

# THE SOCIAL –PSYCHOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GENDER STEREOTYPES IN PREPARING YOUTH FOR FAMILY LIFE

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## ABSTRACT

In this article, the problem of differences in the development of men and women and its psychological features are widely covered. Also, the specific meaning of gender equality and differences was discussed.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, the reforms being implemented in our country demand special attention to a range of issues, such as providing well-rounded education and upbringing for our youth, who represent our future, and fostering a healthy social and moral environment among young people. In this regard, discussing the development of gender perceptions among the youth is undeniably one of today's pressing matters. The issue of differences in the development of men and women is also reflected in the research of Russian scientist L. Kolberg. This researcher, studying the development of moral views in boys and girls over the course of life, acknowledges that a sense of care for others is more prominent in women's moral perspectives. According to his view, women possess the qualities of kindness and compassion from childhood, while men reach these qualities only in the mature stages of their lives. The intuition, foundational to human psychological development and characteristic of both genders, tends to manifest considerably earlier in women. [1]

It is well known that gender is one of the essential categories in human social life, as seen in everyday realities. Norms and expectations that are applied toward the behavior of individuals of one gender often differ significantly from those applied to the other gender. Specific terms and words are used to refer to boys and girls, men and women, reflecting this distinction. All of this is expressed in social consciousness in particular forms—stereotypes.

Traditionally, the word stereotype refers to a certain fixed pattern (cliché) based on the perception and evaluation of information. This pattern serves to generalize a particular event, object, or phenomenon, enabling individuals to act and make judgments automatically, without prolonged deliberation.

The concept of social stereotype refers to a person's ability to evaluate their surroundings in generalized terms, forming a basis for their thoughts and uncritical conclusions. The positive function of social norms is that they enable quick responses to changes arising from information scarcity, thereby accelerating the process of understanding.

### Literature Analysis

The qualities typical of male and female groups have also attracted the attention of researchers. Recent studies indicate that the image of the ideal man consists of traditional masculine traits: courage, willpower, resilience, self-confidence, determination, and responsibility. In the ideal woman, however, both feminine and masculine qualities are represented: kindness, caring, gentleness, as well as responsibility, self-confidence, and activity. As this list shows, the image of the ideal woman is inherently androgynous. In psychology, the study of gender differences has its historical stages. Based on the analytical work of I.S. Kletsina, the following stages of development can be distinguished: In the 1910s-1920s, the available scientific information on male and female characteristics was unified under the term "gender psychology." Then, from the 1930s to the 1960s, the term "gender psychology" was replaced by "psychology of gender differences", with a primary focus on examining traits attributed to each gender as related to natural, biological factors. The work of B.G. Ananyev on the issue of gender differences is also of particular importance. Referring to his studies, it is essential to recall the experimental research he conducted on sexual dimorphism and gender differences. According to Ananyev's findings, gender-specific individual characteristics become evident in various outcomes of an individual's activities.

## Research Methodology

First and foremost, we will examine the concept of gender stereotypes itself. According to A.V. Merenkov, this is "a perceptual characteristic, a goal-oriented understanding, as well as a programmed perception of human behavior based on the norms and rules concerning the life and activities of a particular gender, as accepted within the given culture."

Another definition is provided by I.S. Kleitsina, who states: "Gender stereotypes refer to standardized perceptions about behavioral models and character traits that correspond to the notions of what is 'typical for men' and 'typical for women.'"

By the mid-20th century, as research on psychological phenomena expanded, biological determinism began to wane, and a new, softer term "sex-related differences" came into use. By 1980, the subject was referred to as "gender differences", with the biological factor entirely sidelined.

In our view, the emphasis on excessive socialization in the study of gender differences can be attributed to the socio-political factors characteristic of that period. Gender is recognized as a key category in human social life, as reflected in everyday realities. Behavioral norms and expectations are applied to individuals of one gender, which often differ significantly from those applied to the other gender. To this end, specific terms and words are used to distinguish boys and girls, men and women, respectively. All of this is represented in distinct forms of social consciousness—stereotypes.

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## Analysis and Results

When we examine scientific research on this issue, it becomes evident that gender-specific individual characteristics are reflected in various outcomes of an individual's activities. These differences are apparent in everything from physiological processes in the body to sensorimotor functions. At the same time, it is emphasized that these characteristics are also closely tied to the nature of a person's social activities.

Many studies have shown that the socialization process for boys and girls varies in almost all cultures. In developmental psychology, this process is known as differentiated socialization, and it begins even before the child is born. Why do parents and close relatives want to know the child's gender in advance? Because based on this knowledge, they choose a name and prepare specific clothing for the baby. Depending on the child's gender, parents buy toys accordingly: dolls and kitchen sets for girls, cars and construction sets for boys.

According to American researchers on differences in toy selection for children, boys are more often given toys that promote physical activity and intellectual development, while girls receive toys that encourage social interaction and verbal expression. Belarusian psychologists' studies indicate that fathers are more inclined than mothers to differentiate their children by gender. Fathers tend to engage in more active, physical play with their sons, while providing more emotional support to their daughters. This tendency is less pronounced in mothers, although they generally show more tolerance toward boys' aggressive behavior compared to girls'. The sources of gender differences may stem from parents' selection of gender-marked toys and clothing and from gender-specific upbringing, which reflect the parents' own understanding of gender and entrenched gender stereotypes. Through these choices, parents teach their children specific behavioral models based on gender.

In studies on preparing boys and girls for family life and instilling behavioral patterns, psychologists highlight the differing approaches of parents. When discussing parental expectations, students at Fergana University noted that "parents generally expect their daughters to be wise and sensible" while expecting their sons to "become pillars of support in the future."

In most traditional Uzbek families, there is a strong desire to have a son, as he is seen as the family's successor who will provide financial support and assistance to his parents in the future. This preference can lead to prioritizing the son's education while viewing the education of daughters as unnecessary.

Thus, in raising their children, parents often rely on established frameworks—gender stereotypes. As a result, under their influence, boys and girls develop normative ideas about male and female characteristics from a young age. According to I. Kleitsina, this manifests as "activity, determination, assertiveness, and self-confidence in boys, while in girls, it results in submissiveness, passivity, and dependency."

The social, political, and economic changes occurring in society, along with macro-environmental factors, introduce changes across all aspects of human consciousness, thus influencing the formation of sexual attitudes. The transition to a market economy and the rise of values related to activity and entrepreneurship encourage many women to engage actively in various professional fields. This activity is evident not only in women who are concerned with economic fluctuations but also in the widening range of career choices for girls, their active participation in interpersonal relationships, and their imitation of new behaviors. Due to the expansion of choices in professional fields, the participation of both genders is ensured in areas traditionally considered female or male professions. As a result, the number of pure female and pure male professional fields is steadily decreasing.

Another source of the fragility of gender roles in professional activity and daily life is the increasing universality of household items, which are not associated with either male or female genders (such as light cars, automatic washing machines, mobile phones, computers, and other technical devices). Such conveniences lead to the blurring of boundaries between the types of activities performed by representatives of both genders and even result in a "diminution" of gender roles.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it should be noted that the concept of "gender stereotypes" encompasses, first, the characteristics and definitions that are typically associated with men and women. Second, gender stereotypes contain normative behavioral patterns traditionally attributed to males and females. Third, gender stereotypes reflect the generalized views, opinions, and understandings people have about how men and women differ from one another. Finally, fourth, gender stereotypes are also linked to the cultural environment in which they exist.

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