

Gender Stereotypes as an Indicator of Gender Incompetence of Modern Ukrainian Young People: Survey Result Analysis

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Abstract. The article describes the main gender stereotypes identified upon a questionnaire survey on the topic “Gender Stereotypes of Modern Student-Age Young People”. Analysis of the obtained data emphasizes rather high level of gender incompetence of the modern Ukrainian young people, their adherence to the principles of the traditional society, and, consequently, reproduction of gender inequality in the existing social structure. In conclusion, the necessity of comprehensive introduction of gender education is emphasized.

Key words: *gender, gender stereotypes, gender education, gender incompetence, masculinity, femininity.*

Introduction. The results of numerous research works in the field of gender relations in the Ukrainian society point the necessity of gender education at all stages of personality development, formation of one’s gender competence. In the meantime the traditional system of gender attitudes complicates the process of gender education and awareness rising considerably, demanding that an individual reproduce gender stereotypes and gender inequality, which fail to correspond both to the needs of a modern personality (irrespective of sex) and modern reality in general. Hence today’s Ukrainian facts of life in the best way possible actualize the main objective of the “second wave” feminism: to teach women to accept their equality with men in all spheres of the social scale, get rid of their inferiority complex which is portrayed as a merit by the patriarchal value system, and to learn how to use the gained rights. It’s important to stress that gender incompetence is typical not only of the older generation, but also of modern young people.

Brief overview of related publications. The issue of gender stereotypes is reflected in studies of both Western scientists and their colleagues from the former Soviet republics. Works by Eleanor Maccoby [11], Carol Gilligan [9], Sandra Bem [8], Lawrence Kohlberg [10], Todd Nelson [12], Svetlana Aivazova [1], Irina Zherebkina [3], Dmitriy Vorontsov [4], Tamara Melnik [7], Pavel Gornostay [2], Liudmila Males [6], Irina Kletsina [5], etc., deserve special mention.

Objective. Objective of this work was to identify gender stereotypes of modern student-age young people.

Materials and methods. Gender stereotypes were analyzed on the basis of the results of the survey of students of Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy on the topic: “Gender Stereotypes of Modern Student-Age Young People”. The survey was conducted via a questionnaire poll at the place of studying of the respondents from 11 May to 15 May 2015, respondent selection method was quota sample (by sex). In total 260 intramural students were interrogated (confidence interval: 5%), average age of those asked was 20 years.

The questionnaire consisted of 29 questions (see Annex 1), which make it possible to determine gender stereotypes characteristic of the respondents, more specifically: 1) masculinity and femininity stereotypes imposing certain perceptions on somatic, psychical and behavioral qualities characteristic of men and women upon people; 2) stereotypes on family and occupational gender roles; 3)

stereotypes relating to the content of activities of men and women (classification by D. Vorontsov).

Results and discussion thereof. The study brought the following findings:

– the majority of surveyed men (56%) consider that modern women are not subjected to discrimination in professional sphere. Answers provided by women were not that definite: 33% reckon that it is more difficult for women to build a career than for men, and 34% see no oppressions against women in labor relations;

– the majority of those asked (57% of men and 57% of women) believe that a person’s gender doesn’t influence his/her employment, though 39% of women and 29% of men are sure that it is a man still for whom it is easier to enter a high-paying job;

– most respondents (63% of men and 68% of women) are unaware of the fact that statistically average salary of women in Ukraine is by 30% lower than that of men;

– more than half of those asked (55% of men and 51% of women) see no difference under whose command to work: a man’s or a woman’s. However, 35% of women and 23% of men would still prefer to be directed by a man, and only 8% of men and 4% of women would prefer to have a woman as a boss;

– 46% of men and 19% of women agreed with the statement that the primary role of a woman in the society is related to her “natural” predestination: family, husband, children. However, the majority of women (58%) couldn’t agree with said gender stereotype;

– 47% of men and 17% of women share the opinion that only that woman who has fulfilled herself as a wife and mother can be considered to be successful. A man in his turn is considered to be successful if he has fulfilled himself in terms of career and has prospects for advancement. However, most surveyed women (58%) reckon that the concept of success shouldn’t be associated with gender stereotypes which limit the spheres of human self-fulfillment;

– 62% of men and 41% of women noted that a man should fully provide for his family; 52% of women and 34% of men consider that financial responsibility for the family should be equally divided between a man and a woman;

– overwhelming majority of those asked (85% of men and 88% of women) is sure that if a woman fulfills herself in terms of career, it won’t have negative influence on her family. Along with that, the students labeled the following

as purely women's duties: 1) staying on a parental leave – 59% of men and 58% of women; 2) keeping the house tidy, cozy and comfortable – 45% of women and 42% of men; 3) care for the health of all family members – 35% of women and 17% of men; 4) care for the looks of all family members – 30% of women and 7% of men; 5) cooking – 28% of men and 15% of women; 6) childrearing – 19% of men and 8% of women. And only 19% of men and 23% of women noted that none of the duties is purely women's;

– while choosing features characteristic of a perfect woman and a perfect man, the student rated the following ones as strongly pronounced feminine qualities: kindness (75% of the total number of those asked), attractive looks (67%), lack of bad habits (60%), ability to keep the house (54%), meekness (52%). The following ones appeared to be the most remarkable masculine qualities: reliability (84%), resoluteness (82%), responsibility (79%), diligence (71%), bravery (69%), financial independence (65%). The most significant gender-neutral features characteristic of both genders appeared to be: wit (~ 87%), fidelity (~ 80%), thoughtfulness (~ 67%).

Thus, judging from the obtained results of the questionnaire survey, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. A considerable part of surveyed students supports gender stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, which form expectations as to proper behavior of men and women in terms of gender. The portrait of a perfect woman obtained as a result of the survey doesn't just portray a woman as a representative of the "weaker sex", but also reflects and supports gender inequality existing in the contemporary Ukrainian society. Thus, aside from possessing the gender-neutral features noted during the survey, a perfect woman according to the respondents should be kind, have attractive looks, have no bad habits, be able to keep the house. Apart from that, a perfect woman should be unambitious (84% of women and 88% of men); and 77% of women and 90% of men find her financial independence conceivable. At the same time the majority of female students (54%) wouldn't agree to stay at home and keep the house if they had such an opportunity, and when choosing the place of employment, they paid attention to, the amount of salary (78%) and prospects for advancement (72%) in the first place. Put in other words, the results of the survey give us an opportunity to suggest that the obtained perfect image of a woman doesn't satisfy the challenges of the present-day life, while reflecting gender stereotypes of a traditional Ukrainian family, which under the circumstances of gender incompetence are interpreted by the young generation as a certain standard. Such lack of correspondence between facts of life and gender stereotypes as the perfect patterns of inheritance may result in intrapersonal and interpersonal gender conflicts.

It's also important to note that one of the negative effects of gender stereotypes on masculinity and femininity is suppression of the development of the qualities which fail to correspond to the ideas of a "real" man or a "real" woman. Women's emotional sensitivity and men's composure are settled gender stereotypes, which rise with the very birth of the child, when the complicated process of gender socialization begins. The majority of the surveyed students (76% of women and 55% of men) supported this

stereotype, having noted that women are more emotional than men.

2. Though the majority of respondents to the survey consider that professional fulfillment of a woman won't have negative influence on her family, the conducted survey revealed that gender stereotypes related to gender roles in both family relations and professional life are intrinsic to a good number of the respondents. For example, the proposition that a woman is the preserver of the hearth and a man is the breadwinner was supported by 45% of women and 47% of men. At the same time the majority of the surveyed women (52%) and 34% of men are convinced that financial responsibility for the family should be equally divided between men and women. The results of the survey therefore corroborate the fact that in view of the economic facts of life, as well as the need and desire to fulfill herself, a modern woman remains overcharged, as she bears at least double burden of responsibility, being one of the investors to the family budget and "the preserver of the hearth" at the same time.

As regards to the professional life, mainly gender-neutral answers were given to straightforward questions on the issues of employment, career growth, gender of the person in charge and gender of a specialist providing services. However, the proposition that woman's reason differs from that of a man was supported by 75% of women and 68% of men; 38% of men and 20% of women agree that leadership and managerial skills are more commonly found in men, while women are more apt to organizational and execution activities.

3. The majority of the surveyed students support gender stereotypes relating to the content of activities of men and of women. Thus, the vast majority of the respondents labeled the occupations in which technical equipment is the subject of activity as purely masculine ("Human being – Technical equipment" 343 mentions). The following occupations are in the lead among masculine occupations: miner, builder, driver, plumbing specialist and electrical technician. Those occupations in which a human being is the subject of activity were labeled as purely feminine by the overwhelming majority of students ("Human being – Human being" 312 mentions). Pedagogical jobs and service trades prevail among the occupations noted: educator, teacher, hairdresser, cook, nurse, etc.

The fact that none of the respondents related women with occupations like "Human being – Technical equipment" is quite conspicuous. And only 6 out of 260 surveyed students expressed the opinion that there are no purely feminine or purely masculine occupations.

Gender stereotypes relating to the content of activities of men and women are based on gender stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, which, in their turn, are justified by theories on natural predestination of genders (essentialism). Thus, feminine qualities: sociability, benevolence, carefulness, affability, keenness of observation, etc., are mainly attributed to occupations of the type "Human being – Human being", while masculine qualities: a high order of intelligence, good coordination of movements, concentration, endurance, stable nervous system, etc. are generally attributed to "Human being – Technical equipment" occupations.

In view of all of the foregoing, it may be concluded that men adhere to traditional gender stereotypes to a

greater extent than women do and are more inclined to gender blindness. Whereas women, even though showing more progressive attitude and greater gender sensitivity as compared with the surveyed men, serve as the source of gender inequality themselves, inheriting some or other gender stereotypes.

Conclusions. In the light of the obtained results, it is a fair assumption to say that the level of gender competence of modern young Ukrainians is low. Severe shortage of gender education (both training courses and educational events relating to gender problems and available popular-science booklets, guidance manuals and other educational publications) leads to gender inequality underlying gender stereotypes. It is our opinion that comprehensive introduction of gender education should both increase gender competence of an individual and facilitate the restoration of gender balance in the society.

Annex 1.

Questionnaire "Gender Stereotypes of Modern Student-Age Young People"

1. Which future prospect is the most important for you today?

- 1). Work and career.
- 2). Founding a family.
- 3). Work and family at the same time.

2. Do you agree that the primary role of a woman is related to her "natural" predestination: family, husband, children?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

3. Should a man fully provide for his family?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). Only children.
- 3). Financial responsibility for their family should be equally divided between a husband and wife.
- 4). No.

4. Would you be able to cast your lot with a person who already has a child (children) of previous relationship?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.
- 4). Your variant

5. Would you be able to forgive your spouse infidelity?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

6. If a single woman bears a baby "for herself", your attitude to that is:

- 1). Positive.
- 2). Negative.
- 3). Neutral.

7. In which cases, in your opinion, will a divorce be reasonable?

- 1). Physical abuse: resort to force, physical punishments in relation to a spouse or children.
- 2). Psychological abuse: emotional abuse, bullying, insults.
- 3). Economic abuse: severe restriction in material resources preventing one from having an adequate standard of living.
- 4). Sexual abuse.
- 5). Pernicious habits of a spouse.
- 6). Conjugal infidelity.
- 7). Reluctance of a spouse to work.
- 8). Your variant

8. Which of the below duties are purely women's in your opinion?

- 1). Staying on a parental leave.
- 2). Childrearing.
- 3). Cooking.
- 4). Keeping the house tidy, comfortable and cozy.
- 5). Care for the looks of all family members.
- 6). Care for the health of all family members.

7). Financial contribution to formation of the family's budget.

8). None of the above duties is purely women's.

9. In your opinion, if a woman works, it has:

- 1). Negative influence on her marriage.
- 2). Negative influence on her children.
- 3). Negative influence on her family in general.
- 4). Work doesn't have any negative influence on her family.

10. Do men and women actually have equal chances of career growth and advancement in your opinion?

- 1). The chances are not equal.
- 2). The chances are equal.
- 3). Cannot say.

11. If you were offered a choice under whose command to work, of a woman or a man, what would your answer be?

- 1). Of a woman.
- 2). Of a man.
- 3). I see no difference.
- 4). Cannot say.

12. For whom it's easier to enter a high-paying job in your opinion?

- 1). For a man.
- 2). For a woman.
- 3). I see no difference.

13. Did you know that statistically average salary of women in Ukraine is by 30% lower than that of men?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.

14. If a work doesn't provide psychic income, is it worth changing it even for the one with a smaller salary?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

15. Would you abandon your work if you had an opportunity to stay at home and keep the house?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

16. When choosing a place of employment to what will you pay attention in the first place?

- 1). Salary amount.
- 2). Distance from home.
- 3). Duration of leaves.
- 4). Prospects for advancement.
- 5). Your variant

17. The concept of "success" is closely associated with the gender of a person in the contemporary Ukrainian society. A woman is considered to be successful only if she has fulfilled herself as a wife and mother. Whereas a man is considered to be successful if he has fulfilled himself in terms of career and has prospects for advancement. Do you share such opinion?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

18. Are women discriminated in professional (career) progression today in your opinion?

- 1). Yes.
- 2). No.
- 3). Cannot say.

19. Name the primary features of a modern woman in your opinion (3 to 5 qualities): _____

20. Name the primary features of a modern man in your opinion (3 to 5 qualities): _____

21. Choose several features out of those offered which describe a perfect woman in your opinion: 1). Wit. 2). Outer beauty. 3). Kindness. 4). Meekness. 5). Diligence. 6). Generosity. 7). Emotional sensitivity. 8). Ability to keep the house. 9). Charisma. 10). Resoluteness. 11). Reliability. 12). Responsibility. 13). Timidity. 14). Unpredictability. 15). Thoughtfulness. 16). Financial independence. 17). Fidelity. 18). Bravery. 19). Ambitiousness. 20). Lack of bad habits.

22. Choose several features out of those offered which describe a perfect man in your opinion: 1). Wit. 2). Outer beauty. 3). Kindness. 4). Meekness. 5). Diligence. 6). Generosity. 7). Emotional sensitivity. 8). Ability to keep the house. 9). Charisma. 10). Resoluteness. 11). Reliability. 12). Responsibility. 13). Timidity. 14). Unpredictability. 15). Thoughtfulness. 16). Fi-

nancial independence. 17). Fidelity. 18). Bravery. 19). Ambitiousness. 20). Lack of bad habits.

23. How much important is the gender of a person providing professional services to you (seller, teacher, doctor, hairdresser, etc.)? (Ring in the degree of importance in the scale):

of no significance _____ very important _____
 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

24. Name the occupations, which in your opinion are strictly men's: _____

25. Name the occupations, which in your opinion are strictly women's: _____

26. Select statements with which you agree:

- 1). The crucial thing for a woman is to be attractive and for a man to be clever.
- 2). Men are more apt to exact sciences, whereas women to humanities.
- 3). Women are more emotional than men.

4). Men are more pragmatic than women

5). Leadership and managerial skills are more common in men, whereas women are more apt to organizational and execution activities.

6). Women's reason differs from that of men's.

7). The most important thing for a woman is to get married successfully.

8). Woman is the preserver of the hearth and man is the breadwinner.

9). Women (men) are made rather than born.

10). The majority of differences between men and women are of social, rather than natural origin.

11). Men are polygamous by nature, whereas women are monogamous.

27. Your sex: Male _____ Female _____

28. Age (specify in figures): _____

29. Year of study: _____

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Гендерные стереотипы как индикатор гендерной некомпетентности современной украинской молодежи: анализ результатов анкетирования

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Аннотация. В статье характеризуются основные гендерные стереотипы, выявленные в результате анкетного опроса на тему: «Гендерные стереотипы современной студенческой молодежи». Анализ полученных данных подчеркивает достаточно высокий уровень гендерной некомпетентности современной украинской молодежи, ее подверженность устоям традиционного общества и, как следствие, воспроизведение гендерного неравенства в существующей социальной структуре. В заключении делается акцент на необходимости комплексного внедрения гендерного образования.

Ключевые слова: гендер, гендерные стереотипы, гендерное образование, гендерная некомпетентность, маскулинность, феминность.