

Project Report on

“Exploring Gender Stereotypes in popular media”

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(May 2, 2024)

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Date: May 2nd, 2024

Respected Ma'am,

This is to inform you that we are submitting our report entitled "Exploring Gender Stereotypes in popular media" as partial fulfilment of the Professional Communication Course (UHU003) requirement.

The survey aimed to gain insights into the influence of media on perceptions of gender roles and identities, as well as to assess the prevalence of gender stereotypes in contemporary media content. We believe that the findings presented in this report will contribute valuable information to the ongoing discourse on gender representation in the media landscape.

Throughout the survey process, we endeavored to ensure the integrity and reliability of the data collected. The responses obtained from the participants have been carefully analyzed to identify key trends, patterns, and insights regarding gender stereotypes in popular media.

We trust that the information contained in this report will be of interest and benefit to you and your organization. Should you require any further clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this survey, and we look forward to any feedback or insights you may have on the findings presented.

Most Sincerely

Harshit Sethi (102115230)

Akhil (102115239)

Chirag Punia (102115010)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project report on '**Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media**' is a bonafide project work done originally by **Harshit Sethi (102115230), Akhil (102115239), Chirag Punia (102115010)** in fulfilment of the project work given by the School

of Humanities and Social Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology during the year 2022. Ms Rishita Goyal

Date: May 2, 2024 Place: Patiala

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the onset, we wish to portray this endeavor focusing on "Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media" as a transformative journey, rich with learning experiences. The culmination of this project owes its success to the exceptional support, guidance, counsel, and motivation extended by our esteemed mentors at Thapar University. This expedition would have been incomplete without the unwavering support from our family and friends.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Professor Ms. Rishita Goyal for her invaluable contribution to this project. Her presence was palpable during critical decision-making junctures, imparting deep insights into the subject matter, which undoubtedly propelled the project towards qualitative and timely completion. Ms. Rishita Goyal guidance encouraged us to delve into unique conceptual and practical dimensions of gender stereotypes in popular media, elevating the project to its successful culmination. We also express our appreciation to our friends for their constant encouragement and support throughout this endeavor.

Introduction

Gender stereotypes in popular media have been a subject of considerable debate and scrutiny in recent years, as society becomes increasingly aware of the pervasive influence of media on shaping perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. The portrayal of men and women in various forms of media, including movies, television shows, advertisements, and social media, often perpetuates certain stereotypical notions about gender roles and characteristics. These stereotypes not only reinforce traditional gender norms but also contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality and discrimination. As such, understanding and analyzing the prevalence and impact of gender stereotypes in popular media is essential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society.

The influence of popular media on shaping societal perceptions of gender cannot be overstated. From a young age, individuals are exposed to media representations of gender that often adhere to narrow and restrictive stereotypes. These portrayals not only shape how individuals perceive themselves and others but also inform societal attitudes and expectations regarding gender roles and behaviors. Therefore, examining the ways in which gender stereotypes are perpetuated and reinforced in popular media is crucial for understanding the broader socio-cultural dynamics at play and identifying opportunities for intervention and change. By critically analyzing the portrayal of gender in various forms of media, we can begin to challenge and deconstruct harmful stereotypes, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster more equitable representations of gender in popular culture.

Furthermore, the advent of digital media and the widespread accessibility of content through online platforms have amplified the reach and impact of gender stereotypes in popular culture. With social media platforms becoming integral parts of daily life for millions of people worldwide, the influence of media on shaping perceptions of gender has become more immediate and pervasive than ever before. Therefore, examining the role of digital media in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes is essential for understanding contemporary dynamics of media representation and its implications for societal attitudes towards gender.

Overview of Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media

Gender stereotypes in popular media typically depict men and women in predefined roles and attributes that conform to societal expectations. These stereotypes not only reinforce traditional gender norms but also contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality and discrimination.

Analysis of Gender Stereotypes in Different Forms of Media

1. Movies and Television Shows

In mainstream cinema and television, gender stereotypes are pervasive. Male characters are often cast as action heroes or leaders, while female characters are relegated to supporting roles or depicted as damsels in distress. Additionally, female characters are frequently hypersexualized or portrayed as dependent on male counterparts for validation and success. Mainstream media often presents stereotypical portrayals of gender roles, perpetuating the idea that men should be strong, assertive, and dominant, while women should

be passive, nurturing, and dependent. These representations not only limit the diversity of roles available to actors but also reinforce harmful stereotypes about gender roles in society. For example, action movies often feature male protagonists who are depicted as tough and emotionally stoic, while female characters are reduced to love interests or sidekicks. This perpetuates the notion that men are inherently more capable and powerful than women, reinforcing patriarchal power structures.

2. Advertisements:

Advertisements play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions of gender roles. Advertisements targeting men often emphasize strength, aggression, and success, while those targeting women focus on beauty, domesticity, and submissiveness.

Gender stereotypes in advertisements contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender norms and expectations. Advertisements often present idealized images of masculinity and femininity, promoting unrealistic standards of beauty and behavior. For example, ads targeting men may depict hypermasculine stereotypes, such as muscularity and dominance, while ads targeting women may emphasize physical appearance and domesticity. These portrayals not only perpetuate harmful stereotypes but also contribute to body image issues and low self-esteem among viewers.

3. Social Media:

Social media platforms are rife with gender stereotypes, perpetuated through influencers, celebrities, and user-generated content. Social media platforms can both challenge and perpetuate gender stereotypes, depending on the content and users' interactions. While social media has the potential to amplify diverse voices and challenge traditional gender norms, it also provides a platform for the dissemination of harmful stereotypes. For example, influencers and celebrities often promote narrow standards of beauty and behavior, reinforcing unrealistic expectations for both men and women. Moreover, cyberbullying and online harassment based on gender are prevalent issues on social media platforms, further perpetuating harmful stereotypes and contributing to gender-based discrimination and violence.

Impact of Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media:

The perpetuation of gender stereotypes in popular media has far-reaching consequences for individuals and society as a whole. It can contribute to the reinforcement of harmful gender norms, leading to discrimination, gender-based violence, and limited opportunities for women and marginalized genders. Moreover, exposure to gender stereotypes in media can negatively impact individuals' self-esteem, mental health, and sense of identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender stereotypes in popular media have been a subject of extensive research. Let's delve into the findings from various studies:

Critical Discourse Analysis and Political Media Discourse:

[Sriwimon, Lanchukorn, and Pattamawan Jimarkon Zilli¹](#) explored gender stereotypes in political media discourse using Critical Discourse Analysis. Their study highlighted how media representations can perpetuate traditional gender roles and reinforce existing power dynamics. By examining language use and framing in political contexts, they shed light on how media contribute to shaping societal perceptions of gender.

Media and Development of Gender Role Stereotypes:

[Ward and Grower²](#) investigated the role of media in shaping gender role stereotypes. Their review emphasized that media content often reinforces traditional gender norms, limiting opportunities for children, especially girls and women. By analyzing TV shows, films, and advertising, they highlighted how these norms can impact societal expectations and behaviors.

Gender Representations and Objectification in Media:

[Santoniccolo et al.³](#) conducted a comprehensive review of gender representations in media. They explored objectification and sexualization, emphasizing how media portrayals can perpetuate harmful stereotypes. Their study highlighted the need for more equitable and diverse representations to challenge existing norms.

Media Influence on Gender Stereotypes:

[Goodall⁴](#) examined the influence of media on gender stereotypes. Their research emphasized that media content plays a significant role in shaping societal perceptions. By analyzing media messages, they underscored the importance of promoting positive and non-stereotypical portrayals of gender.

Psychological Impact of Modern Mass Media:

[Shamilishvili⁵](#) delved into the psychological influence of modern mass media on gender stereotypes. Their study explored how media content affects individuals' perceptions and behaviors. By examining the interplay between media exposure and cognitive processes, they highlighted the need for critical media literacy.

Gender Stereotypes in Advertising:

Grau and Zotos reviewed current research on gender stereotypes in advertising. Their study focused on how advertisements perpetuate traditional gender roles and reinforce societal expectations. By analyzing ad campaigns, they emphasized the impact of visual and textual cues on shaping gender perceptions.

SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

In today's media landscape, gender stereotypes persist and exert a significant influence on societal perceptions and behaviors. These stereotypes often perpetuate harmful norms and reinforce inequalities. Exploring gender stereotypes in popular media is crucial for understanding their impact and identifying strategies to challenge and dismantle them.

By examining the portrayal of gender roles and identities in various forms of popular media, this study aims to shed light on the ways in which media shapes and reinforces gender stereotypes. Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, we seek to uncover the underlying messages and narratives that contribute to the perpetuation of these stereotypes.

The findings of this study will not only provide insights into the prevalence and perpetuation of gender stereotypes in popular media but also inform efforts to promote gender equality and diversity in media representation. By raising awareness and advocating for more inclusive and accurate portrayals of gender in media, we can contribute to positive social change and challenge entrenched stereotypes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the prevalence and types of gender stereotypes portrayed in mainstream media, including TV shows, movies, and advertisements.
- To assess the impact of gender stereotypes in media on individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, particularly regarding masculinity, femininity, and gender identity.
- To explore the role of social media platforms in perpetuating or challenging gender stereotypes and their influence on societal norms.
- To investigate the changes in the portrayal of gender roles and identities in media over time and identify any trends towards more diverse and inclusive representations.
- To propose recommendations for content creators and media organizations to promote more positive and accurate portrayals of gender, fostering greater equality and respect for all genders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the context of exploring gender stereotypes in popular media, there is an urgent call for all members of society to contribute to reshaping how our needs are met. This shift necessitates a transformation of both production and consumption systems. Within this framework, the portrayal of gender stereotypes in popular media assumes a critical role, as it influences societal perceptions and norms regarding gender roles and identities.

The concept of the "Right to Representation" has emerged as a focal point in various platforms such as tech webinars, podcasts, and academic literature. Much data has been sourced from these discussions, alongside extensive review of research papers, journals, and product websites. Additionally, a survey has been conducted among consumers of media content, utilizing a questionnaire to gauge preferences and perceptions regarding the portrayal of gender stereotypes in popular media and its impact on societal norms and values.

DATA SOURCES

• Primary Data

A questionnaire was filled out by the people. The data collected and the interpretations of the same are presented ahead in this report.

• Secondary Data

Research papers, journals, and magazines were studied. Information from Podcasts was also taken into consideration.

• Data Collection Method

The primary data collection method used in this research is the questionnaire method. Here the data are systematically recorded from the respondents.

The secondary data used here is from published research papers, journals and podcasts.

RESEARCH TOOL

To facilitate data collection, a structured questionnaire has been meticulously crafted to elicit relevant insights from respondents. The questionnaire encompasses a diverse range of inquiries aimed at capturing nuanced perspectives on gender stereotypes prevalent in popular media.

SAMPLING

The target demographic for this study was specifically drawn from various academic institutions, prioritizing those with a diverse representation of gender identities. Considering the nuanced nature of the topic, the sample unit primarily comprises students enrolled in media studies or related disciplines, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Sample Unit - Students enrolled in media studies programs across different academic institutions serve as the primary sample unit in this research.

Sample Size - In order to attain a thorough analysis within the scope of this Mini Research Project, a sample size of 81 respondents has been deemed sufficient. **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.**

1. Your Age Group

80 responses

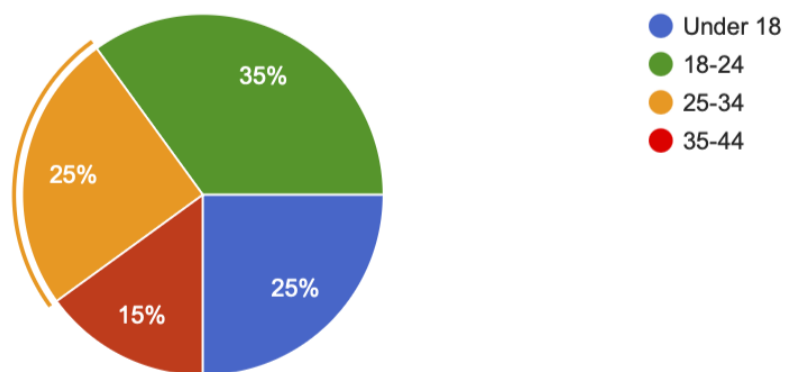


Fig. 1 Age Group

2.What types of gender stereotypes have you noticed while watching TV shows or movies?

81 responses

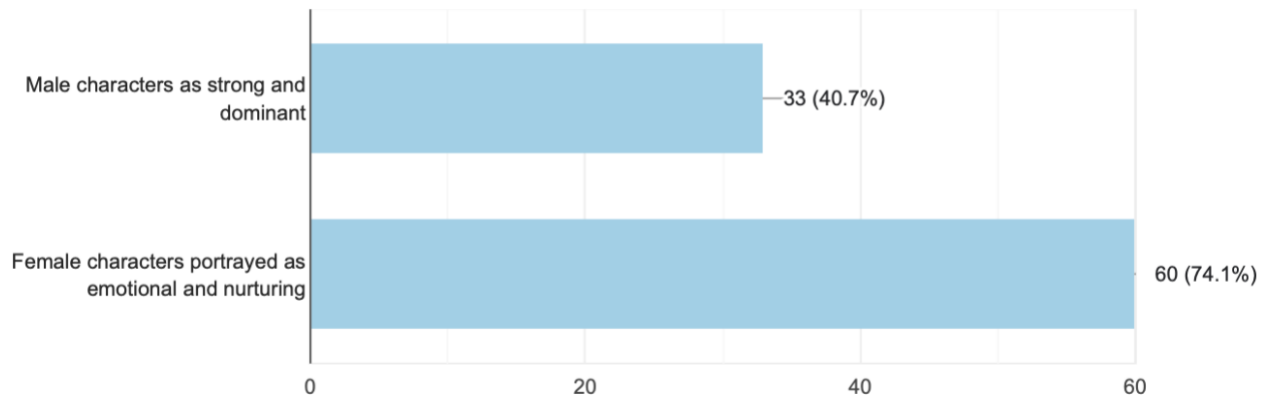


Fig. 2 Gender Stereotypes noticed while watching tv

3.Do you think the media accurately represents the diversity of gender identities?

81 responses

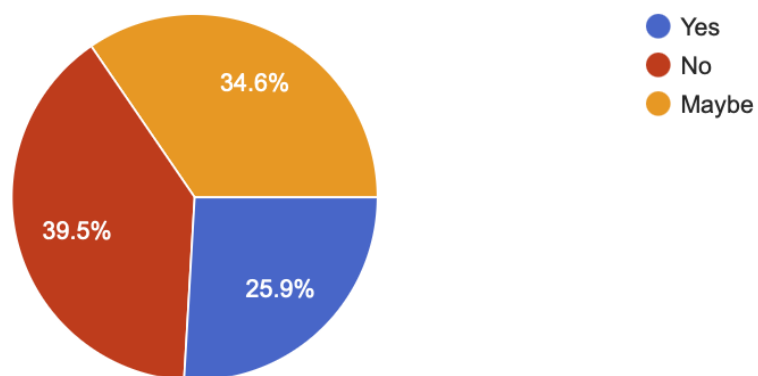


Fig. 3 Media representing diversity of gender identities

4. Have you ever felt pressured to conform to gender stereotypes portrayed in media?

81 responses

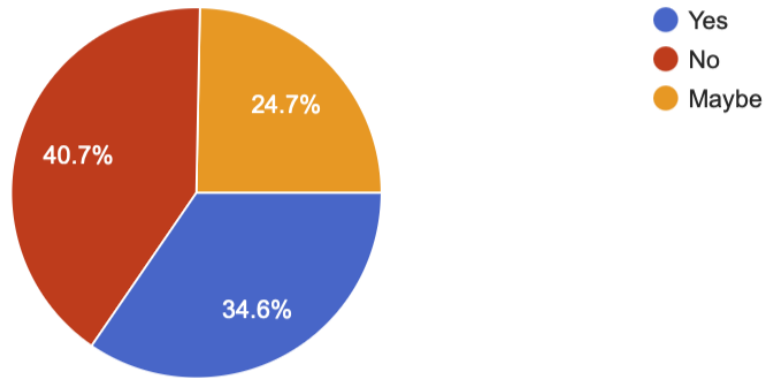


Fig. 4 Pressure to conform Gender Stereotypes

5. Can you recall any advertisements that reinforce traditional gender roles?

81 responses

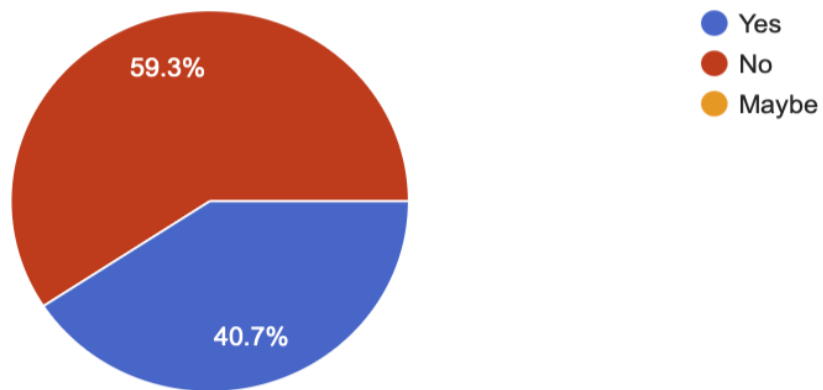


Fig. 5

6. How do gender stereotypes in media affect your perceptions of masculinity and femininity?

81 responses

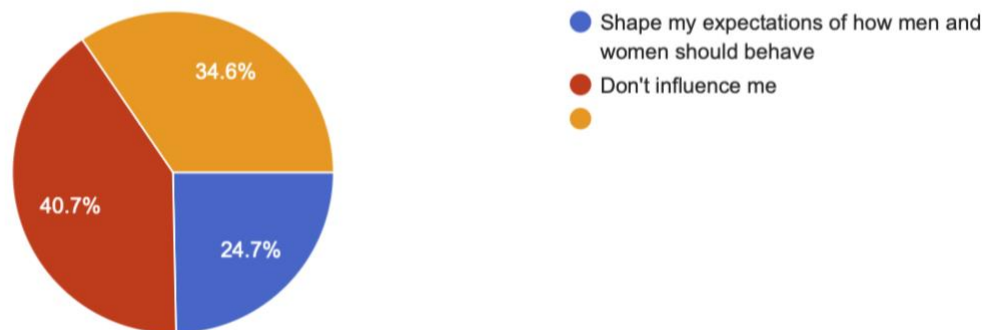


Fig. 6

7. Have you noticed any changes in the portrayal of gender roles in media over the years? If so, what are they?

81 responses

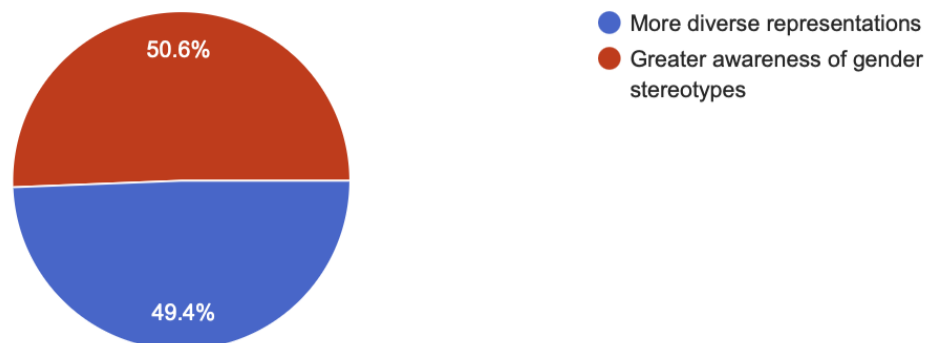


Fig. 7

8. Do you think the media has a responsibility to challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes?

81 responses

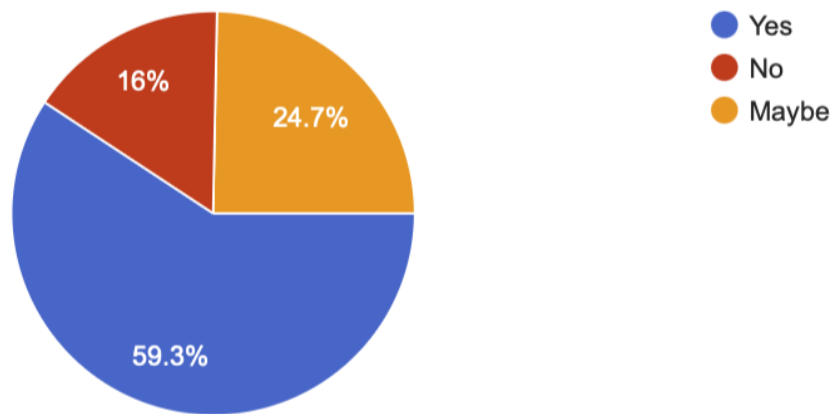


Fig. 8

9. How do representations of gender in media affect your self-esteem?

81 responses

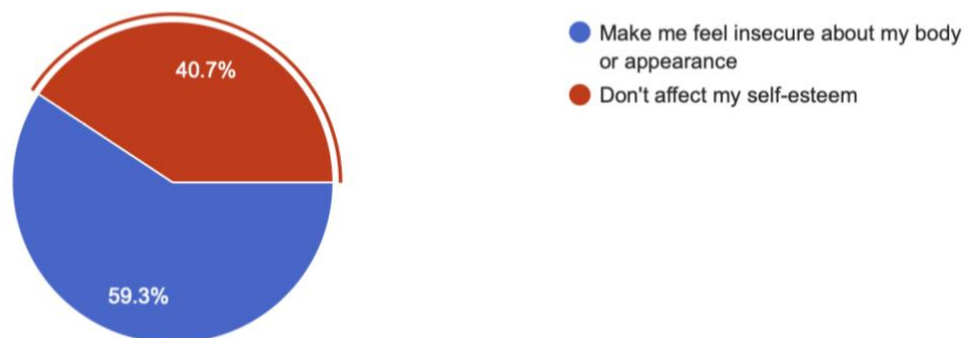


Fig. 9

10. What role do you think social media plays in perpetuating gender stereotypes?

81 responses

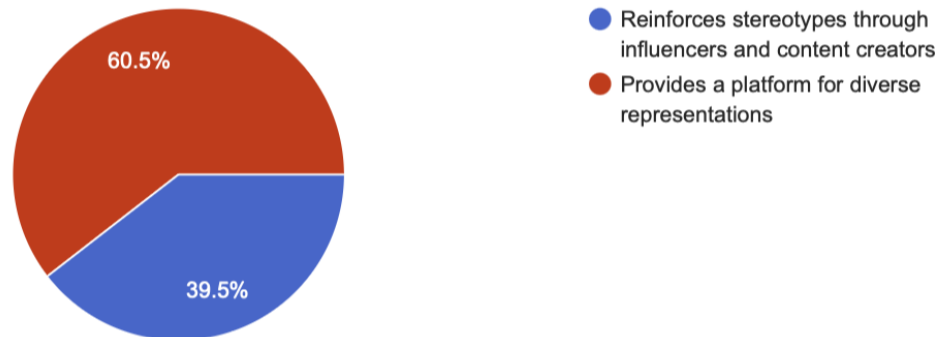


Fig. 10

11 Have you ever discussed gender stereotypes in media in your classes or with friends?

81 responses

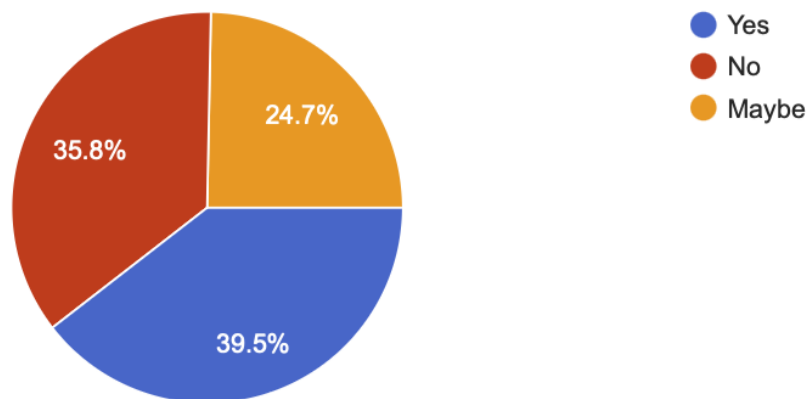


Fig. 11

12. Can you think of any examples of movies or TV shows that challenge traditional gender norms?

81 responses

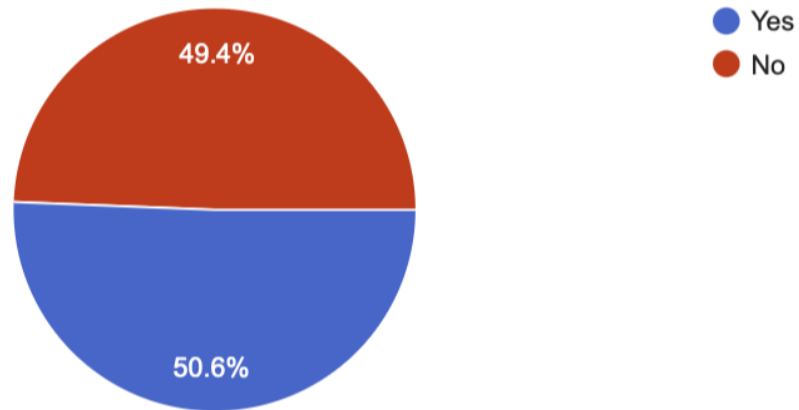


Fig. 12

13. How do you think gender stereotypes in media influence relationships between people?

81 responses

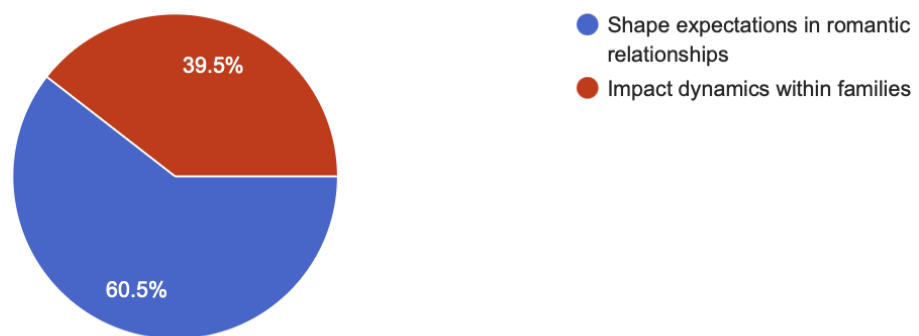


Fig. 13

14. Do you believe there is a difference in how gender stereotypes are portrayed in mainstream media compared to independent or niche media?

81 responses

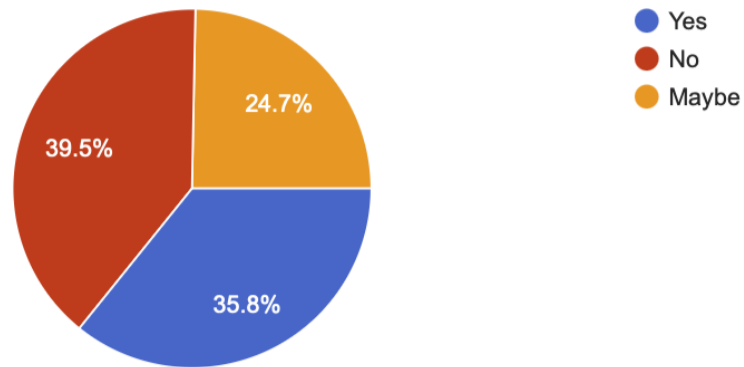


Fig. 14

15. Have you observed any instances where popular media reinforces harmful gender stereotypes?

81 responses

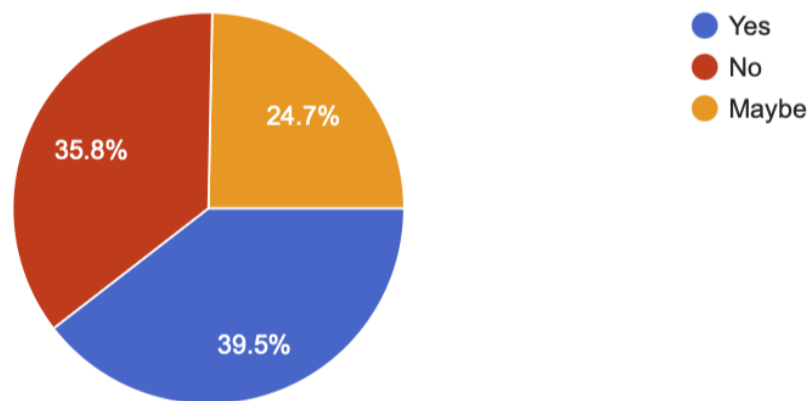


Fig. 15

16. How do you think advancements in technology have influenced gender representations in popular culture?

81 responses

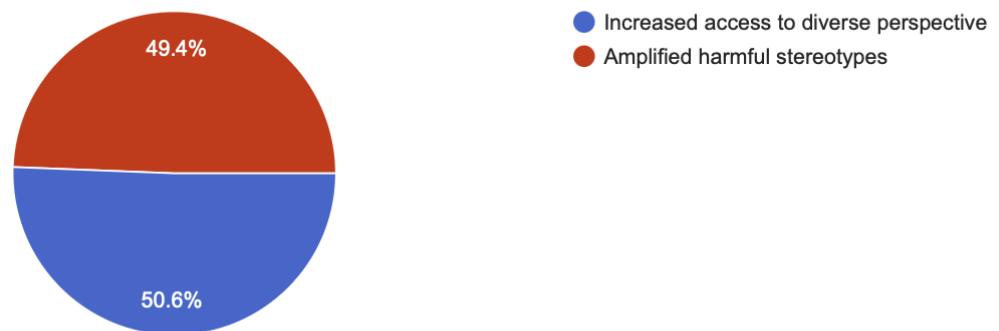


Fig. 16

17. Do you think there is enough representation of non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals in popular media?

81 responses

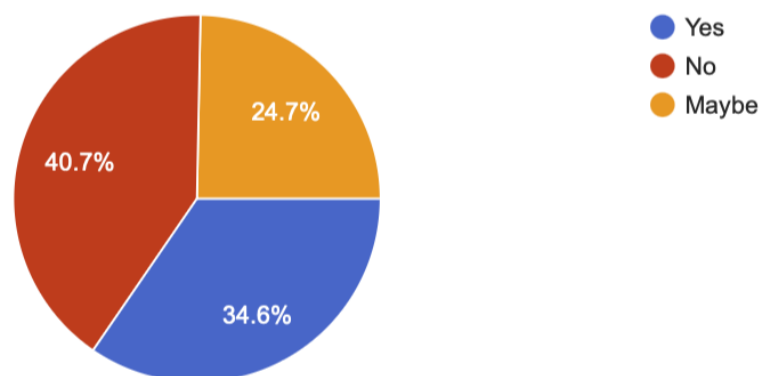


Fig. 17

18. How can content creators contribute to creating more inclusive representations of gender in media?

81 responses

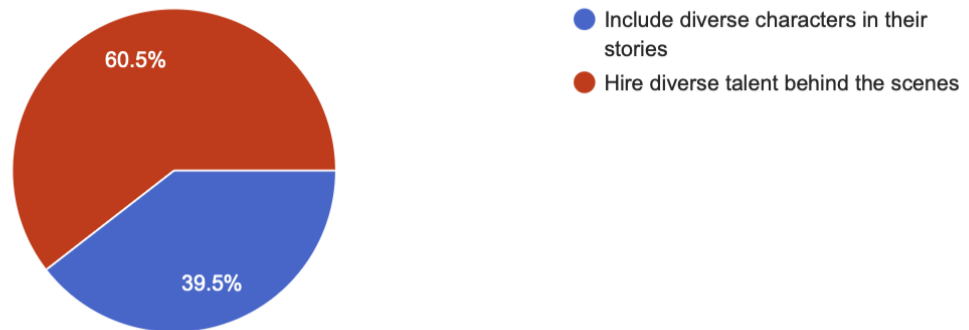


Fig. 18

19. What steps can individuals take to challenge gender stereotypes in the media they consume?

81 responses

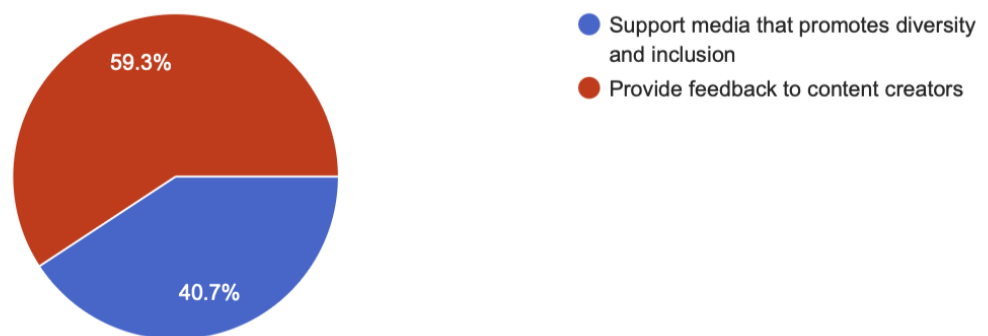


Fig. 19

20. In your opinion, what are the benefits of breaking gender stereotypes in media?

81 responses

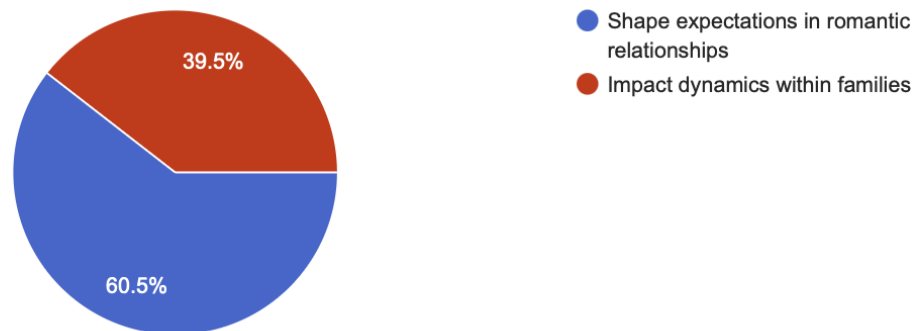


Fig. 20

21. How can we promote more positive and accurate portrayals of gender in popular media?

81 responses



Fig. 21

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Gender Stereotypes in Media:** Respondents commonly identified gender stereotypes such as male characters being portrayed as strong and dominant, while female characters are depicted as emotional and nurturing in TV shows and movies.

2. **Representation of Gender Diversity:** There is skepticism regarding the media's accurate representation of gender identities, with many respondents unsure if diversity is adequately portrayed.

3. **Influence of Media on Gender Stereotypes:** A significant number of participants reported feeling pressured to conform to gender stereotypes perpetuated by media.
4. **Reinforcement of Traditional Gender Roles:** Some respondents recalled advertisements that reinforce traditional gender roles, indicating a prevalent trend in marketing strategies.
5. **Perception of Masculinity and Femininity:** Media's portrayal of gender stereotypes was noted to shape expectations of behavior for men and women by a majority of respondents.
6. **Changes in Gender Representation:** Many respondents observed positive changes over the years, including more diverse representations and increased awareness of gender stereotypes in media.
7. **Media's Responsibility:** There is a consensus among respondents that the media bears responsibility to challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes.
8. **Impact on Self-Esteem:** Media representations of gender were reported to have a significant impact on self-esteem, particularly in relation to body image and appearance.
9. **Role of Social Media:** Social media platforms were recognized as both reinforcing stereotypes through influencers and content creators and providing opportunities for diverse representations.
10. **Discussion of Gender Stereotypes:** A substantial number of respondents have discussed gender stereotypes in media, indicating a growing awareness and interest in the topic.
11. **Challenging Traditional Gender Norms:** Some respondents could recall examples of movies or TV shows that challenge traditional gender norms, suggesting a desire for more diverse storytelling.
12. **Influence on Relationships:** Gender stereotypes in media were noted to shape expectations in romantic relationships and impact dynamics within families by a significant portion of respondents.
13. **Mainstream vs. Independent Media:** There is a perception among respondents that mainstream media tends to reinforce harmful gender stereotypes more than independent or niche media.
14. **Advancements in Technology:** Technological advancements were seen to both increase access to diverse perspectives and amplify harmful stereotypes in popular culture.
15. **Representation of Non-Binary Individuals:** Respondents expressed doubts about whether there is enough representation of non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals in popular media.
16. **Contributions of Content Creators:** Content creators can contribute to creating more inclusive representations of gender by including diverse characters in their stories and hiring diverse talent behind the scenes.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, gender stereotypes in popular media remain a pervasive and concerning issue with significant implications for society. Efforts to challenge and deconstruct these stereotypes are crucial for promoting gender equality, diversity, and inclusivity in media representation. By fostering more accurate and nuanced portrayals of gender, media can play a transformative role in shaping attitudes and perceptions towards gender roles and identities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In spite of the precautions, vigilance and scrupulousness taken by the investigator to make the study objective, it cannot be denied that there are certain limitations.

- The questionnaire was filled primarily by B-TECH students of Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala. So, the scope of sample findings was limited.
- The topic being very vast, much literature was left unread.
- Due to time constraints, the investigator was unable to gather a larger and more diverse sample for the study, potentially impacting the comprehensiveness of the findings.
- These limitations underscore the need for future studies to address these constraints and strive for broader and more comprehensive analyses of gender stereotypes in popular media.

APPENDIX

SURVEY FORM AND QUESTIONNAIRE:

Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media

Greetings!!

We kindly request your participation in a brief survey focused on "Exploring Gender Stereotypes in Popular Media." The survey aims to gather insights into individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards gender representations in various media platforms. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all responses will remain confidential. The data collected will be analyzed in aggregate form for research purposes only. Thank you for considering taking part in this survey.

1. Your Age Group
 - a) Under 18
 - b) 18-24
 - c) 25-34
 - d) 35-44
2. What types of gender stereotypes have you noticed while watching TV shows or movies?
 - a) Male characters as strong and dominant
 - b) Female characters portrayed as emotional and nurturing
 - c) Other:
3. Do you think the media accurately represents the diversity of gender identities?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
4. Have you ever felt pressured to conform to gender stereotypes portrayed in media?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
5. Can you recall any advertisements that reinforce traditional gender roles?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
6. How do gender stereotypes in media affect your perceptions of masculinity and femininity?
 - a) Shape my expectations of how men and women should behave
 - b) Don't influence me
 - c) Other:

7. Have you noticed any changes in the portrayal of gender roles in media over the years?
If so, what are they?
 - a) More diverse representations
 - b) Greater awareness of gender stereotypes
 - c) Other:
8. Do you think the media has a responsibility to challenge and dismantle gender stereotypes?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
9. How do representations of gender in media affect your self-esteem?
 - a) Make me feel insecure about my body or appearance
 - b) Don't affect my self-esteem
 - c) Other:
10. What role do you think social media plays in perpetuating gender stereotypes?
 - a) Reinforces stereotypes through influencers and content creators
 - b) Provides a platform for diverse representations
 - c) Other:
11. Have you ever discussed gender stereotypes in media in your classes or with friends?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
12. Can you think of any examples of movies or TV shows that challenge traditional gender norms?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Other:
13. How do you think gender stereotypes in media influence relationships between people?
 - a) Shape expectations in romantic relationships
 - b) Impact dynamics within families
 - c) Other:
14. Do you believe there is a difference in how gender stereotypes are portrayed in mainstream media compared to independent or niche media?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe

15. Have you observed any instances where popular media reinforces harmful gender stereotypes?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
16. How do you think advancements in technology have influenced gender representations in popular culture?
- a) Increased access to diverse perspective
 - b) Amplified harmful stereotypes
 - c) Other:
17. Do you think there is enough representation of non-binary and gender non-conforming individuals in popular media?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
18. How can content creators contribute to creating more inclusive representations of gender in media?
- a) Include diverse characters in their stories
 - b) Hire diverse talent behind the scenes
 - c) Other:
19. What steps can individuals take to challenge gender stereotypes in the media they consume?
- a) Support media that promotes diversity and inclusion
 - b) Provide feedback to content creators
 - c) Other:
20. In your opinion, what are the benefits of breaking gender stereotypes in media?
- a) Promotes equality and respect for all genders
 - b) Encourages self-expression and authenticity
 - c) Other:
21. How can we promote more positive and accurate portrayals of gender in popular media?
- a) Implement diversity quotas for media production
 - b) Provide training on gender sensitivity for content creators
 - c) Support independent media projects that challenge stereotypes
 - d) Other:

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2. WEBSITES AND BLOGS

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