How do people become aware of gender stereotypes?

Mukaeva Dilnaz 11 “D”

Nazarbayev Intellectual School

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**Introduction**

“The importance of gender labeling is explained by the fact that children observe the frequency with which certain actions are performed by men and women and are more likely to imitate the behavior that is considered inherent in people of the same gender” (Burn, 1996)

A gender stereotype is a common idea in society about the characteristics and behavior of representatives of different genders. Recently, people more often begin talking about gender stereotypes. Women and men claim that counterpart, internet users, parents, or society constantly telling them what to do and how to be. These people say that women must be gentle, supposed to wear dresses, cook, do housework well and with it take care of children. As a case in point, in the United States, there were several discussions in the media and beyond it about if the USA was ready for women to run for president. It demonstrates prejudicial submission of a woman in society, that prevents woman to take part in politics. As for men, they must be strong, must be good in politics, science, and play sport. Moreover, people follow these stereotypes. However, how do people become aware of gender stereotypes and have you ever wondered where these perceptions of women and men come from?

Now I am influenced by gender stereotypes. Lately, I told my mum and dad that I do not want to have kids unless I build my career and have enough money to create a family. Nevertheless, my parents do not agree with me, they said I should find a husband and have children before 25 years old. I have been hearing that I should do housework, cook, and marry early my entire adult life. Even now my siblings go through their words. So became curious as to where did it come from divisions and stereotypes and why they spread in society so fast.

My bias is that one of the most influential and intimate ways to learn gender stereotypes are parents. I want to make people understand that gender stereotypes can ruin someone’s plan for the future and even destiny. Because the child is the mirror of the parent, he/she repeat every single thing that does the parent. The kid learns behavior, habits, and worldview from parents.

The outcomes of my research can help people be more aware of the reasons for labeling gender stereotypes and find out more about the opposite gender, to learn to not devalue the problems of women and men. Also, the result of research can show the actuality of the problem and make people pay attention to this issue.

**Context**

For a long time, society has always been divided into 2 genders – women and men. Let’s take a look at ancient times. The woman did a specific kind of activity, like picking berries, looking after kids, making clothes, preparing food, whereas men haunted, fought and etc. Also, there was a difference in character and behavior, women were polite, careful, accurate, and clean, whereas men were messy, rude, and lazy. Therefore, from this requirement in the community occur gender stereotypes. So, what is the gender stereotype? Gender stereotype – is the attribution of certain conditions, like characteristics, roles, responsibilities to men or women, because of their social position (*United Nations human rights/gender stereotypes and women’s rights, 2017*). School and family are two distinct environments that support the development of children’s perception of gender stereotypes. Different characteristics of classroom teaching show substantial effects on student’s insight into gender stereotypes. Within the family context, often, parents underlie stereotypical evaluations which do not correspond to their children's actual achievements. For example, parents tend to regard daughters as being less talented in mathematics and science and reinforce dysfunctional attribution patterns as a result. (B. Ertl, S. Luttenberger, M. Peachter, 2017)

Another type of source, which can bring those stereotypes in our life, is parents. From an early age, 2.5 – 3 years old children, know and show that each activity and object associated with each gender (C.L. Martin, L. Dinella, 2016). Parents mostly divide their roles, like a mother who takes care of the daughter, when a father must always be with his son. From this point starts separating actions. For example, boys buy cars, balls, dinosaurs, tools, blue, black, green color cloth. Through the use of these toys, adults learn them that men do “dirty job” such as construction and mechanics, and they enjoy working on cars (Holly Brewer, 2020). While girls buy dolls, baby carriage, pink color dresses or skirts, take an art or dance classes. As a result, girls are taught that women love to dance, responsible for raising children, supposed to look clean and pretty (Holly Brewer, 2020).

The second origin of the spread of gender stereotypes is school and education. In most situations, the division of genders manifests in school subjects. Firstly, it occurs in physical education lessons, for instance, to get an “A” mark in sports standard, boys need to jump 2 meters in the long jump, whereas girls need to jump 1.80 meters. Also, in shop classes, girls embroider, cook and make different handmade crafts for the home, at the same time boys make chairs and carve things out of wood. Additionally, in math or science classes, often teachers tell boys that they must know math or other types of science better than girls. For example, in Russia, Perm grammar school Principal Tatiana Dyakova increased passing scores for girls to entire this school, for boys it was 65.7 points, for girls 69.1. She refers to the fact that girls are more diligent, but boys “become leaders and run the country” in the future, so they need preference (Ella Rossman, 2019).

The Russia Prosecutor’s office checked the school where the passing score expanded, but court did not detect the discrimination in this situation, that is they do not think that school spreads gender stereotypes.

Gender stereotypes, also, occur at the global level, which is unusual in developed countries. By way of illustration, in the UK only 7% of engineering modern apprenticeships were filled by girls, and 16% of girls constitute students received for computing science in the UK in 2016. In Scotland, only 10% of men are teachers in primary schools. (IGB,2019). On a global level, GSNI shows, that half part of men and women consider that in political leadership men demonstrate themselves better than women. (“In Kazakhstan, 96% of the population has prejudices against women” 2020).

Definitely, observing this issue at the local level, in Kazakhstan gender stereotypes are present too. On March 6th, 2020, in Nur – Sultan, United Nations Development Programme presented the Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI), which allows measuring how gender stereotypes and biases existing in society prevent women from achieving success in science, education, and politics. “Despite the progress achieved in reducing gender inequality, 96% of the population in Kazakhstan still has prejudices against women, the analysis of which allows us to understand the invisible barriers women face in professional and personal life to achieve equality,” noted permanent representative of UNDP in Kazakhstan, Yakup Berish. Nowadays, there are 21.9% of women in the Parliament of Kazakhstan, and among them, 11.7% of women are political civil servants (“In Kazakhstan, 96% of the population has prejudices against women” 2020). The reason for the presence of gender stereotypes in Kazakh culture is the mentality. From ancient times men fought in action and went hunting, and women looked after kids and cooked food.

Taking everything above into account, the gender stereotype is the actual problem in the whole world. It can appear in different spheres of life and can come from several sources.

**Aims**

The main purpose of this research is to find out who is the primary source of spreading stereotypes and prevent the introduction of the social frameworks, find out the cause of appearance and dissemination of gender stereotypes, and consequences of this. Thus, the following questions can help undertake research:

* What type of stereotype people face often?
* How relevant is the issue of gender stereotype in society?
* What is the effect of gender stereotype on education?
* How is the issue of gender stereotype being addressed?

Based on the research, I predict that parents are more often likely to play a role in shaping gender stereotypes in children, and teach them gender stereotypes, because based on my peer’s and on my own experience, parents raise them by their beliefs and submissions.

**Methods**

I’m researching the gender stereotypes problem, because, to date, most people face gender stereotypes in current society. Research design is more qualitative because I try to find out the cause of appearance and dissemination of gender stereotypes and their consequences, which is my research's main aim. Also, there will be quantitative information, because I’m also researching how actual this issue is.

The first method that I used was a survey. Especially about the number of people who faced gender stereotypes. Also, it is effective because the information, that I got, went through computer analysis, and I got done diagrams, so it made it easier to analyze the data. Research questions to this method are:
 \*How relevant is the issue of gender stereotype in society?
 \*What is the effect of gender stereotypes on education?
 \*How is the issue of gender stereotypes being addressed?
 I took a survey from 50 students, teenagers from 13 to 18 years old. I wanted to get thoughts about gender stereotypes of the young generation, have faced gender discrimination in their school. I sent them a link to WhatsApp and other social media, so I took the survey online. It provided me with quantitative information because I got points of view and experiences. For example, «yes, I heard about gender discrimination in school». Also, I got quantitative data, I got the number of students who faced gender discrimination and from that, I could do the ratio of people who encountered gender stereotypes.
 The survey was verified by the focus group method. From the survey, I chose several people who encountered gender stereotypes and I conducted a focus group with them. From focus group discussion I will received specific data of their experience and about this issue.

The second method that I used was focus group discussion. Because I communicated with people who encountered gender stereotypes and got more information about this issue. It is effective because it provides information only from people who encountered this problem. There are research questions, which are appropriate to this method:
 \*How relevant is the issue of gender stereotype in society?
 \*What type of stereotypes people face often?
 \*How is the issue of gender stereotypes being addressed?
 I conduct a focus group with the students and parents, who faced gender discrimination and agreed to participate in a focus group discussion. So, I got exact and detailed information, which helped me to investigate and solve the issue. I got information such as how they solve this problem, the consequences of the problem, and others. I carried out this type of method online, in video conferences and recorded our conversation. This method gave me qualitative data because I got data about their experience, their feelings, and the consequences of the problem. I talked with people and got more detailed information about gender stereotypes. For example, “I faced gender discrimination in school and school. In school … In school my parents/relatives …

The third method that I use is an interview. It is effective because it will be easier to communicate with adults, if something is not clear to them, it will be possible to explain. Also I can ask additional questions and collect more information about the problem. The research questions that are addressed using this method are:
 \*What type of stereotypes people face often?
 \*How relevant is the issue of gender stereotype in society?
\*How is the issue of gender stereotypes being addressed?
\*What are the consequences of gender discrimination?
 I asked adults, especially my parents and parents of my classmates. Based on this got the opinion of the old generation about the gender stereotypes, ask them what the attitude to gender discrimination and have encountered gender stereotypes. I asked friend’s parents online, using the conference call, while my parent answered my questions offline.
 It gave me quantitative data; I got their experience and point of view. For example, «Yes, I faced gender discrimination, it was in my family. My parents didn't want me to be a makeup artist because I'm a boy. »
 The interview was verified by focus group discussion; from this interview, I chose parents, who encountered gender discrimination. In focus group discussion I got more detailed information about their problem and experience.

To sum up, above mentioned methods helped me to get more detailed data. After analyzing this method, I got the solution and answers that searching for to gender stereotypes problem.

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**Results**

The survey, interview, and focus group were conducted to get answers to my research questions.



 Diagram 1

The survey was completed by 50 people from different schools of Ust-Kamenogorsk, there were students of 9, 10, 11 grades. 50% of students chose the answer “people see the problem in this situation, but do not think it needs to be solved” (purple color). While 14 (28%) people answered that people do not see this problem. (red color). However, there are 20% of people, who think that gender discrimination is a serious problem in the society. This shows that the gender stereotype problem is relevant at the present time, but people do not want to solve it. (Diagram 1)



 Diagram 2

According to the survey results, 34% of people partially encountered gender stereotypes in their schools. (dark blue color) These students have the experience, but did not receive it seriously or maybe they saw gender discrimination in the school, but it was definitely addressed to them. Furthermore, 30% of students marked answer “no”; they did not face gender stereotypes in their school. (turquoise color). Whereas 22%, 11 participants from 50, encountered gender discrimination in their school and have their own experience with it. (Diagram 2)



 Diagram 3

According to Diagram 3, 18 students pointed out that the main source of gender stereotypes was the students themselves. Other students, 25.2% (11 people), answered, that the source of gender stereotype in their experience were teachers. Taking into account the fact that parents were the origin of gender discrimination of 8 people, it can be the parents of these 8 students or parents of other students.



 Diagram 4

Moreover, the students, who responded that they face gender discrimination, about 95.6 %, answered “no” to the question “Is gender stereotype affected your marks?” . This information answered my research question about the impact of gender stereotypes on education. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that 2.2% of student’s marks have been influenced by gender stereotypes. (Diagram 4).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is it possible to prevent gender stereotypes in school and how? | # of answers |
| Introduce lessons | 3 |
| I don’t know | 4 |
| No answer | 7 |
| No  | 9 |
| start to do actions (implement the rules etc) | 10 |
| Conversation with students and teachers | 14 |

 Table 1

To the question “Is it possible to prevent gender stereotypes in school and how?”, almost all students said that it is hard to address the gender stereotype problem because it is inherent in nature. According to ‘Table 1’ in most of the student’s opinion, to avert gender discrimination need to talk with students and teachers about this issue and present gender equality. 10 people responded that it will be solved only by changing people’s minds, give the same tasks to girls and boys, or punish discrimination. However, 18% of students (9), replied that the gender stereotypes cannot be solved in schools. 5 of them noted that it would be difficult to deal with, while the other 4 told that they do not see it as the problem.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | My mother | 1 classmate’s mother | 2 classmate’s father |
| Does current society face gender stereotypes? | “I think, more yes than no, because nowadays teenagers always talk about it. But I do not face gender discrimination.” | “Yes, I had an experience. My parents always told me that I should be a good wife that I must cook well, be polite with the husband relatives and etc.” | “No, someone just coined the term gender stereotypes. I think that the division of genders by responsibilities is inherent in nature, this has existed from very beginning, when people first appeared.” |
| Do you think, it is right that a woman should do housework, and a man should work and create a career? Why?Do you agree that woman cannot participate in politics? Why?Do you agree that men should not cook, sew, or do crafts? | In her opinion, woman must do housework more than man. However, this is not reason to have a job and create a career or be politic. Also, man should sometimes help woman, like wash the dish or vacuum the rooms.  | In her opinion woman must have a job and make a career, and she must choose to do her household chores or not. Moreover, she thinks that men necessarily must help and do housework.  | In his point of view, woman should do all housework and it is not always important to have a job. He thinks that man should work and be a breadwinner for the family. Also, he does not agree with the statement that men can sew or do crafts, for him this activity is only for women. |
| Is it possible to prevent spreading gender stereotypes in society? | “Unfortunately, it is hard to solve this problem, because it was considered the norm. it is really hard to change people’s mind and worldview.” | “I think there is hope to prevent this problem. Since more and more people recognize this issue. Thanks to young generation, teenagers talk about it and more people get known and understand the problem”. | “As I said, there is no gender stereotype problem.” |

 Table 2

While the results of the interview are different compared with the survey’s results. The interview was conducted among people aged 40-60, precisely parents and grandparents. According to Table 2, opinion diverged into 3 parts. It can be said that the senior generation sees the problem but does not think that it is necessary to solve it. Also, the information from Table 2 shows that there is a correlation between teenagers and parents. The gender stereotype problem is not so relevant in old generation society than in a young generation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Student 1 | Student 2 | Student 3 |
| How school shows gender discrimination? | “Maybe when on a gym, boys are forced to do push-ups, for example, 30 times and girls 10, due to the fact that we are supposedly weaker.” | “In most cases this is expressed through the attitude of classmates and teachers, for example, boys are forced to push objects like tables, chairs, carry folders.” | “The teachers did not allow to play football, as they believed that girls were not required. Also, clubs such as knitting were available only to girls.” |
| Do you face gender stereotypes in your family? | “Gender stereotypes are a part of our society; it is even embedded in traditions. for example, when dad comes home we have to prepare a table for him and later clean up after him (this is the case in almost all Kazakh families)” | “Before, every time I was often reminded that I am a girl, that I need to take care of myself, lead diligently, and always told me «No one will marry you», «go clean the house, or go cook» and etc.” | “That each gender has its own responsibilities; the girl should behave in one way, and the boys in another. For example, my parents told me to cook and clean the house. While my brother was told nothing, like clean the kitchen and etc.” |
| Where did you hear more gender discrimination? In school, family or another? | “Everywhere and always in Kazakhstan, because again - this is a part of our society, and everything started with traditions.” | “In the family, this is probably where this clear division into gender roles is laid, that dad earns, and mom takes care, cleans up, and so on. The skills that you learn like cooking, cleaning are instilled in the family.” | “In the family, for example, they say that you have to wash the dishes or clean up, because you are a girl. While there are very few gender separation situations in school” |
| Why people do not perceive gender stereotypes as something negative?   | “Because everybody thinks this is normal since our ancestors decided for us and everyone follows this without wanting to change anything in their lives.” | “They are used to it, it comes from ancient times, although many people forget and the story is not told about the feats of women, etc., but now more and more people are raising the issue of gender equality of rights, responsibilities.” | “The adult generation that is not used to discussing this topic. At the moment, the younger generation is starting to bring this topic into society.” |

 Table 3

In the third method – focus group discussion participated people from the survey and interview, who faced gender discrimination. According to Table 3, students have similar thoughts and ideas. They all think that the gender stereotype is more presented in the family than in school. Furthermore, Table 3 shows that the most prevalent type of stereotype is that girls must be housewives, whereas boys must create a carrier and have high-paying jobs.

**Conclusion**

My hypothesis is that parents are more likely to implement gender stereotypes in children, and greatly influence the development of the idea of gender discrimination in children, because based on my peer’s and on my own experience, parents raise them by their beliefs and submissions. According to the primary research, my hypothesis was confirmed.

 \*How relevant is the issue of gender stereotype in society?

It was explored through all 3 methods, and the biggest part of people responded that there is a problem in our society. First of all, 70% of surveyed students answered that people see the issue. In the interview, 2 respondents replied that gender discrimination is taking place in society, but 1 answered that there is no problem. Also according to the secondary research, 96% of citizens of Kazakhstan still prejudiced against women. (In Kazakhstan, 96% of the population has prejudices against women, 2020) So, this information has slightly over average level of moderate level, due to this there need to interview more people from the city.

 \*What type of stereotypes people face often?

This question was discussed only in an interview and focus group discussion. In these methods, all respondents, who faced gender discrimination, answered that in most cases, they faced a stereotype in which women should be housewives, and men should have a high-paying job and a successful career. However, secondary research also considered school stereotypes, such as different attitudes to girl and boy students, parents tend to regard daughters as less talented in mathematics and science and reinforce dysfunctional attribution patterns. (B. Ertl, 2017). In these two methods there were few participants, 3 in each, so it would be necessary to increase the number of people to 5 or 6, and then the information would be more relevant.

\*How is the issue of gender stereotypes being addressed?

In all methods, most people answered that there are no ways to prevent spreading gender stereotypes in our society. In the survey, 14 from 50 students claimed that the conversation with students and teachers can solve half of the problem. To improve the frequency of answers and get know the accurate data, I should find out more information from secondary research.

\*What is the effect of gender stereotypes on education?

According to the primary research, the issue of gender discrimination does not affect education in general. The 95.6% of people who have been discriminated against by teachers say that it did not affect their grades. Also, 71.7% responded that the attitude towards the subject did not change and 70.5% replied that attitude towards teachers did not change either. Nevertheless, in the secondary research, the behavior of school principal affected the marks of students; the entire exam passing scores was 65.7 points for boys and 69.1.for girls. (Rossman, 2019). To get full information on this question, there needs more content from secondary research and discuss this question in the other 2 methods.

Based on research, people know about gender stereotypes, but the biggest part considers that there is no need to solve them. Due to the fact that they think that gender stereotypes the natural phenomenon and they won’t change.

**Evaluation**
All research questions were answered and allowed me to make a good conclusion.

The first method – survey, was conducted among students of the different schools in the town. That was an advantage of method, because it gave different opinions and cases of gender stereotypes in different schools of the city, not only NIS. In general, the students answered in detail, but there were questions that may have made it difficult to understand. Question, “Why do people not perceive gender stereotypes as negative?” was a little misunderstood by those students who considered gender stereotypes a normal phenomenon. This question was my biased opinion, based on this it is necessary to change this question and formulate questions so that it will be neutral for all respondents. Also, 9th grade students answered the most, while students from 10th grade answered only 9 people. It would be better if there were the same numbers of students for each grade, so the opinions will be analyzed more accurately.

The interview was the second method, where parents answered questions. Surprisingly, the parents answered the questions very easily and in detail, it also allowed me to get point of view of the elder generation. However, the weak side of the interview was that only 3 parents answered it, other students refused to take part in this method. Most likely, the older generation was ashamed to answer such questions live, so it would be worth using the survey as a method. In this way, I would get more responses and opinions from the older generation.

The last method was a focus group discussion, which was very useful for answering the research questions. The strong side of this method was that students answered all questions and deployed replies. Nevertheless, it would be better if in the focus group were parents too, but they all refused to participate.

In conclusion, in earlier mentioned methods such as survey, interview and a focus group were common questions; it allowed me to make a good conclusion by comparing the results.

**Further research**
To have more confident and definitive answers, there should be made some changes and introduced details.

First of all, I need to clarify the hypothesis, make it more understandable in order to continue the research and understand what exactly I need in this research.

Secondly, it is to change, add or remove some questions in survey, to get replies that will really answer research questions. For example, remove question “Why do people NOT perceive gender stereotypes as negative?” , because is biased question, or change it to “How do you feel about gender stereotypes? Negative or positive?”. Also add question to what extent the participants (students) themselves take the issue of gender stereotypes seriously.

Furthermore, I have to change the method for assembling responses from the older generation. More precisely, change the interview to a survey so that the adults can more easily answer the questions. Also in this way I will collect more participants and therefore more information from parents.

Finally, I learned a lot more about the issue of gender stereotypes and how urgent this problem is in society. I also learned about different types of gender stereotypes, more precisely list of male and female gender stereotypes.

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**Appendices**

Appendix 1 – survey

Questions to student:

1. Grade (7/8/9/10/11/12)
2. What is your gender (male/female)
3. How seriously do people around you take the issue of gender stereotypes?
4. For many people this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed
5. People see the problem in this situation, but do not think that it needs to be solved
6. People do not see this situation as a problem
7. Your answer\_\_\_\_\_
8. Does gender discrimination exist in schools? (yes/sometimes/no/ your own answer)
9. Have you ever noticed gender inequality in your school? (yes/sometimes/no/ your own answer)
10. Are there teachers who praise one gender more than another? (yes/ some of them / no/ your own answer)
11. If you answered “some of them” or “yes” in the last question, what subjects do they teach?
12. Have you ever faced gender stereotypes in school, your experience?(yes/no/ your own answer)
13. If your answer is “Yes”, who was/were the source of gender stereotypes?
14. Teachers
15. Parents
16. Students
17. Others \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
18. Has the attitude towards the subject changed? (yes/no/your answer)
19. Is it affected your marks? (yes/no/your answer)
20. Has the attitude towards the teacher changed?(yes/no/your answer)
21. Is it possible to prevent gender stereotypes in school and how?
22. Why do people do not perceive gender stereotypes as something negative?
23. If you faced gender discrimination, do you agree to participate in focus group discussion? (yes/no)
24. If you answered “yes”, please leave your contacts (email or number) \_\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 2 – interview

Questions to parents and classmate’s parents:

1. Does current society face gender stereotypes?
2. Do you think, it is right that a woman should do housework, and a man should work and create a career? Why?
3. Do you agree that woman cannot participate in politics? Why?
4. Do agree that men should not cook, sew, or do crafts?
5. Have you ever encountered gender discrimination in your own life?
6. Do you have more experience of this?
7. If you face gender stereotypes, what did you feel at this moment? What do you think of this happened situation?
8. Have you ever noticed gender discrimination when you were studying at school? And/or in your family?
9. Can you tell more details?
10. Why do people do not perceive gender stereotypes as something negative?
11. Is it possible to prevent spreading gender stereotypes in society?
12. How did you deal with gender discrimination?

Appendix 3 – focus group discussion

Questions to people, who agreed to participate in a focus group from the survey:

1. Have you ever encounter gender discrimination in your school?
2. Could you say something more about that?
3. How school shows gender discrimination?
4. Do you face gender stereotypes in your family?
5. How did your parents impose gender stereotypes? What did they say to you?
6. Where did you hear more gender discrimination? In school, family or another?
7. Why do people do not perceive gender stereotypes as something negative?