	Age	Profession	Length of exposure to the media industry	contact method
A1	Eunice	Female	24	Media Operations	Work: 2 years	WeChat Video
A2	Tiffany	Female	23	New Media Account Operations Internship / Media Graduate Student	Professional studies: 4 years	WeChat Video
A3	Nieve	Female	25	Media Graduate Student	Professional studies: 2 years	WeChat Voice
A4	Chloe	Female	32	News Channel Reporter	Work: 6 years	Telephone Interview

In the field, this research focused on four women currently working in the mass media industry: A1: Eunice, A2: Tiffany, A3: Nieve, A4: Chloe. Two of the interviewees, A2 and A3, are graduate students in the media industry and have internship experience in the media industry. Compared with these two, A1 and A4 both have relatively mature work experience in the media industry. A1 has two years of new media operations and media content post-production and production experience on online video media platforms. A4 has more than six years of journalism experience in traditional news media organizations. Above, this research conducted a half-hour online in-depth interview with these four female workers in the media industry. This method can provide a deeper understanding of the relevant industry work and background of these four women. To protect the personal privacy of the interviewees, all interviewees were anonymized.

3.2 Interview outline design for respondents

Preparing and setting interview questions in advance is an important part of semi-structured interviews. A series of pre-set questions are prepared in advance in the research, but these questions are not fixed. During the interview, they will be adjusted appropriately according to the specific situation and answers of the four interviewees. The main eight interview questions in this research are intended to explore the difficulties of women in obtaining leadership positions in the media industry, especially in the context of gender stereotypes. The main outline design is conceived around themes such as gender equality, women's workplace challenges, implicit bias, and so on. The interview outline and questions were designed to cover multiple aspects of female media practitioners' personal career development, industry characteristics, gender stereotypes and implicit biases. It also inspires them to reflect deeply on gender stereotypes based on their own experiences. This design not only helps to gain a deeper understanding of the interviewees' individual experiences, but also reveals common problems in the media industry

from a macro perspective. In addition, the interview provides important information and empirical support for the study of gender stereotypes, gender bias and female leadership in the media industry (See Appendix 2).

4. Focus on the promotion ceiling for women in the workplace: A research based on in-depth interviews

Through in-depth interviews, the interviewees believe that women also face the problem of promotion ceilings in the media workplace. In particular, compared with men, the threshold for women to obtain leadership is higher and the difficulty is relatively greater. For example, taking the 'performance' in the current industry management as an example, some important jobs that may quickly accumulate professional capital are often not assigned to female employees. In the news industry, some important interviews that may bring traffic and capital will be given priority to male journalists. The existence of this situation is a challenge to women's promotion. Women's unfavorable access to resources in the workplace may exacerbate gender inequality.

4.1 Why women are not trusted: Gender differences and gender inequality in performance acquisition

Although women have achieved results in many fields, especially their flexible management methods can greatly stimulate women's gender advantages. According to existing research, the gap between women's work competence and men's is no longer obvious. It is still a scientific decision-making conclusion that some outstanding women become leaders (Jiang, 2010). However, to prove they are competent for the job, women need to work harder than men. It has been verified many times during the in-depth interview process.

I remember that there was a very important international organization news report. In fact, I was fully capable of

doing this job, but the leader chose to give this opportunity to a male colleague. So from that moment on, I thought that stereotypes would affect my career planning. So I need to work harder than men to prove my ability to report hard news, and then I can break this gender restriction. (Interviewee A4, 16 December 2024)

To meet the verification of women's work competence, female employees need to overcome many possible restrictive conditions. Gender bias is even closely related to physiological phenomena such as female pregnancy. As a result, some very inhumane but firmly existing 'unwritten rules' still exist in some workplaces. For example, companies are unwilling not to hire married women without children, or quickly fire the female employee after the maternity protection period ends. From a sociological perspective, 'hidden rules' are a manifestation of some deviant behaviors and social deviance under traditional social regulations (Lv & Wang, 2012). As a result of this phenomenon, female leaders often appear to be unmarried and childless. They are given discriminatory nicknames on the internet, such as 'Ice Queen' or 'A ruthless leader'. *I remember that there is a rule in China that female employees cannot be laid off within two or three years after giving birth. So some female employees felt that they were in danger of being laid off, so they chose to get pregnant, thinking that they could continue to work... However, there is a problem that after the protection period, they will still be laid off one or two years after giving birth.* (Interviewee A1, 15 December 2024)

The dilemma of female employees not being trusted and the demonization of female leaders not getting married or having children have frightened some young women who have not yet entered the workplace. Gender stereotypes closely accompany this process in the workplace. From women being questioned about their ability to do their jobs, to female leaders being seen as problematic figures with personality defects. In this process, young women's concerns mainly come from the unfairness of the workplace's access mechanism for women. Or setting a requirement that is significantly higher than that of men, so that women cannot meet it at all (Peng & Ouyang, 2019). *When applying for a position in the media industry, the recruiter may not say that it is only for men, but will say that they only want male employees and not female employees. If you are a woman, some companies will just ignore you or reject you directly. I think this still needs to be improved in the industry, that is, women should be able to enter this industry fairly first, so that there will be more development opportunities.* (Interviewee A2, 15 December 2024)

Through the content analysis of the in-depth interviews with the interviewees, it can be found that although wom-

en have gradually gained some professional recognition and achievements in the media field, they can make full use of their professional advantages to show in the industry. However, women are still easily distrusted in leadership, especially compared with men. Job competence for women in the industry still depends on gender bias and gender restrictions (Raišienė et al., 2020). Gender bias in the media industry will affect women's promotion opportunities, especially when it comes to childbirth, marriage and other aspects, where there are many hidden rules. The continued existence of gender stereotypes in the media industry will not only aggravate the impact on the existing media workplace environment but may also cause more new women to have some concerns when entering this industry. They are not only afraid that the industry will impose harsh restrictions on them due to gender but also that it will negatively affect their subsequent career development.

4.2 Why women are marginalized: The stereotype of women playing supporting roles as 'vases'

In the media industry, the marginalization of female workers is closely related to gender stereotypes. Such as 'vase' and 'just need to be beautiful' have not only become labels for women's 'supportive' work roles at work but also rigidly reinforce the thinking that women only need to have beautiful appearances or basic work in the industry (Paul et al., 2022). In a woman's career development work, her appearance and specific gender characteristics are more likely to be seen than her work ability. The appearance and gender stereotypes of women in the industry will cause them to be biased by others when working or to be assigned different tasks than men. These gender stereotypes will directly lead to the limitation of women's promotion opportunities in the workplace due to unfair and fixed and basic work content, especially in traditional news media organizations.

In the traditional media industry where I work, there are some common gender stereotypes. Including the belief that women are more suitable for reporting soft news, while men are better at reporting hard news. In particular, I am usually assigned to social or cultural news at work. I rarely come into contact with hard news, such as sports news, political news, and war news. In particular, it limits me to certain types of reports, which will definitely affect my overall development and promotion opportunities. (Interviewee A4, 16 December 2024)

When assigning operational tasks, leaders prefer to assign tasks such as content writing and operation for social media platforms such as Weibo and Xiaohongshu

(rednote) to female workers. This is because they believe that girls' writing is softer... Then, boys are assigned to official newspapers and official platforms, or some public platforms, which are more formal. (Interviewee A3, 14 December 2024)

At the same time, this gender stereotype may lead to women being given priority in positions such as image display, publicity, or logistical support. As a result, they are less likely to obtain key positions of core creativity and editorial decision-making and lack competitiveness for leadership positions. Male-dominated leadership in the media industry limits women to 'soft news' or other auxiliary roles by reinforcing gender stereotypes (Ross, 2001). It not only limits the space for women's career development in this industry but also makes their abilities and professional values underestimated in the industry, thus further exacerbating gender inequality.

When I was interning, I probably did more office logistics-related work: if the boss asked you to do this today, you would do it.... It would be different from men, whose work is more complete and more in line with professional media work. I feel that the most important jobs belong to male. This makes male feel more capable. (Interviewee A3, 14 December 2024)

At the same time, the marginalisation of women in the media industry is often highlighted through implicit bias in language expressions. Thinly veiled and invisible language can imply that women are valued more for their physical appearance and supportive roles than for their professional journalistic or communication skills. The negative effects of sexism are more typical in the promotion of women, as has been shown in research (Qing, 2011). These language biases invisibly devalue women's professional abilities and restrict women to the role framework of some auxiliary positions. It not only reflects the prevalence of gender stereotypes in the media industry but also weakens women's opportunities to participate in key leadership and core professional fields (North, 2016).

However, some leaders, especially male leaders or old employees, would make fun of young female colleagues. They would spread rumors... they would like to match with others. Especially women are automatically assigned as objects. (Interviewee A1, 15 December 2024)

In fact, the workload of women is not less than that of men when I was interning. We are even more than that of men. But we cannot fully and truly show our professional talents. Because they will say, hey, girls may be more careful in preparing materials or organizing PPT, while boys are not so careful, they just need to be responsible for editing or something. They will use women's softness to 'define' women's work. (Interviewee A1, 14 December 2024)

In the media industry, women are marginalized due to

gender stereotypes. The nickname of 'vases' is forced to define the stereotype that women are only responsible for appearance and auxiliary work in the industry and ignore their professional abilities. Gender stereotypes still impact and intervene in the credibility of news articles, and the presence of women in the industry is more inclined to focus on appearance (Klaas & Boukes, 2022). At the same time, implicit bias in language further limits women's participation in core work, hindering their advancement in the industry and causing their professional abilities to be underestimated (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). This phenomenon is particularly prominent in traditional media. The career development of women in the workplace is severely restricted by gender bias, exacerbating gender inequality in the industry.

5. Gender hegemony observations based on the career of frontline women media workers

5.1 Community construction in the male circle: a collective behavioral tendency to exclude women

In the workplace, the circle construction completed quickly by male employees enables community formation. They use the male hegemonic behavior formed by power distribution, resource control and decision-making processes to form a collective behavior of male employees that excludes women, which can be called a homogenization tendency (Kanter, 2008). It also reinforces stereotypes about women and potential gender discrimination. It leads to the exclusion or marginalization of women in the industry and restricts them to low-power auxiliary roles (North, 2009). In the news culture dominated by male hegemony, not only are competition and authority emphasized and feminine traits excluded, but women are also excluded from resource allocation and promotion opportunities through power. They also use implicit bias to reinforce further the stereotype that women are suitable for 'soft news'. Restricting their future career development makes it difficult for women to gain a place in management (North, 2009). The importance of women's solidarity has been highlighted in this regard, such as the MeToo movement. From a social level, female journalists' public visibility should be widely improved, and the actual situation of female media workers should be shown through actions such as spreading social movements for women's equality. It will help eliminate gender stereotypes against women in the media industry and promote women to gain more equal status and recognition.

At the same time, the media industry should actively promote the contribution of women and eliminate the barriers caused by gender issues through some legal activities. For example, in 2017, the famous news organization BBC was exposed for its gender pay gap, which triggered constant controversy within the media industry (BBC, 2018a). For example, news presenters, operators and reporters. Women and men have the same working hours and work content, but male colleagues in the same position earn twice as much as female reporters (BBC, 2018b). It is the most direct way to reflect the stereotypes and unequal treatment of women in the media industry, which is led by male circles. Therefore, the solidarity of female employees has become crucial after the fermentation of this incident. When thousands of BBC employees collected comments and data and conducted in-depth investigations, this incident attracted society's attention. At the same time, a project to protect women's workplaces called Making the BBC a Great Workplace for Women was launched. The power of women's solidarity has promoted gender equality in the media workplace culture and the career development of female media people worldwide (BBC, 2018c). This action not only reflects that women can jointly cope with gender discrimination in the workplace through mutual support and collaboration but also enables media organizations worldwide to value women's contribution to journalism. This weakens the prejudice against women caused by gender stereotypes and breaks through the inherent gender boundaries in the workplace.

Take the video game industry as an example. Women are often excluded from men and stigmatized as auxiliary roles outside the power centre. Therefore, gender swapping occurs during the game, and players shuttle between 'he' and 'she', creating gender games (Huang et al., 2021). In addition, benevolent sexism in the workplace and at home has a direct impact on women's careers. Lower expectations of career satisfaction for women may lead to reduced promotion opportunities for women (Zhang et al., 2019). The male circle constructs and reinforces gender stereotypes and implicit biases throughout the community. They exclude female staff from core power and restrict their career development. This behavior exacerbates the marginalization of women in the workplace and consolidates the structural problem of gender inequality in the workplace. In this context, women have promoted the industry and society to pay attention to gender equality through their actions. Women have enhanced their professional voice and prompted media organizations to pay attention to and value women's contributions. It will reduce gender bias in the media industry and promote fair distribution of career development opportunities for men and women.

Compared to the hegemonic male exclusionary behaviour, which is a hostile gender bias, the influence of popular attitudes towards female practitioners and women's career development in the media industry is more commonly known as 'sweet poison', called benevolent sexism (Zhang et al., 2019). This metaphor vividly reveals that seemingly well-intentioned behaviors and concepts may hide hidden harm to women's career development. This prejudice follows the traditional gender role norms to maintain the patriarchal social structure jointly. This prejudice regards women as beautiful and weak stereotypes such as wives and mothers who need protection and have good morals and romantic emotions (Glick et al., 1997, 2000). Moreover, give positive evaluations to women who meet these role norms. Benevolent sexism is an attitude that cares for women subjectively but restricts women to traditional gender role positioning (Zhang et al., 2019). In the media industry, women may be 'kindly' guided towards areas that are stereotyped to be more 'suitable' for career advancement, such as entertainment, fashion or culture programs, news and reports, rather than hard news fields such as politics, finance, war and so on. This potential gender bias is often not necessarily malicious, but it subtly restricts women's career growth. As a result, female media workers are unfairly biased and positioned in this highly competitive industry. In this context, it is explained that some measures that seem to care about women and support their development may restrict their career development, limit their choices, or strengthen gender stereotypes (Zhang et al., 2019).

5.2 Masculine design of female leadership images: Marginalization of female gender traits

In modern society, women's gender temperament is influenced by society's traditional perception of authority. This influence often makes women face challenges when building authority. Historically, authority has been associated with masculine traits such as rationality, calmness, and other adjectives. When these traits appear in women, they will be regarded as not conforming to the gender roles of traditional society. Butler (2004) proposed gender performativity, which states that gender is not only a biological difference but is also constantly performed and constructed through culture and social norms. He demonstrates that gender temperament is determined by socialization. Therefore, women are often restricted to softer and auxiliary roles in the workplace and society, especially in the media industry, where they must demonstrate leadership or decision-making power. This makes it difficult for women to obtain the same authority as men. For example, in ancient Chinese society, Confucianism

dominated the shaping of gender roles. Women's temperament was idealized as gentle, virtuous, obedient and family-centered. Women's social roles are often related to the family, taking on housework, washing clothes, cooking, and educating children (Bray, 2013). For example, embroidery was an important part of women's work in ancient society, suggesting that women's roles in the family or society are often seen as caring for others (Bray, 2013). The proficiency of embroidery is often used as a criterion for judging the qualities of ancient women. From the historical evolution, it can understand that society more emphasize women's virtues rather than their management and decision-making skills. With the modernization of society, although women have gradually participated in social and political life and have gradually begun to fight for more social, political and economic rights for themselves, society's expectations of femininity are still strongly gender biased. Society's stereotypes of traditional gender roles still exist, especially in leadership decision-making. Although women have broken the stereotypes of female identity in traditional social culture and can participate in various industries, the connection between femininity and leadership is still weak. Authority is still related to masculinity. For example, when women show leadership, if they are too strong or have a poker face, they will be questioned and criticized for deviating from the norm of femininity. Although women have gradually gained more social status in modern society, gender stereotypes still affect their professional performance and authority construction.

In the modern media industry, women's gender temperament also faces similar challenges. When demonstrating professional authority, women are also required to find a balance between social gender expectations and professional ability. For example, the role of a news anchor puts women under double standards. Women who serve as news anchors must have professional ability and meet the standards of appearance and temperament. This requirement puts women under a double standard. On the one hand, they must appear calm, rational, and authoritative, but on the other hand, they are emphasized and expected to be flexible and considerate in their words and avoid appearing overly strong and masculine (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). Therefore, many female news anchors are often limited in their ability to demonstrate authority and need to find a balance between their professional identity and gender expectations. However, as a place that requires authority and decisiveness, the media industry's unique temperament may affect female news anchors' ability to gain equal respect and authority (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015). In the current media, through television, advertising and other forms, it is still seen that the feminine tem-

perament is strengthened, and the performance of women in authoritative roles is restricted, especially in the news media (Grill, 2007).

Therefore, in the media field, female leaders and journalists face conflicts caused by gender temperament. Traditional gender temperament emphasizes that women should have characteristics such as weakness and obedience, while leadership and authority are regarded as part of masculinity. Even in modern society, gender bias still has a profound impact on women's performance and promotion in the workplace. It is especially true in fields that require strong decision-making and leadership capabilities, such as the media and journalism industry. The gender structure of the news industry still faces challenges for women in a male-dominated workplace. On the one hand, female journalists and staff are often required to conform to traditional feminine standards, such as gentleness, thoughtfulness, and emotionality. However, these temperamental characteristics may weaken their ability to demonstrate professional authority in some hard news fields (Ross, 2001). On the other hand, women are often expected to play supporting and auxiliary roles, thus lacking opportunities to be important in the power structure, which makes it difficult for women to build leadership and authority due to the influence of traditional gender temperament (Acker, 2009). The traditional standards of female gender temperament not only affect their career development but also affect society's perception of women's professional roles.

From ancient times to the present, the construction of female gender temperament is a product of history and social culture and is deeply influenced by traditional gender roles and social expectations. From traditional Chinese culture to modern society, women in the workplace, especially in the media industry, often face a conflict between being flexible and expressing authority. As Butler's (2004) gender performative theory states, gender performative theory holds that gender is jointly constructed by society and culture. In particular, for some high-level female talents, the construction of their femininity will fully consider the influence of social expectations and gender stereotypes (Gao, 2015). In the current media environment, while women need to fully demonstrate their professional rationality and authority, they are also constrained by the industry and society to not deviate from society's expectations of femininity. This conflict of gender stereotypes often makes women face more resistance when building authority in the workplace.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the reality that it is difficult for

women to obtain leadership positions, this article studies the dilemma of women's leadership in the media industry due to gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes have a profound impact on women's career development, especially the acquisition of leadership, in the social, cultural and professional environment. In the media industry, this stereotype is reflected in the allocation of women's work roles and in the key steps of acquiring career resources and promotion opportunities. According to in-depth interviews with four respondents who met the research criteria and background, women are often restricted to auxiliary or non-core positions due to gender stereotypes. At the same time, the allocation of important resources is more inclined towards men, further exacerbating gender inequality in the media industry. At the same time, women are constantly trying to break through gender stereotypes, especially when they want to take on leadership roles. They also hope to be recognized and valued in the industry. However, female media workers are always restricted by the malicious gender bias brought about by male hegemony and the benevolent sexism constructed for women in traditional society. Their behavior and leadership will be seen as a conflict of gender temperament, leading to more obstacles in building workplace authority. This hidden obstacle constitutes a promotion ceiling in the workplace, which has a negative impact on women's professional identity and limits the diversity of the media industry. Therefore, if the media industry wants to achieve gender equality further further, it needs not only to analyze the manifestations of gender stereotypes but also to strengthen transparent system design and reform in the media workplace. The industry needs to create an environment that can fairly support women's career and leadership development, thereby reducing the restrictions on women's development caused by traditional gender role concepts. This article provides important insights into gender stereotypes in the media industry and their impact on the development of female leadership and authority, but there are still limitations and deficiencies. The representativeness of the research sample is relatively limited, lacking attention and research on the male perspective and other intersectionalities. In addition, the research focuses on qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews but lacks the support of large-scale quantitative data. It makes it difficult to verify and support the extent of the impact of gender stereotypes on the media industry, especially female leadership. The sample range should be expanded in future research, combining qualitative and quantitative research. From an intersectional perspective, the impact of gender stereotypes in the media industry on female workers and the construction of leadership and authority can be revealed more deeply and comprehensively.

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