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Торайғыров университета

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MASS MEDIA AND GENDER STEREOTYPES: RESULTS OF A PILOT STUDY

This article presents the results of a pilot study of the influence of mass media, especially advertising on gender stereotypes. The significant role of digital media in the formation and dissemination of gender stereotypes is shown. An analysis of secondary data was carried out, where generational differences in the perception of stereotypes were established. Results showed a high level of awareness of gender stereotypes and its identification in the mass media among participants. Meanwhile, socio-cultural features, value orientations, social norms and others serve as a source of preservation and further spread of stereotypes. To eradicate and reduce gender stereotypes, it is necessary to improve the regulatory framework in the field of media, advertising and monitoring these areas for the presence of gender stereotypes. In connection with the transformation of society and value orientations, this research topic is relevant and requires an interdisciplinary approach in its study by sociologists, psychologists, and culturologists.

Keywords: media, culture, gender stereotypes, advertising, discrimination.

Introduction

Mass media is a powerful factor in the formation of public consciousness. They reinforce certain concepts and stereotypes in public opinion. According to Lee P.S.N. (2014) «media refers to tools that help people distribute, receive and share information, experience or entertainment among themselves on a large scale» [1]. This includes both print and electronic media. For instance, newspapers, magazines, books, films, radio stations, etc. With the development of the information society, mass media also develops through the Internet (social

networks, instant messengers, etc.) and has acquired the character of digital mass media. Now, there is a significant predominance of digital mass media over traditional [2]. All this has led to an increase in the amount of information, and the impact of this information on human life. In this article, we will consider the spread of stereotypes, in particular gender stereotypes, through the main channels of the digital mass media.

In the social sciences, the term «stereotype» is usually defined as relatively fixed and oversimplified generalizations about groups or classes of people. (G. Allport, 1954). In practice, they tend to focus on negative, unfavorable characteristics, although some authorities include positive social overgeneralizations in their stereotyping. The term comes from the Greek words «stereo» meaning «hard» and «tupos» meaning «image or impression», from «tuptein» meaning «to hit». The term was first adapted by W. Lippmann (1922) in his classic book *Public Opinion* [3]. Stereotyping is a cognitive process and can be learned (explicitly or implicitly) and reinforced through many different social influences, including but not limited to friends and family, neighbors, teachers, peer groups, and wider social influences. One important example is that the media (hereinafter referred to as the media) have often been studied and discussed in terms of the role they play in creating, promoting, and maintaining the stereotypes of many different groups through the representations they represent, since the media have a great influence on many people. Some groups, as a rule, are underrepresented in the media, but the images that exist in the media space are disproportionately stereotyped. These representations in the media can affect people's support for stereotypes, especially if people do not have frequent and close contact with members of groups represented outside of what they see in the media [4].

There are the following most common types of stereotypes: racial, cultural, social, religious, political and gender. As noted above, in this article we will focus on gender stereotypes. There are many differences between men and women. To some extent, they are embodied in the stereotypical images of these groups. Stereotypes about how men and women think and behave are widespread, and there is some truth in them.

Gender stereotypes are generalizations about what men and women are and there is usually a lot of consensus about them. According to social role theory, gender stereotypes arise from the inconsistency in the distribution of men and women in social roles both at home and at work (Eagly, 1987, 1997; Koenig and Eagly, 2014). Gender stereotypes are used not only to characterize others, but also to characterize oneself (Bem, 1974). According to stereotypes, the process of self-stereotyping can influence people's identity. Thus, stereotypical characteristics can be internalized and become part of a person's gender identity,

which is an important aspect of self-image (Ruble and Martin, 1998; Wood and Eagley, 2015). Boys and girls learn about gender stereotypes from their immediate environment and the media and learn how to behave in a way that is gender specific (Deaux and LaFrance, 1998). This socialization experiences no doubt continues to influence later in life, and indeed studies have shown that male and female self-characterizations differ according to stereotypes (Bem, 1974; Spence and Buckner, 2000).

In Kazakhstan researchers also diversify the topic of gender, gender stereotypes and the influence of culture on identity and socialization. For example, Kylyshbaeva B. in her article on the formation of male identity, she notes the transformation of gender roles in a changing world and society, as well as the importance of sociocultural conditions and the process of adaptation to them [5]. In another study, Satybalдина N., Urgaliev R. showed an empirical relationship between gender identity and its influence on the choice of life values among young people [6]. A group of researchers Aimaganbetova O. et al., (2016) in a review article devoted to the study of the influence of culture on the formation of gender stereotypes, conclude that it is necessary to consider the «interaction of biological, cultural and psychological factors» [7]. In the article Masalimova A., Naisbayeva A., on the example of advertising materials in Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Russia, the significant influence of advertising on the «formation and approval» of gender stereotypes in the mass consciousness of citizens is shown. At the same time, they mentioned about the patriarchal nature of the modern Kazakh mentality as the main source of the spread and preservation of gender stereotypes [8].

In this part, we made a brief overview of the studies of foreign and Kazakh researchers devoted to the study of mass media, stereotypes, especially gender stereotypes. Considered cultural characteristics in the study of this topic.

Materials and methods

The pilot study was conducted as part of the study of the course «Cultural studies» and the assignment «Pilot study report» at Astana IT University (hereinafter AITU) during the 2nd trimester (January-February 2022). We developed a survey, which, in addition to the socio-demographic block of questions, included three main questions:

- *How aware are you of the topic of gender stereotypes?*
- *How often do you notice gender stereotypes in mass media and in various shows (media, TV, Internet)?*
- *What do you think, what results does the discussion of gender stereotypes lead to in the mass media space?*

The inclusion of these questions made it possible to quantify the opinion of respondents about gender stereotypes and their awareness of this topic.

The survey was conducted in English language, based on the Google Forms online survey platform. The choice of language is because studying at AITU takes place in English. The choice in favor of the online method of data collection is justified by wide access to respondents, as well as convenience for participants in the form of complete confidentiality, saving personal time. To collect data, an online survey was published on various social networks and instant messengers, where everyone could voluntarily participate in it. Moreover, the snowball method was used, when the study participants sent the link to the online questionnaire to their friends, classmates, etc.

In our sample, the age ranged from 18 to 22 years old with an average age of $\text{Mage}=19.5$ years. In addition, according to the level of education, all respondents noted that they are currently studying at the university.

Results and discussion

Based on the analysis of the results, we obtained the following results: 95,5 % of respondents noted that they are aware of gender stereotypes. This may be due to generational differences between the group of youth and adults. For instance, researchers found that a group of young people are more aware and receptive to gender issues/information [9]. However, in the realities of Kazakhstan, the adult generation of 30 years and older demonstrates a higher level of knowledge about gender policy and related issues [10].

Regarding the question «How often do you notice gender stereotypes in the mass media and in various shows?» responses were on a frequency scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means rarely and 5 means often. The results show that many participants often notice gender stereotypes in the mass media space and in various programs. In percentage terms, this amounted to 86,4 % of respondents' answers. The remaining 13,6 % of respondents rarely notice stereotypes, or do not notice at all. A high percentage of identification of gender stereotypes in the media sphere is also confirmed by the studies of foreign researchers. For instance, in a study on the influence of stereotypes in TV and cinema on the development of children, researchers found that adolescents and children can recognize stereotypes [11]. The study and analysis of gender stereotypes in the advertising sphere by Kazakhstani researchers and NGOs does not stand aside. Researchers note the following trend: a sharp reaction on the part of society to open discrimination in advertising. An example would be an advertisement campaign by «Chocotravel» [12]. One of the brightest examples of raising the topic of gender stereotypes in a TV is the show program «Figurative truth» (in kazakh Астарлы ақиқат). The guy A. was invited to this program because of his appearance, since he, being a man, wears cosmetics and dresses feminine. In Kazakhstan, of course, intolerance towards people like A. is strongly expressed. In the TV show, he was accused of being «not like everyone else» and that this is not typical of a «real» man.

After that, a big wave of condemnation and misunderstanding hit him [13]. However, a few commercials containing hidden discrimination, stereotypical patterns continue to be broadcast and remain unattended [14].

According to the third question «What do you think is the result of discussing gender stereotypes in the show?», the results showed that 31,8% of respondents voted for positive results, 31,8 % of respondents voted for negative results and 36,4 % of respondents voted for neutral results.

In conclusion of this block, it can be noted that the results show that many respondents are familiar with the term «gender stereotypes». In addition, 86.4 % of respondents notice gender stereotypes in various programs. Finally, the answers to the third question show that many participants believed that the discussion of gender stereotypes in programs leads to neutral results, not negative or positive ones. However, we recognize that the results are based on a small number of AITU student participants and do not represent the opinion of the majority of young people in Kazakhstan.

Conclusion

In this article, based on the analysis of secondary data and the conduct of a quantitative study, we explore stereotypes, in particular the dissemination of gender stereotypes through the mass media. The obtained data and analysis confirm the importance and influence of mass media on the formation and dissemination of gender stereotypes. In addition, a connection has been established between stereotypes and culture, social norms, and value orientations. As an eradication and reduction of gender stereotypes, we see that it is necessary to improve the regulatory framework in the field of media, advertising, and monitoring of these areas for the presence of gender stereotypes by the public and researchers.

Finally, we would like to note that the task of modern media is to determine their use, to break outdated anachronistic stereotypes, to comprehend the source of the gender stereotype, and to capture and fix something new that characterizes time and surface. Since the general function of the media is to disseminate socially assimilated norms. and meeting, including holding new, corrective, representative events about femininity/masculinity and representativeness.

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БҰҚАРАЛЫҚ МЕДИА ЖӘНЕ ГЕНДЕРЛІК СТЕРЕОТИПТЕР: ПИЛОТТЫҚ ЗЕРТТЕУ НӘТИЖЕЛЕРІ

Бұл мақалада масс медианың, әсіресе жарнаманың гендерлік стереотиптерге ықпалын пилоттық зерттеудің нәтижесі негізінде берілген. Сонымен қатар осы тақырып бойынша бар зерттеулердің бағыттарының негізгі тенденциялары көрсетілген. Гендерлік стереотиптерді қалыптастыру мен таратуда цифрлық медианың, оның ішінде әлеуметтік желілер, онлайн журналдар және т.б. маңызды ролі көрсетілген. Қайталама деректер негізінде стереотиптерді қабылдаудағы ұрпақ-аралық айырмашылықтар белгіленді. Біздің пилоттық зерттеуімізге сәйкес, респонденттердің гендерлік стереотиптерден хабардар болуы және оны масс медиада анықтау деңгейі жоғары болды. Сонымен қатар, стереотиптердің сақталуы мен одан әрі таралуының көзі ретінде әлеуметтік-мәдени ерекшеліктер, құндылық бағдарлар, әлеуметтік нормалар, сондай-ақ патриархалдық мәдениет пен оның негіздерінің ықпалы қызмет етеді. Гендерлік стереотиптерді жою және азайту үшін медиа, жарнама және осы салаларда гендерлік стереотиптердің болуына мониторинг жүргізу саласындағы нормативтік-құқықтық базаны жетілдіру қажет екенін көреміз. Қоғамның және құндылық бағдарлардың өзгеруіне байланысты бұл зерттеу тақырыбы өзекті болып табылады және оны зерттеуде әлеуметтанушылар, психологтар және мәдениеттанушылар пәнаралық көзқарасын қажет етеді.

Кілтті сөздер: медиа, мәдениет, гендерлік стереотиптер, жарнама, кемсіту.

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МАСС МЕДИА И ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ СТЕРЕОТИПЫ: РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ПИЛОТАЖНОГО ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

В данной статье представлены результаты пилотажного исследования влияния масс медиа, в особенности рекламы, на гендерные стереотипы, а также отражены основные тенденции направлений существующих исследований по этой теме.

Показана значительная роль цифровых медиа, таких как социальные сети, онлайн-журналы, и др. в формировании и распространении гендерных стереотипов. Проведен анализ вторичных данных, где были установлены поколенческие различия в восприятии стереотипов. Согласно нашему пилотажному исследованию, респонденты показали высокий уровень осведомленности о гендерных стереотипах и их идентификации в сфере масс медиа. Вместе с тем, социокультурные особенности, ценностные ориентации, социальные нормы, а также влияние патриархальной культуры и ее устоев служат источником сохранения и дальнейшего распространения стереотипов. В качестве искоренения и снижения гендерных стереотипов, мы видим, что необходимо усовершенствовать нормативно-правовую базу в сфере медиа, рекламы и мониторинг этих сфер на наличие гендерных стереотипов. В силу трансформации общества и ценностных ориентаций, данная тема исследования является актуальной и требует междисциплинарного подхода в ее изучении со стороны социологов, психологов и культурологов.

Ключевые слова: медиа, культура, гендерные стереотипы, реклама, дискриминация.

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