

Perception of B.Ed. trainee's regarding the gender stereotypes related to Physical Appearance

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Abstract: Gender stereotypes plays an important role to make the perception of individual and influences the personality to make views, how to behave in society and present himself or herself. As these stereotypes are not hereditary, but these are socially constructed and maintained by the society by regular reinforcement. Sometimes, these stereotypes leads to psychological stress, low self concept and self esteem. The aim of the present research is to study the perception of male and female B.Ed. trainee's regarding the gender stereotypes related to physical appearance. For this purpose a questionnaire is made by the researcher and a sample of one hundred and two trainee's is taken. The result of study showed that, most of the male and female B.Ed. trainee's rejected the various traditional stereotypes related to the gender. Most of them rejected the stereotypes related to men and women for examples slimness, fair skin, outward look or dressing sense and muscular body, broad shoulder and v-shaped body respectively.

Keywords: Gender Stereotypes, B.Ed. trainees and Physical Appearance.

1. INTRODUCTION

A gender stereotype may be defined as a preconception or assumption or belief about the characteristic or role or behavior that is deemed appropriate for any individual based on his/her gender. These stereotypes based on gender are deeply related to the social, cultural and historical contexts on which people perceive themselves and others. Gender stereotypes become harmful when it restricted or limits the capacity of men's and women's to develop their personal abilities, careers and choices related to their lives. Sandra Bem defines "gender stereotypes as culturally defined expectations about what it means to be masculine or feminine, emphasizing how society shapes gender roles through norms and schemas". According to Alice H. Eagly, gender stereotypes are "shared beliefs about the attributes of men and women." So it is cleared from these above definitions that, these stereotypes are not individual choices, but social expectations about the gender, as how to behave any gender. The stereotypes which are related to the physical appearance plays an important aspect so that society defines and makes the differences between men and women. L. A. Jackson et al. (1987) in their study examined that, how the physical appearance is closely related to the gender roles and expectation. Their study showed that, it is the society assigns different values and importance to appearance based on gender, often emphasizing attractiveness and body image more strongly for women than for men. Further the study showed that, individuals makes their concepts regarding the appearance through the socialization for example it leads to more concerned in women about their weight, facial beauty and more attractiveness. However, in case of the men, they concerned about their physical strengthens, height and physical competency. These trends showed that, masculinity is associated with power and femininity related to the beauty.

If we talk about the common gender stereotypes related to the physical appearance, then these plays an important role in shaping men and women outward outlook as expectation of the society. Basically these stereotypes are socially constructed and promote inequality and unrealistic standard related to physical appearance. If we see then traditionally it is expected from the women to be physically attractive, slim body and well dressed or groomed. In addition to this, clear skin, long hairs and fashionable clothing are also related to the beauty concepts as per societal norms. In other side, it is expected from the men to appear tall, muscular and strong. Apart from this characters such as broad build up, facial

hair and a rugged appearance are often related to masculinity. So we may say that, gender stereotyping refers to the practice of attributing fixed, oversimplified and generalized beliefs about the roles, traits, behaviors, and abilities of people based solely on their gender. These stereotypes ignore individual differences and can limit opportunities, reinforce inequality, and influence how people are treated in society.

2. Review of the Literature

Sczesny, S. et al. (2004) studied on “Gender stereotypes and the attribution of leadership traits: A cross-cultural comparison”. They included in their study, management students of both sexes from three countries i.e. Australia, Germany, and India. The sample included executives-in-general (no gender specification), male executives, or female executives and then estimated the percentage of these groups on the basis of person-oriented and task-oriented leadership traits. In this study, participants rated the importance of these characteristics. However other group of participants described themselves two types of traits and their importance for themselves. Finding of the study showed that, there is existence of interculturally shared view of a female specific leadership competence according to which women possess a higher person orientation than men. The self-descriptions of the female and male management students regarding person- and task-oriented traits were found to be very similar. de Lemus et al. (2013) conducted a study on “Reversing implicit gender stereotype activation as a function of exposure to traditional gender roles”. The researchers exposed the participants to traditional or stereotypical versus to counter non- traditional or stereotypical gender roles. Mainly they categorize the feminine stereotypical with communal/warmth and masculine to agentic/competence traits and measured their automatic responses. Result of the study showed that, when the women were exposed with the traditional roles based on gender, then, women rejected the traditional ideas and basically reacted in the opposite way and challenged these traditional roles or stereotypes. Women responded faster where the prime is related to agentic/competence and male faster to the prime warmth/communion. The participants who reverse these stereotypes is due to their positive attitudes towards affirmative action policies. Further the results showed that, there is somewhere the motivational influence of perceived discrimination in intergroup relations.

Oksana M. Shyian et al. (2023) concluded in their study, that gender stereotypes based on the physical appearance are closely shaped by a combination of social and psychological factors, which further includes cultural and societal norms, influence of media, and interpersonal experiences. Such types of the stereotypes influence individual's perception for them and others persons and it often leads to discrepancy between ideals of beauty constructed by the society and personal self-image. Further these discrepancies leads to negative impact on self-esteem, psychological stress and reinforces to the discrimination pattern based on physical appearance. The authors emphasize that these stereotypes are not inherent but socially learned and maintained through continuous societal reinforcement. The researcher in this study gives the importance to develop the educational and psychological intervention to reduce the prevalence of appearance based stereotypes and for promotion of more healthier and inclusive perception of beauty across the various gender. Reinhard Schunck et al. (2025) explored a the research on the topic “Gendered beauty inequalities? A multiverse analysis of physical attractiveness, occupational gender-typicality and earnings in the German labour market”. This study focused on gendered attractiveness inequalities in German labour market. Further, it is examined that, they focused on the mismatches between an employee's gender and level of occupational gender segregation in their field. By using the longitudinal data from German family panel and conducting a multivariate analysis, they found that, there is positive association between physical attractiveness with and earning for both gender. Further, from the study it is concluded that, attractiveness is linked to earning for men and women, however it affects more in case of men as compared to women.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To study the perception of male B.Ed. trainee's regarding the gender stereotypes based on the physical appearance.
2. To study the perception of female B.Ed. trainee's regarding the gender stereotypes based on the physical appearance.

3.1 Delimitation

1. The study is delimited only to the B.Ed. trainee's of Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh.
2. The study is restricted only to the stereotypes related to the physical appearance only.

3.2 Sample

For the present study, a total of sample of one hundred and two B.Ed. trainees is taken from the Department of Teacher Education, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh through the random sampling.

3.3 Tool Used

Keeping in view the nature of the study a questionnaire for the B.Ed. trainee's is developed by the researcher.

3.4 Statistical Technique

In present study percentage analysis is used to analyze the raw data.

4. Result and Interpretation

The perception of the B.Ed. trainee's regarding the gender stereotypes based on physical appearance is given in table 1.1:

Table 1.1

Perception of B.Ed. trainee's regarding Gender Stereotypes based on Physical Appearance

Sr. No.	Content	Male				Female			
		Yes	%age	No	%age	Yes	%age	No	%age
1.	Slim and graceful figure to look attractive for women.	9	17.64	42	82.36	5	11.11	46	88.89
2.	Fair skin is the one of quality of the beauty in women.	17	33.33	34	66.66	6	12.00	45	88.00
3.	Muscular body or a tough appearance seems less feminine in women.	22	43.14	29	56.86	10	10.00	41	90.00

From the table 1.1, it may be noted that, 17.64 percent of male and 11.11 percent of female are agree that, women should be slim and graceful to look attractive, however, 82.36 percent of male and 88.89 percent of female denied the statement. Apart from this, 33.33 percent of male and 12.00 percent of female recognized that, fair skin is the quality of beauty in women, while 66.66 percent of male and 88.00 percent of female denied that, this is not any quality of beauty in women.

It is further, cleared from the table 1.1 that, 43.14 percent of male and 10.00 percent of female accepted that, if any woman have muscular body or tough appearance than she is treated as less feminine, however, 56.86 percent of male and 90.00 percent of female rejected the statement.

From the above discussion it may be said that:

1. Most of B.Ed. Trainees agreed that, slimness and fair skin is not the quality to look attractive and beauty in women.
2. Further they rejected the statement that, if any women have muscular body or tough appearance than, she is treated as less feminine.
3. Overall, B.Ed. trainee's rejected the presumption and stereotypes related to women beauty and physical appearance.

Table 1.2

Perception of B.Ed. trainee's regarding Gender Stereotypes based on Physical Appearance

Sr. No.	Content	Male				Female			
		Yes	%age	No	%age	Yes	%age	No	%age
1.	Women physical appearance as more important outlook as compared to men.	24	47.06	27	52.94	19	38.00	32	62.00

2.	Decent dress Outlook gives respect to women as compared to other outlook.	40	78.43	11	21.57	22	44.00	29	56.00
3.	Women outlook should be younger than the actual age.	19	37.25	32	62.75	18	36.00	33	64.00

From the table 1.2, it may be concluded that, 47.06 percent of male and 38.00 percent of female accepted that, physical appearance is more important in women as compared to men, while 52.94 percent of male and 62.00 percent of female rejected the statement. 78.43 percent of male and 44.00 percent of female agreed that, decent dress outlook gives respect to women as compared to other outlook, while, 21.57 percent of male and 56.00 percent of female were not agreed on the this issue. Further, it may be said from the table 1.2 that, 37.25 percent of male and 36.00 percent of female believed that, women outlook should be younger than the actual age, however, 62.75 percent of male and 64.00 percent of female rejected this conception.

From the above discussion, it may be noted that,

1. Most of B.Ed. trainees treated equally related to physical appearance and outward look as more important for the both gender. However, male trainee's emphasizes more on dressing sense as a matter of more respect to women for their outlook.
2. Male and female B.Ed. Trainee's rejected the stereotype related to women outlook as, they should look younger than their actual age.

Table 1.3

Perception of B.Ed. trainee's regarding Gender Stereotypes based on Physical Appearance

Sr. No.	Content	Male				Female			
		Yes	%age	No	%age	Yes	%age	No	%age
1.	Men should be taller and muscular body.	16	31.37	34	68.63	7	14.00	33	86.00
2.	Men should be taller and muscular body to look attractive rather than the thin.	31	60.78	19	39.22	16	68.00	34	32.00
3.	Men should have be broad shoulder and V-shaped body.	10	19.61	40	80.39	01	2.00	49	98.00

It is cleared from the table 1.3, 31.37 percent of men and 14.00 percent of women believed that, men should be taller and muscular body, while 68.63 percent of men and 86.00 percent of female denied the statement. Apart from this, it be concluded that, 60.78 percent of male and 68.00 percent of female accepted that, men should be taller and muscular body to look attractive rather than thin while 39.22 percent of male and 32.00 percent of female rejected this conception. Further, it may be said from table 1.3 that, 19.61 percent of male and 2.00 percent of female accepted that, men should have broad shoulder and V shaped body shape, while 80.39 percent of male and 98.00 percent of female have no believe on this conception.

From the above discussion it may be concluded that,

1. Male and female B.Ed. trainee's rejected the stereotype related to men, as they should be taller and have muscular body, however, they believed that if it exists then they look more attractive as compared to thin and non-muscular body.
2. B.Ed. trainee's also rejected the broad shoulder and V-shaped body in men as a characteristic of masculinity.

Table 1.4

Perception of B.Ed. trainee's regarding Gender Stereotypes based on Physical Appearance

Sr. No.	Content	Male				Female			
		Yes	%age	No	%age	Yes	%age	No	%age
1.	Darker skin looks seems to be less competent in men	8	15.69	42	84.31	6	12.00	44	88.00
2.	Men who bother about his outlook and apply any face cream seems less masculine.	9	17.65	41	82.35	3	6.00	47	94.00
3.	Women should be long hairs rather than the short or boyish haircut.	28	54.90	23	45.10	9	18.00	42	82.00

From the table 1.4 it may be noted that, 15.69 percent of male and 12.00 percent of female believed that, darker skin looks seems to be less competent in men, while 84.31 percent of male and 88.00 percent of female denied such type of stereotype. 17.65 percent of male and 6.00 percent of female accepted that, men who bother about his outlook and apply any face cream seems less masculine, while 82.35 percent and 94.00 percent of female rejected the same observation. Further it is cleared from the table 1.4 that, 54.90 percent of male and 18.00 percent of female agreed that, women should have long hairs rather than the short or boyish haircut, while 45.10 percent of male and 82.00 percent of female rejected the same.

From the above discussion we may said that:

1. Most of B.Ed. trainee's rejected the statement if a man have dark skin then he is less competent, there is no such issue related to the dark or fair skin.
2. Further, they also denied that, if a man bother about his outlook and apply any face –cream, then he is less masculine. Apart from this, male candidates believed that, women should have long hairs rather than the short or boyish haircut, however, women rejected the statement and said that, as it is own wish of the women.

5. Conclusion

From this analysis and interpretation it may be concluded that,

1. Male and female B.Ed. trainee's rejected the presumption and stereotypes related to women beauty and physical appearance. Further, they explored that, slimness and fair skin is not the quality of the beauty and also rejected muscular body in women leads to less feminine.
2. Further, B.Ed trainees rejected the stereotypes related to the outward outlook is more important to women as compared to men, However, they emphasized equally importance of outward look for both gender.
3. Apart from this, most of them also rejected the stereotypes related to men, that there should be muscular body, V-shaped body, impact of dark or fair skin leads to less or more competent and broad shoulder for men. According to them, these are not the quality of masculinity.

6. Suggestions for further study

1. The present study is restricted only to the B.Ed. trainee's of Department of Teacher Education, Central University of Haryana, Mahendergarh. It May be extended to the other departments of University.
2. The study may also be extended to on a large scale. It must be included teaching and non-teaching faculty, people of urban and rural areas of Mahendergarh and in different age groups.

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