Exploring Gender Roles and Stereotypes : A Case Study of Sialkot

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Abstract

Some societies like Pakistan has set stereotypes for specific gender and some responsibilities are associated with them like men are breadwinners while household responsibilities are associated with women which restricts the role of both genders. Gender stereotypes not only influence personal life decisions and career choices but also influence the individuals´ behavior in different situations like how a person should act in specific situation because of their gender. Now a days, social media is a new medium of interaction with mass audience and it also promotes stereotypical content by showing men and women in their traditional roles set by society. Societal expectations restricts the individuals from adopting professions which are not aligned with their gender according to society. In such societies, mostly women are neglected but men also have to face discrimination like they are assumed to be strong and they have to suppress their emotions in various situations to avoid criticism from stereotypical society and it has the bad impact over psychological and mental health. The aim of this research is to investigate that how gender stereotypes persist in Sialkot, Pakistan and also to explore that how much social media plays its role in promoting stereotypes and traditional roles of both men and women. Furthermore, to analyze and examine the influence of stereotypes on individual behaviors, personal life decisions and career choices. This quantitative study is based on survey methodology and data is collected using structured questionnaire based on 5 point Likert scale. This survey is uploaded on Google forms publicly and by applying purposive sampling technique on 119 students selected from UMT & USKT, Sialkot. The results have shown that 55.5% individuals agree or strongly agree that they have changed their behavior to fit in societal norms while 68.1% agree or strongly agree that they are discouraged if they choose career which doesn´t align with their gender. Moreover, 71.5% agree or strongly agree that society influence personal life decisions while 77.3% agree or strongly agree that social media promotes stereotypes.

Keywords: Exploring, Gender, Roles, Stereotypes, Case Study, Sialkot

Introduction

The society in which people have integral doctrine that what responsibilities and roles men and women should have to perform. Such dogma is known as gender stereotypes. (Priyashantha K. G., 2022). This belief is mostly found in South Asian societies where women are mostly neglected. These are basically patriarchal societies where men are breadwinners and often seemed as dominant while women are dependent over men for financial and domestic decisions (Mussawar Shah, 2006). Pakistan is one of such conservative societies in which traditional gender stereotypes are encouraged and supported (Bussolo, 2022).

When we talk about the gender stereotypes in societies like Pakistan then first thing comes to mind is specific responsibilities that are assigned to gender and societal expectations from particular

gender. Mostly, outdoor responsibilities are associated with men while household chores are aligned with women (Akram, 2018). Although, Pakistan is male-oriented society but still men are emotionally suppressed and face societal pressures as they are often seen as primary breadwinners (Hana Arshad D. S., 2019). Traditional norms, values and societal expectations have restricted the role of both genders not only in society but also in various fields like if a man is interested in fashion designing or makeup artistry then he is often discouraged while women are suppressed if they want to join military or law enforcement agencies or crime investigation field (Hana Arshad S. S., 2021). Despite progress, still cultural and traditional norms, values and stereotypes influence individual behaviors, career opportunities and personal life decisions (Tabassum, 2024).

Now, in modern era, different mediums of communication like radio, TV, newspaper and social media are used to share information and to express feelings as they play important role in mind building of individuals (CARDOSO, 2008). Especially, social media has played an important role in offering scope to both genders in learning, educating and expressing their ideas and opinions. Moreover, social media also increases awareness among women regarding their adoption of profession, their economic status and family growth as it provides the platform to marginalized communities not only to learn and educate but also giving them the opportunity to express their point of views (S Kadeswaran, 2020).

Furthermore, social media has given the power to individuals to speak out more and share their point of views and opinions willingly and freely, particularly when they perceived support from other users by engaging in discussions and comments and by sharing posts on various social media platforms (Jung Won Chun M.A., 2017).

Social media has worldwide access and platform of sharing information, exchange of thoughts and it has international users, where at one side it questions and challenge the stereotypical content (Victoria Betton, 2015) then on the other hand, it promotes stereotypes on various social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. (Arendt, 2023). It promotes the stereotypes by setting beauty standards for women as they are particularly judged by their physical appearance, body shape, skin color and physical attractiveness which has the negative impact on mental health of many girls and such standards are adopted and then promoted on social media (Dr Rajesh Ranjan, 2024).

Social media promotes stereotypical content which further emphasis on physical strength and emotional suppression of men which has the negative impact on both physical and mental health (Soraya Giaccardi, 2016).

As according to a report by (DataReportal, 2024), total population in Pakistan is 242.8 million in January 2024 out of which 49.6 percent are female while 50.4 percent are male. At the start of 2024, there were 111.0 million users of internet in Pakistan which is 45.7 percent of the total population which is shown that access to internet in Pakistan is not broad.

Moreover, there were 71.70 million active social media users in January 2024, it means just   29.5 percent of population uses social media. Out of which 74.1 percent are male while 25.9 percent are female (DataReportal, 2024). As social media is used by less than half of Pakistan´s population and out of 71.70 million users, 54.38 million users aged 18 and above which is youth and that´s why I choose adult audience to fulfil my research purpose.

Problem Statement

Societal expectations and stereotypes continue to shape personal life decisions and individual behaviors. In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, men are mostly seen as breadwinners and women are restricted to household activities. Furthermore, women are mostly judged by their beauty, physic and appearance while men are emotionally suppressed as they could not express their emotions because of their physical strength.

Moreover, societal stereotypes restrict the both genders from pursuing the career of their own choice if it is not aligned with their gender like Pakistan if a woman wants to join crime investigation field, it is not acceptable by society while men are suppressed if they want to pursue makeup artistry field.

Sadly, social media which is considered as hub of sharing information and new tool of interaction with mass audience, is also promoting stereotypical content by setting beauty standards (Kushwaha, 2024) and portraying men and women in their traditional and stereotypical roles. While on the other hand, social media gives the power to individuals to question and challenge these stereotypes on platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Facebook where receiver of the content and message is mass audience from worldwide. Such gender roles, societal expectations and stereotypes set by society not only influence individual behaviors and personal life decisions but also influence career choices of individuals.

Societal stereotypes is the immense issue of South Asian societies specially Pakistan which are patriarchal in nature. This study aims to analyze that to what extent individual behaviors, personal life decisions and career choices are influenced by societal expectations and cultural norms in Sialkot and how social media also promoting gender stereotypes by exploring and analyzing the opinions, approaches and experiences of individuals toward gender roles and stereotypes.

Research Questions
1. Do societal expectations and gender stereotypes influence individuals' behavior in Sialkot?
2. To what extent do gender stereotypes affect career choices and personal life decisions in Sialkot?
3. Do social media promotes gender stereotypes, specifically in Sialkot?

Research Objectives
1. To analyze that how traditional norms and values effect personal life decisions of both genders.
2. To explore that how gender stereotypes influence career choices.
3. To investigate the impact of societal expectations on individual behaviors.
4. To examine the role of social media in promoting stereotypes.

Limitation
Persistent stereotypes set by the society regarding both genders is the main South Asian issue but this research covers only two universities of Sialkot, UMT and USKT. This research aims to check the influence of stereotypes on individuals, also in social media context.

Literature Review
Societal expectations from specific social group or some responsibilities aligned with particular gender are called stereotypes (Ellemers, 2018). Such paradigm is mostly found in South Asian societies where patriarchy is at peak and it influences the life of women not only inside the house but also outside the house like domestic violence, forced marriages comes under inside the house influence of patriarchy while education comes under outside the house influence of patriarchy (Bhopal, 2019). Women are mostly considered as weak, more traditional and less professional in society but in education system of South Asian counties, women are also presented as weak, dependent and mostly involved in household chores. As per this literature review, content analysis is conducted in four South Asian countries, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Malaysia by images in school textbooks of these countries. In which women are shown in 40.4% of images as a whole while in Pakistan, situation is worst as women are shown in just 24.4% images which are also portraying traditional women roles like teaching and care giving (Kazi Md. Mukitul Islam, 2018).

Some studies said that men and women both are effected by social expectations that are associated with their gender as it limits their role in professional life, restrict them to pursue the career of their own choice and influence personal life and plans due to stereotypical expectations from specific gender (K.G. Priyashantha, 2023). Where women have to face gender bias in some fields like mathematics, engineering and technology then on the other hand, men also face gender bias in health care, early education and domestic engagement. As these fields are traditionally associated with women so that's why, men are less likely to choose these careers. Author says that men have to face

severe consequences if they don't behave according to societal expectations and stereotypical mindset of society doesn't accept such attitude and behaviors that are not align with their gender (Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, 2022). In another research, it is mentioned, men are subjected to be providers of house and run the family. This concept is cultivated in them from early age. Societal expectations have a deep impact not only on the psychological health of men which leads them to their emotional suppression like ``Men don't cry´´ but also shape their narrative about how to be a man act. (Goldberg, 2000).

Now a days, media is considered as biggest influence as it has the approach to mass audience. It shaped the perception of audience about what it shows. Media portrays men and women in their traditional roles set by the society and at one side, it has the bad impact over adults then on other hand, it also make the stereotypical perception of children regarding both genders and it has worst consequences in future (Menon, 2022). Media portrays stereotypes like men are shown more aggressive while women are weak, more concerned about their beauty and are judged by their appearance (Grower, 2020). In another study, it is mentioned that social media specially in advertisements, often shows women as housewife while men as breadwinners. Moreover, women presented as emotional and in caregiving roles while men are presented as active and authoritative (Döring, 2021). Such portrayal of stereotypes on social media in which men are shown as independent and dominant and women are represented as attractive and dependent (Jessica Rose, 2012) have the worst and deep impact on mental and psychological health of both genders, especially on women as they suffer more from stress as compared to men (Mayor, 2015). Societal stereotypes influence individuals behavior and personal life decisions of both genders as it directly impact the psychological well-being of a person which basically creates the conflict between personal perception about any specific behavior and practical requirement of different circumstances (Stern, 1997).

Hypotheses
1. It is likely that societal expectations and gender stereotypes significantly influence individuals' behavior, leading to alterations to avoid criticism or adhere to norms.
2. It is likely that gender stereotypes negatively impact career opportunities of individuals.
3. It is likely that societal expectations influence personal life decisions, particularly in areas such as marriage, family planning, and household responsibilities.
4. It is likely that social media promotes stereotypes by portraying men and women in their traditional and stereotypical roles.

Theoretical Framework
Social role theory given by Alice Eagly in 1987 is about societal expectations which shaped the individual behaviours. It says that men and women behave differently in different situations according to societal roles that are assigned to them. Basically, gender stereotypes set by the society in which some roles are aligned with specific gender, limits the role of individuals. Specific responsibilities are associated with gender roles like cooking is considered as women´s responsibility while earning for family is responsibility of men. Traditional and cultural norms of society not only influence the behaviour of individuals which they change according to societal expectations but also have the impact over personal life decisions and career choices. Stereotypical society have set different standards in pursuing career for both genders like if a woman wants to be a police officer then she is discouraged as this field is not aligned with her gender according to traditional societal values and same as for men, if a man wants to pursue career of makeup artistry then he is made despondent as men are considered competitive, authoritative and strong so, this profession doesn't go with the personality traits of men according to society.

This study (KAMIRI, 2017), also applied social role theory in support and to prove its stance regarding gender roles and stereotypes set by the society and its influence over individual´s behaviour and personal life decisions.

In my research, I also use social role theory as I am studying that how cultural norms and societal expectations shape personal life decisions, individual behaviours, career choices and also role of social media in promoting such stereotypes as a new medium of engagement with mass audience.

Methodology
The research has been carried out by applying Quantitative Research Approach using Survey Method to analyze the impact of stereotypes on individual behaviors, personal life decisions, career choices and also role of social media in promoting traditional norms. The data was analyzed by applying frequencies, percentages and cross tabulation by using SPSS.

Collection of Data
The researcher has collected the data using the structured questionnaire based on 5-point Likert scale. Total 19 questions are asked from the targeted audience to fulfil the objectives of research. The following structure is used in questionnaire:
- Section 1: Demographic information (gender, age and qualification).
- Section 2: Questions related the influence of stereotypes on individual behaviors.
- Section 3: Questions regarding the impact of societal expectations on personal life decisions.
- Section 4: Questions related to the influence of gender stereotypes on career choices.
- Section 5: Questions about the role of social media in promoting the stereotypes.

Population
The population of this study is selected from two universities of Sialkot, UMT and USKT. Adult population is selected for this research. Both male and female students filled the survey. As social media is mostly used by adults, that's why, adult population is selected.

Sampling Size
The questionnaire is uploaded on google forms publicly and shared with the students of UMT & USKT and total 119 students from both universities have filled the survey. This sample includes both male and female students to assure the equitable inclusion of different perceptions.

Sampling Technique
In this research, Purposive Sampling technique is used to conduct the survey. Participants are chosen on the basis of their social media engagement and their diverse experiences regarding gender roles and societal expectations from two universities of Sialkot, UMT & USKT.

Categories of Construction:
- Gender Stereotypes
- Impact of Traditional and cultural norms
- Emotional Suppression
- Societal Expectations

Operationalization
Gender Stereotypes: A preconception about the characteristics, roles, behaviors and responsibilities that society assigned to men and women and expects from them to behave according to assigned attributes.
Impact of Traditional and cultural norms: The stereotypes set by the society not only restricts both genders but also have a bad impact over their mental and psychological health.
Emotional Suppression: It refers to the emotions or feelings which are consciously or unconsciously avoided to escape from criticism by society.
Societal Expectations: It refers to the beliefs and expectations which are aligned with specific gender that how individuals behave and act in different situations.

Tables and Graphs

Section 1: Demographics Information

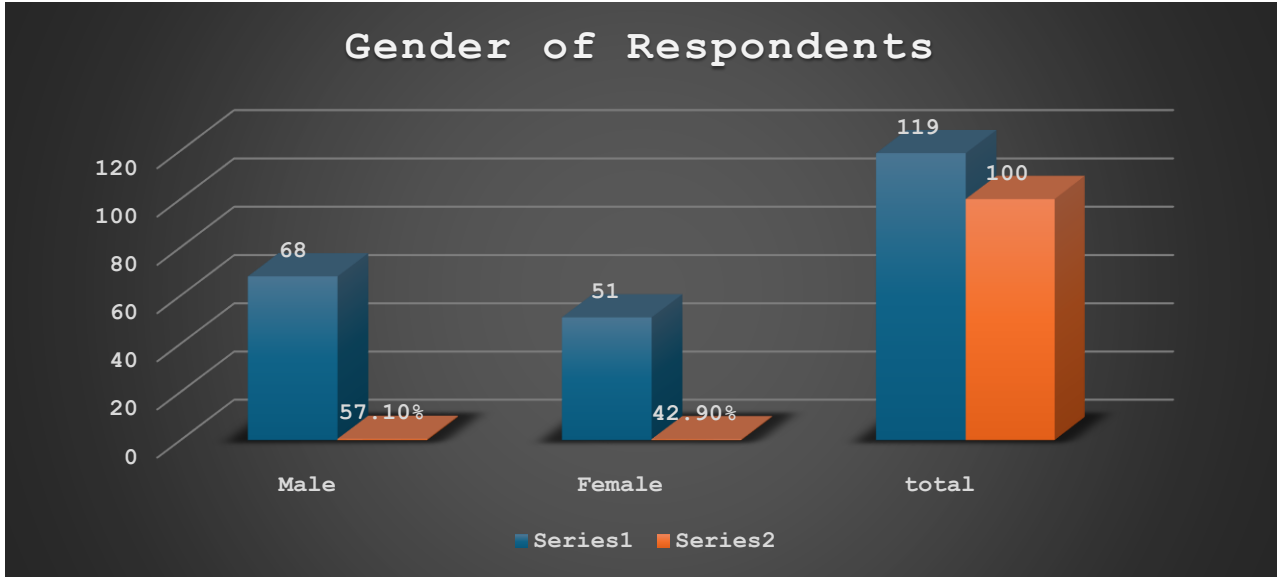|	Male	Female	Total
Respondents	68	51	119
% of total	57.1%	42.9%	100

Gender of respondents

Table 4.1 shows the crosstab of gender of respondents. The overall data shows that 57.1% of respondents are male as compare to 42.9% of respondents are female.

Age of Respondents				
	15-20	20-25	25-30	Total
Respondents	45	62	12	119
% of total	37.8%	52.1%	10.1%	100
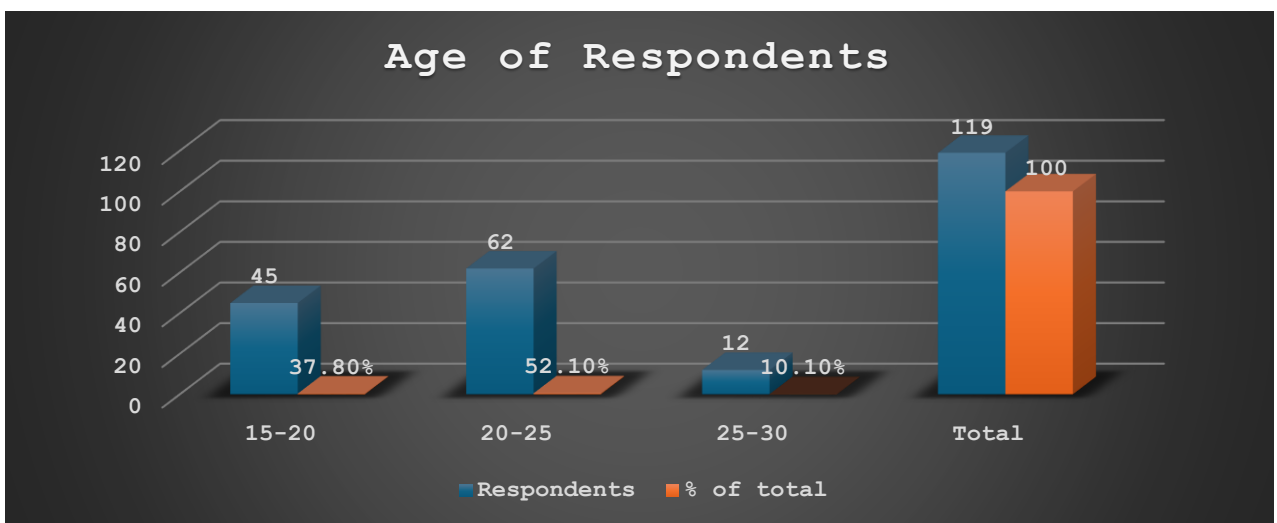
Table 4.2 shows the crosstab of age of respondents. It shows that 37.8% of respondents are from age group 15 to 20 as compare to 52.10% of respondents age lies between 20 to 25 while 10.10% of respondents are from 25-30 age group.

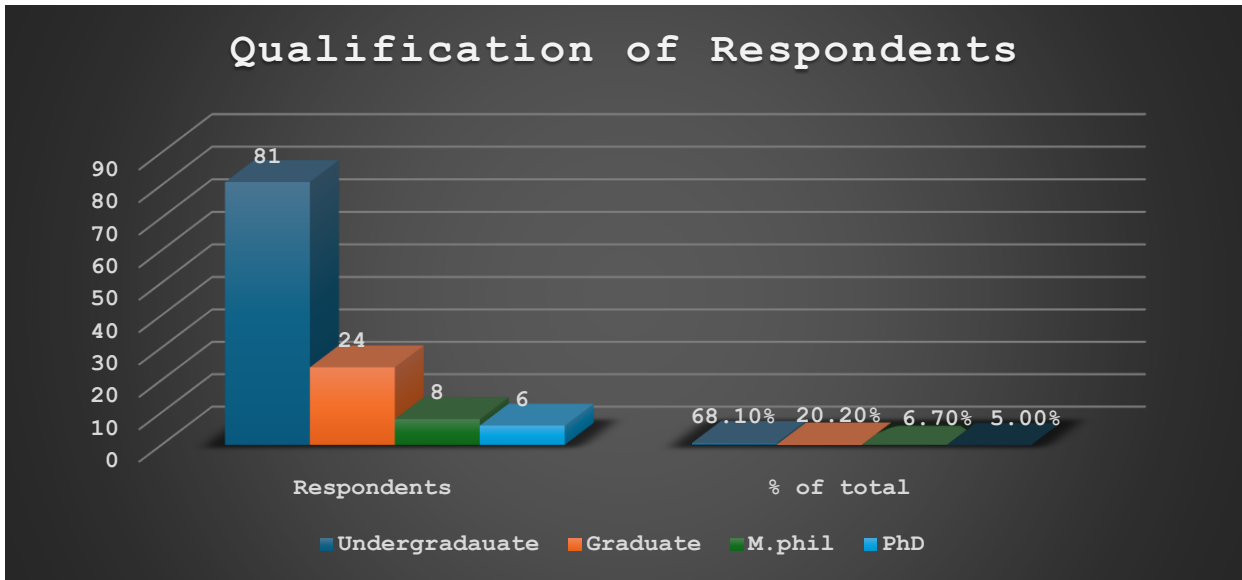| Qualification of Respondents					
	Undergraduate	**Graduate**	**M.Phil.**	**PhD**	**Total**
Respondents	81	24	8	6	119
% of total	68.1%	20.2%	6.7%	5.0%	100

Table 4.3 shows the crosstab of qualification of respondents. It shows that 68.1% of respondents are undergraduate as compared to 20.20% of respondents are graduate, 6.7% of respondents have M.Phil. Degree while 5% of respondents have PhD degree.

Section 2: Individual Behaviors

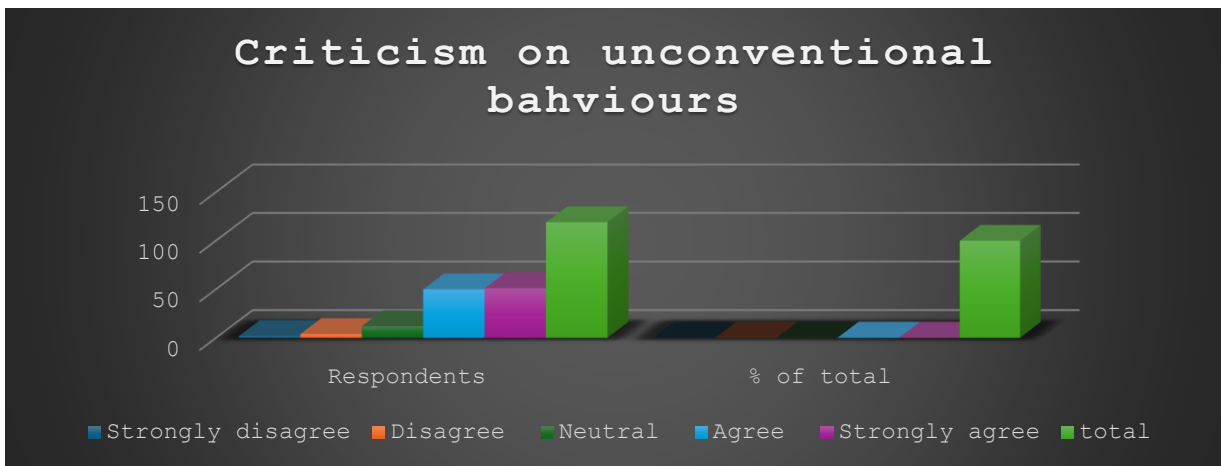| Crosstab of criticism of not behaving according to societal expectations					
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Total**
Respondents	2	4	12	50	51	119
% of total	1.6%	3.4%	10.1%	42.0%	42.9%	100

Table 4.4 shows crosstab of criticism faced for not behaving according to societal expectations. The overall data shows that 42.9% of respondents are strongly agree as compared to other categories, 42.0% of respondents are agree, 10.1% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 3.4% of respondents are disagree and 1.6% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of changing behavior to avoid criticism

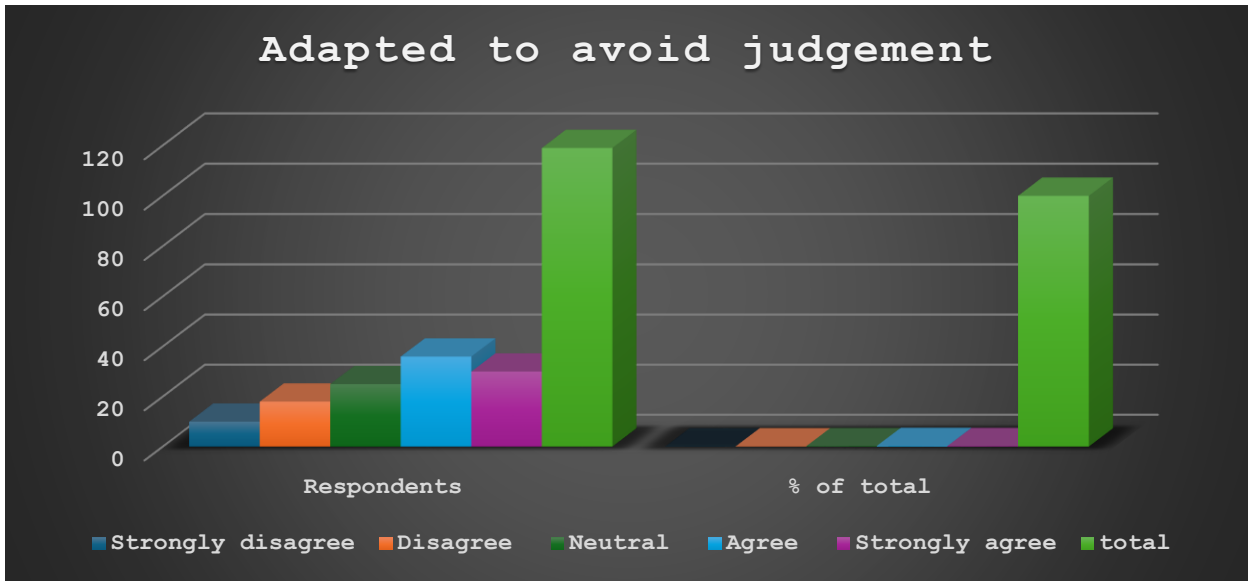|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	10	18	25	36	30	119
% of total	8.4%	15.1%	21.0%	30.3%	25.2%	100

Table 4.5 shows the behavior changed to avoid criticism from society. The overall data shows that 25.2% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories, 30.3% of respondents are agree, 20.1% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 15.1% of respondents are disagree and 8.4% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of discouragement if emotions are expressed freely

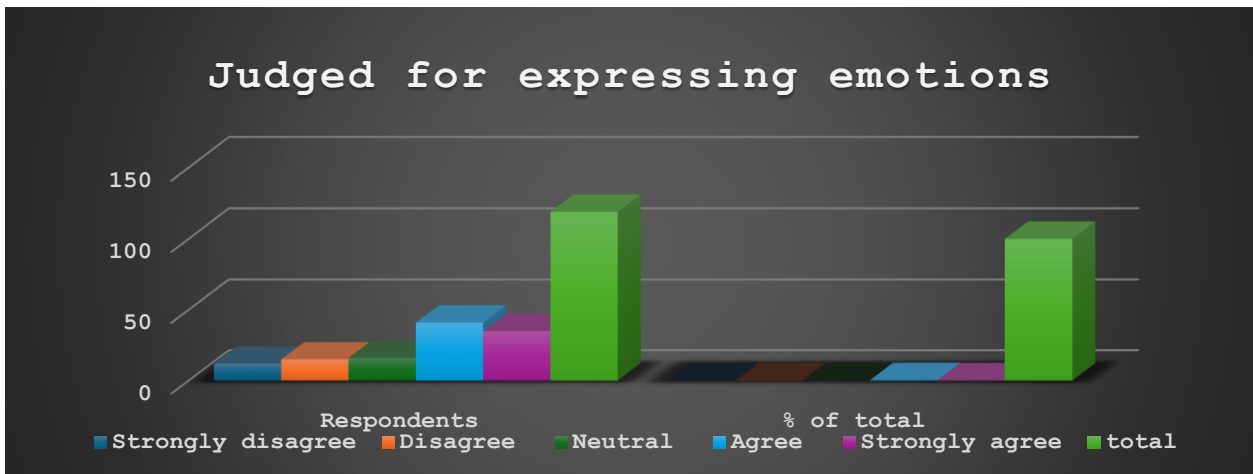|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	12	15	16	41	35	119
% of total	10.1%	12.6%	13.4%	34.5%	29.4%	100

Table 4.6 shows that discouragement is faced if emotions are expressed freely. The overall data shows that 29.4% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories, 34.5% of respondents are agree, 13.4% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 12.6% of respondents are disagree and 10.1% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of neglecting habits not aligned with my gender

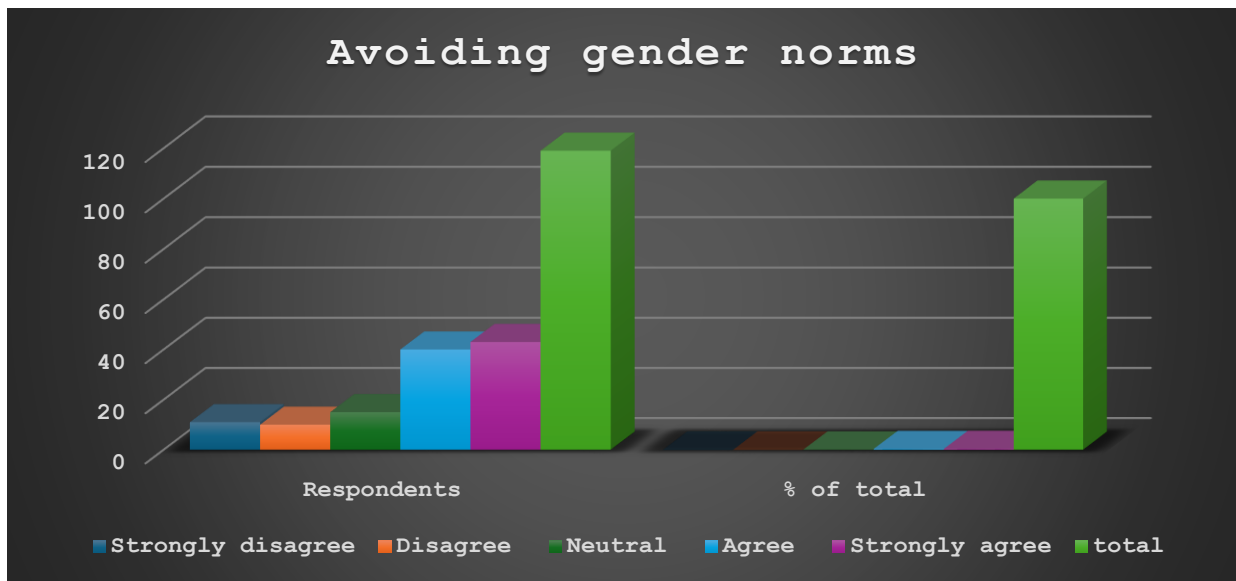|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	11	10	15	40	43	119
% of total	9.2%	8.4%	12.6%	33.6%	36.2%	100

Table 4.7 shows different habits are neglected that are not aligned with my gender to avoid criticism. The overall data shows that 36.2% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories, 33.6% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 8.4% of respondents are disagree and 9.2% responded with strongly disagree term.

Section 3: Career Opportunities

Crosstab of influence of stereotypes on career choice

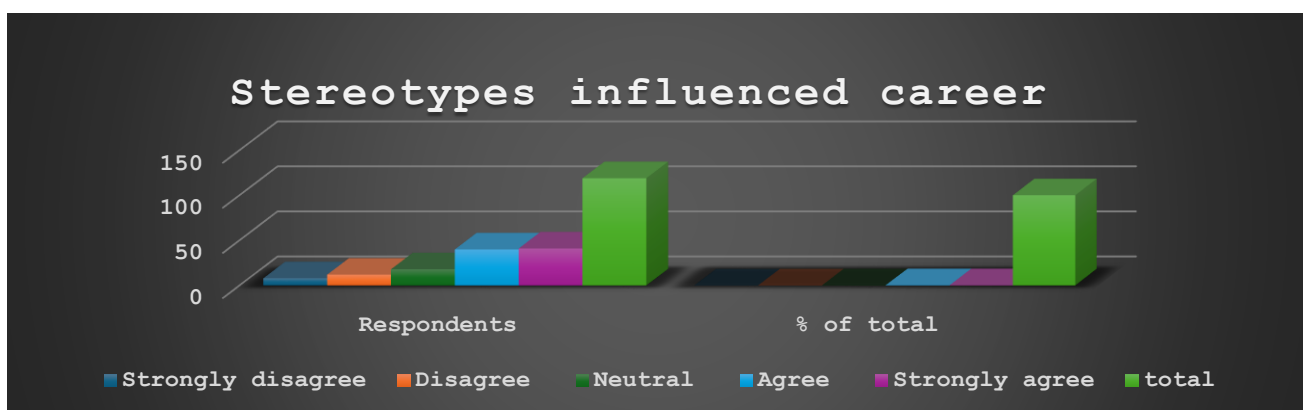|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	8	12	18	40	41	119
% of total	6.7%	10.1%	15.1%	33.6%	34.5%	100

Table 4.8 shows that discouragement is faced regarding pursuing career that does not align with their gender. The overall data shows that 34.5% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 33.6% of respondents are agree, 15.1% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 10.1% of respondents are disagree and 6.7% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of equal access to both genders in pursuing career

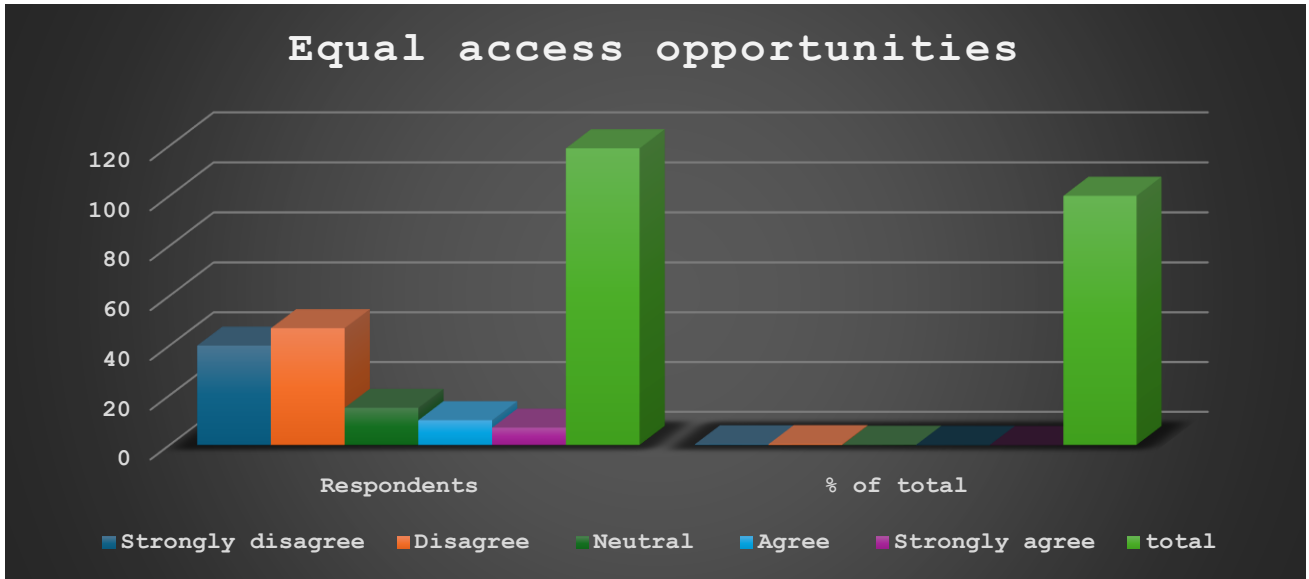|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	40	47	15	10	7	119
% of total	33.6%	39.5%	12.6%	8.4%	5.9%	100

Table 4.9 shows that men and women have equal access to pursue career of their own choice. The overall data shows that 5.9% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 8.4% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 39.5% of respondents are disagree and 33.6% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of facing discouragement regarding pursuing career

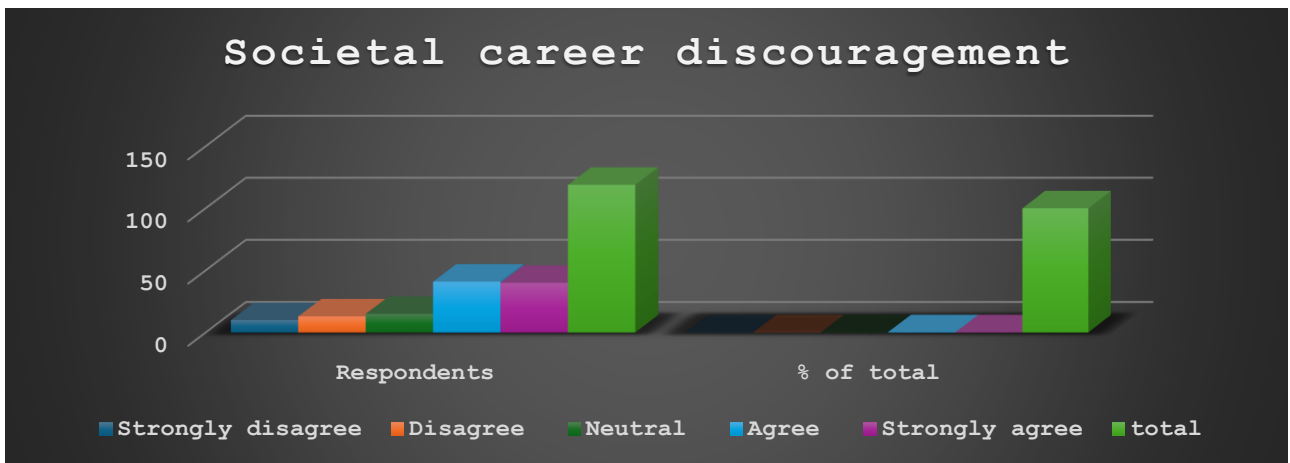|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	10	13	15	41	40	119
% of total	8.4%	10.9%	12.6%	34.5%	33.6%	100

Table 4.10 shows that discouragement is faced regarding career choice if it is not aligned with their gender. The overall data shows that 33.6% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 34.5% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 10.9% of respondents are disagree and 8.4% responded with strongly disagree term.

Section 4: Personal Life Decisions

Crosstab of liberty to make your decisions regardless of your gender

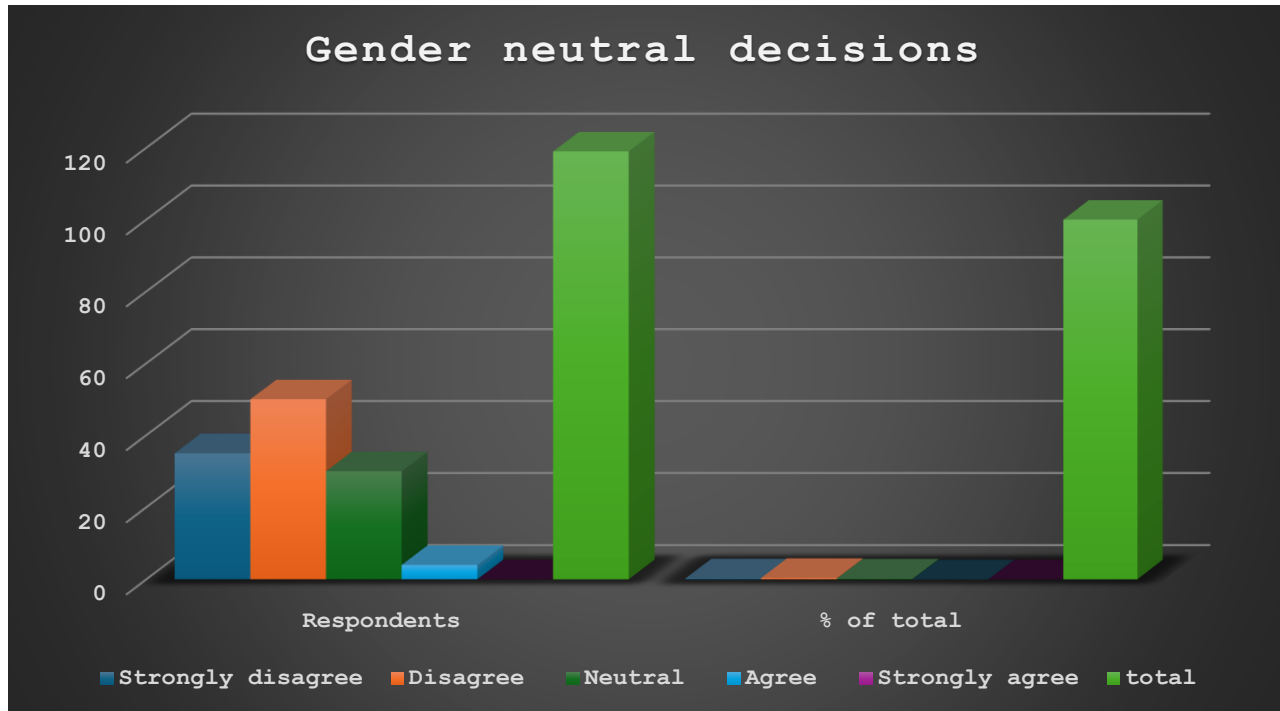|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	35	50	30	4	0	119
% of total	29.4%	42%	25.2%	3.4%	0	100

Table 4.11 shows the liberty of making your decisions on your own regardless of your gender. The overall data shows that 0% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 3.4% of respondents are agree, 25.2% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 42% of respondents are disagree while 29.4% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of household chores are not equally distributed

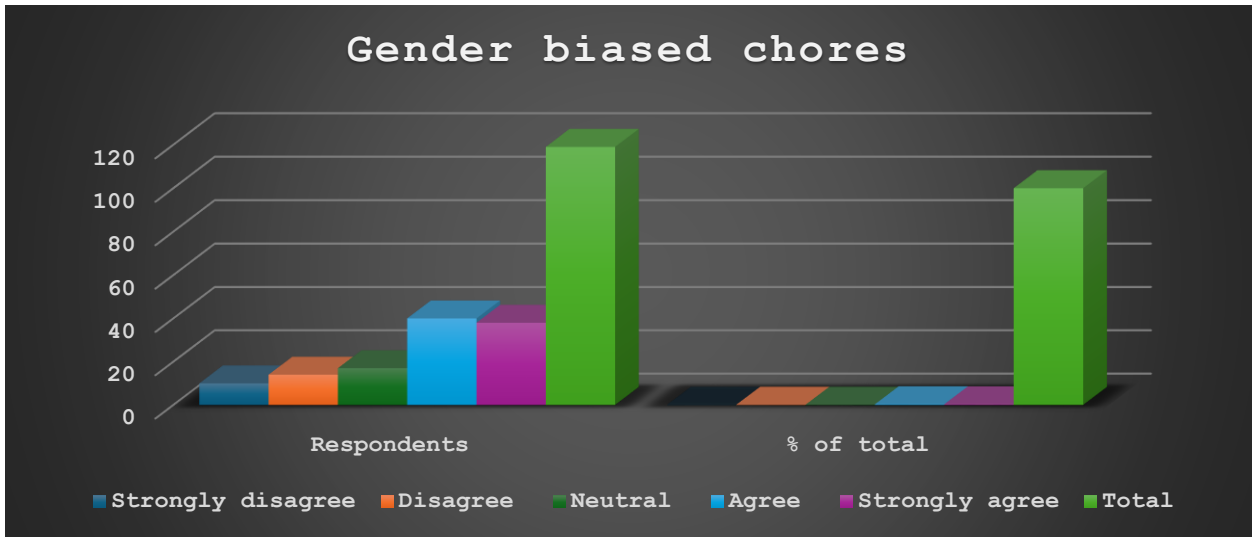|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Respondents	10	14	17	40	38	119
% of total	8.4%	11.8%	14.3%	33.6%	31.9%	100

Gender biased chores

Table 4.12 shows that household chores are not equally distributed. The overall data shows that 31.9% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 33.6% of respondents are agree, 14.3% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 11.8% of respondents are disagree while 8.4% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of society influence personal life decisions

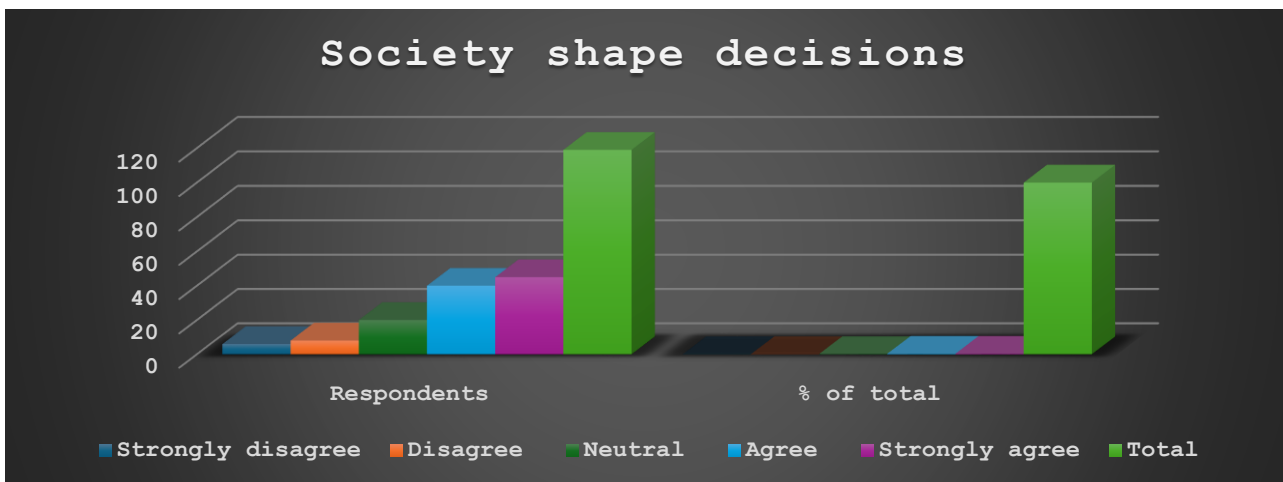|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	6	8	20	40	45	119
% of total	5%	6.7%	16.8%	33.6%	37.9%	100

Society shape decisions

Table 4.13 shows that society influence personal life decisions of both genders. The overall data shows that 37.9% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 33.6% of respondents are agree, 16.8% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 6.7% of respondents are disagree while 5% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of discrimination faced due to gender

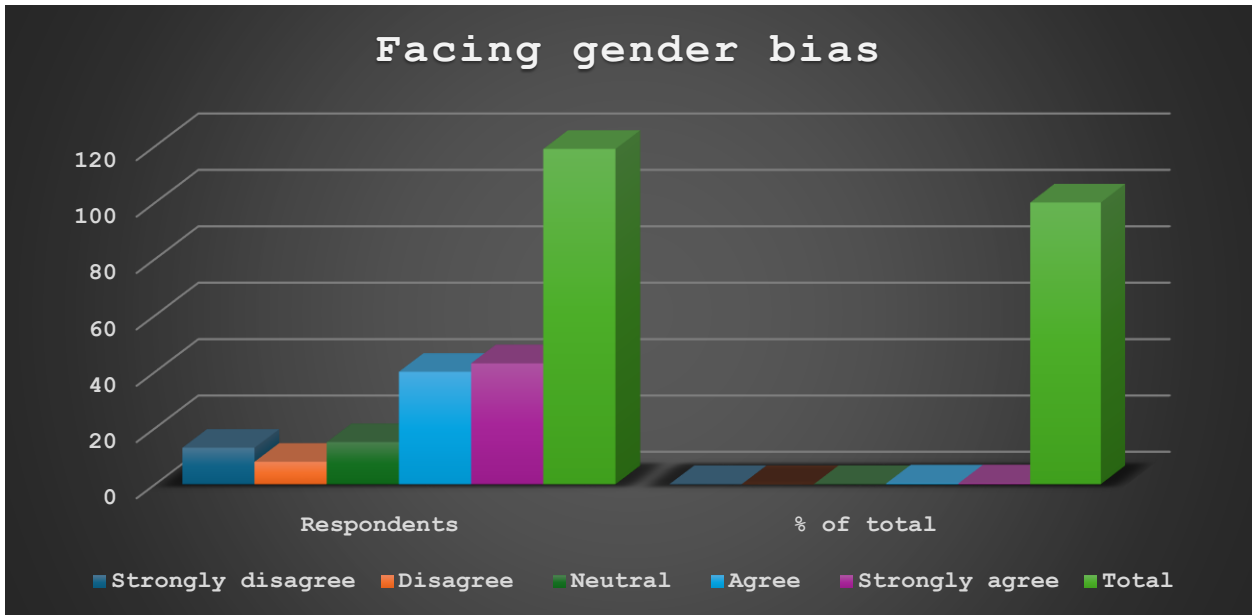|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	13	8	15	40	43	119
% of total	10.9%	6.7%	12.6%	33.7%	36.1%	100

Facing gender bias

Table 4.14 shows that discrimination is faced due to gender. The overall data shows that 36.1% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 33.7% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 6.7% of respondents are disagree while 10.9% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of facing criticism for breaking norms

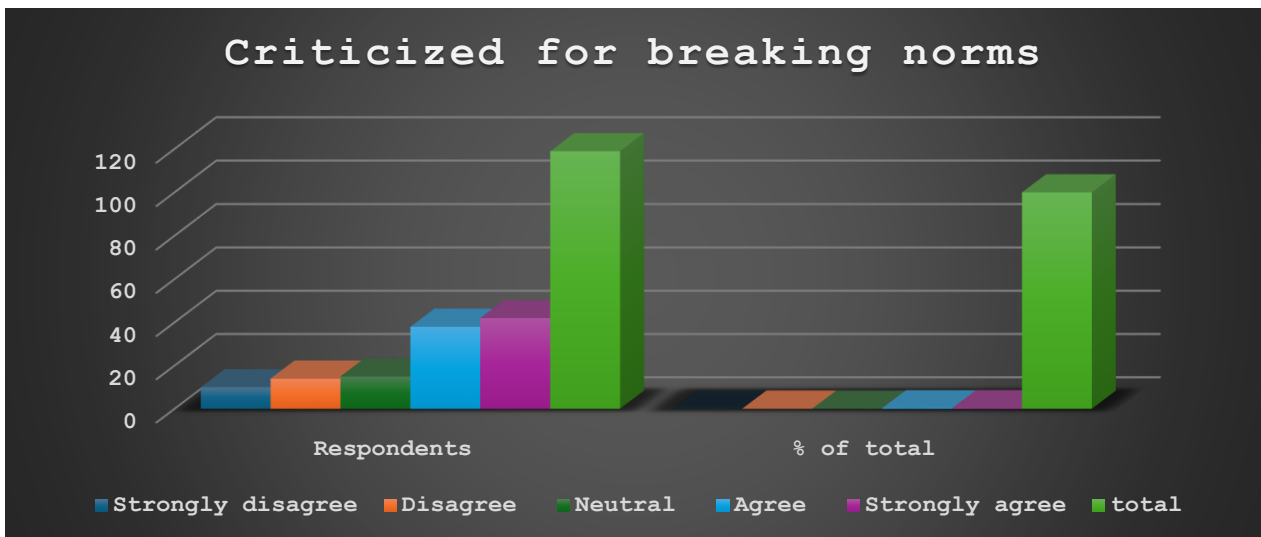|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	10	14	15	38	42	119
% of total	8.4%	11.8%	12.6%	31.9%	35.3%	100

Criticized for breaking norms

Table 4.15 shows that criticism is faced due to any act which is not acceptable by stereotypical society. The overall data shows that 35.3% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 31.9% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 11.8% of respondents are disagree while 8.4% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of society shaped my personal life decisions like marriage

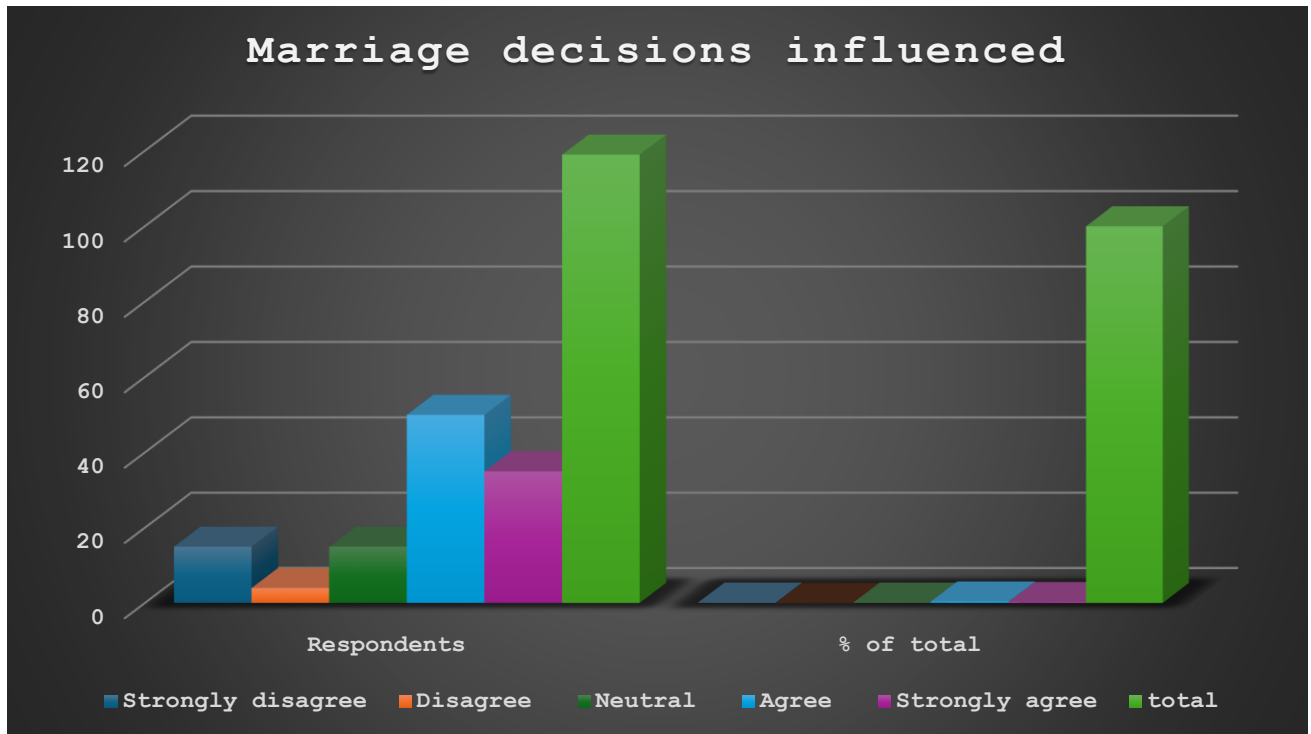|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	15	4	15	50	35	119
% of total	12.6%	3.4%	12.6%	42%	29.4%	100

Table 4.16 shows that society influenced personal life decisions like marriage or family planning. The overall data shows that 29.4% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 42% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 3.4% of respondents are disagree while 12.6% responded with strongly disagree term.

Section 4: Social Media

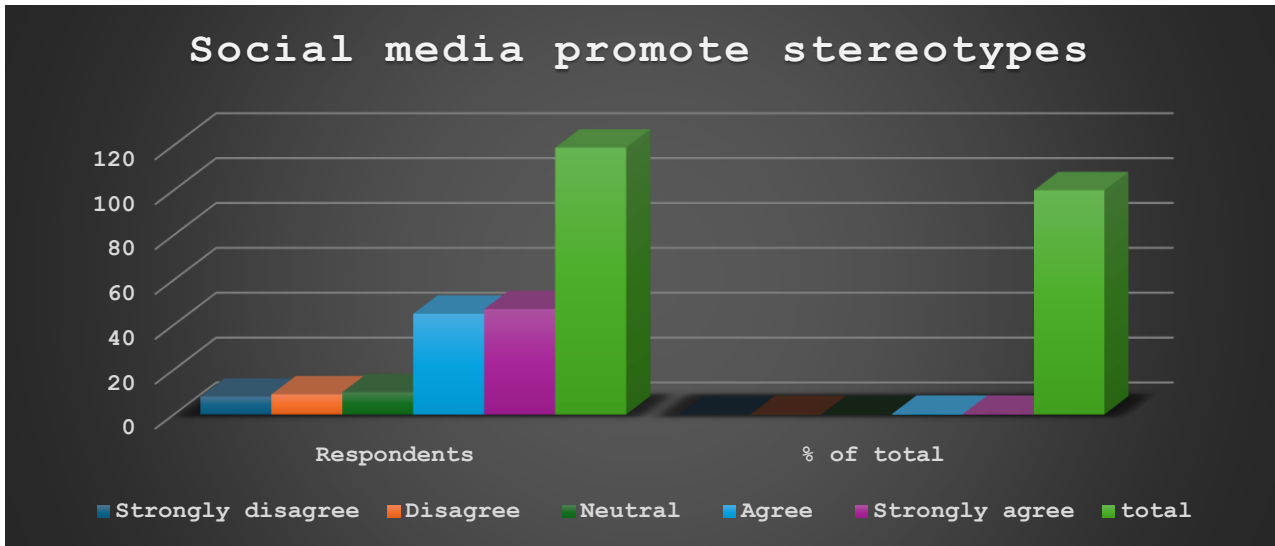| Crosstab of promoting the stereotypical content on social media						
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	8	9	10	45	47	119
% of total	6.7%	7.6%	8.4%	37.8%	39.5%	100

Social media promote stereotypes

Table 4.17 shows that social media promotes the stereotypical content. The overall data shows that 39.5% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 37.8% of respondents are agree, 8.4% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 7.6% of respondents are disagree while 6.7% responded with strongly disagree term.

Crosstab of encouragement of social media to choose career of own choice

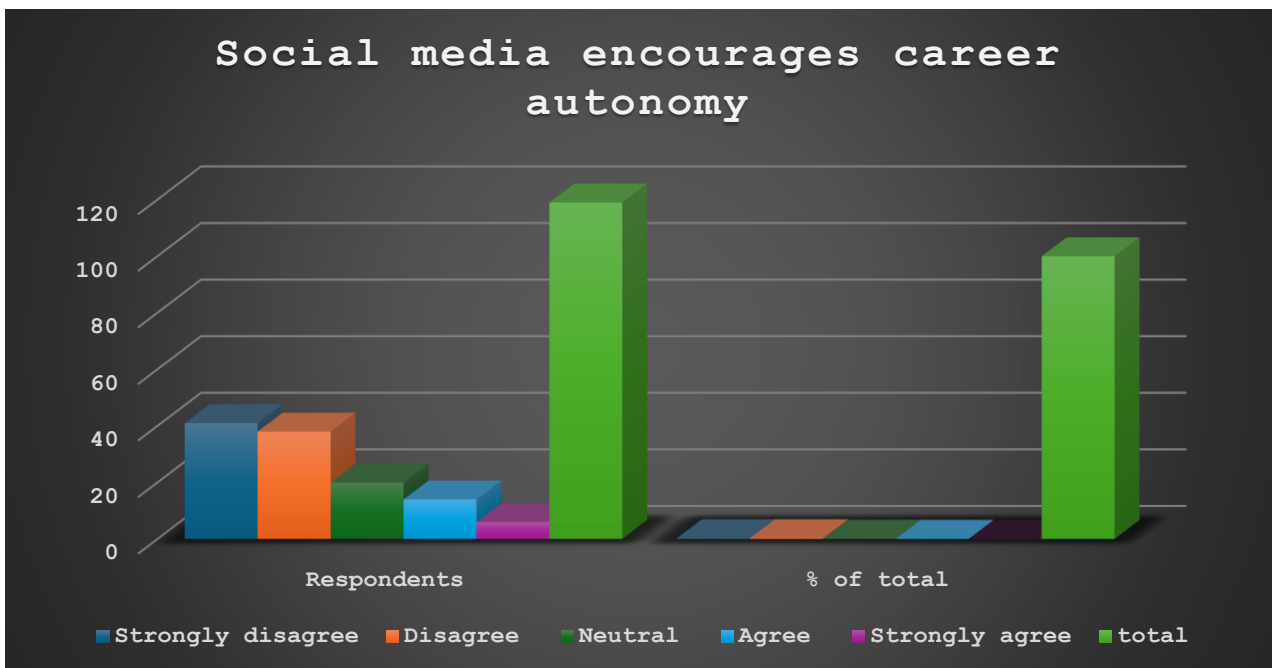|	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Respondents	41	38	20	14	6	119
% of total	34.5%	31.9%	16.8%	11.8%	5%	100

Social media encourages career autonomy

Table 4.18 shows that social media encourages to pursue career of your own choice regardless of your gender. The overall data shows that 5% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 11.8% of respondents are agree, 16.8% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 31.9% of respondents are disagree while 34.5% responded with strongly disagree term.

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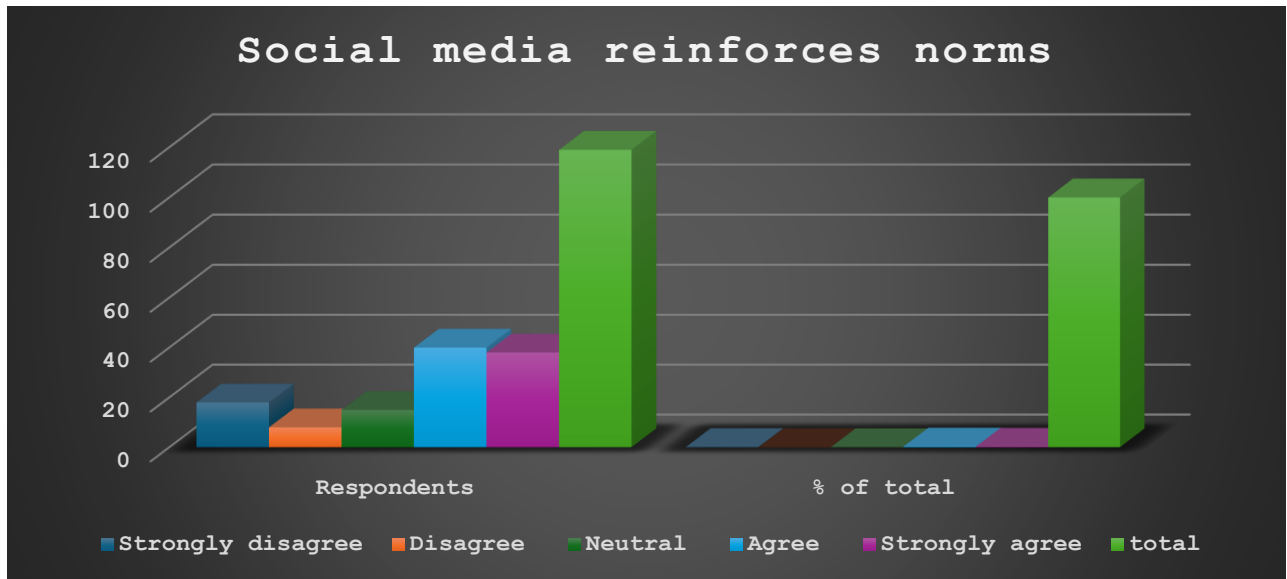| Crosstab of social media perpetuates traditional roles					
	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Total**
Respondents	18	8	15	40	38	119
% of total	15.1%	6.7%	12.6%	33.7%	31.9%	100

Table 4.19 shows that social media promotes men and women in their traditional roles. The overall data shows that 31.9% of respondents strongly agree as compared to other categories 33.7% of respondents are agree, 12.6% of respondents shows neutral opinion, 6.7% of respondents are disagree while 15.1% responded with strongly disagree term.

Table 4.20: Crosstab of Hypothesis Results – Acceptance of Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Remarks
It is likely that societal expectations and gender stereotypes significantly influence individuals' behavior, leading to alterations to avoid criticism or adhere to norms.	Accepted
It is likely that gender stereotypes negatively impact career opportunities of individuals.	Accepted
It is likely that societal expectations influence personal life decisions, particularly in areas such as marriage, family planning, and household responsibilities.	Accepted
It is likely that social media promotes stereotypes by portraying men and women in their traditional and stereotypical roles.	Accepted

Table 4.20 presents the results of hypothesis testing based on survey data. All four hypotheses were accepted, confirming that societal expectations and gender stereotypes significantly influence individual behavior, career opportunities, and personal life decisions. Additionally, social media was found to play a role in reinforcing traditional gender roles. These findings highlight the pervasive impact of stereotypes in various aspects of life.

Interpretation of Hypotheses & Conclusion

Hypothesis 1:

Criticism for not adhering to societal expectations (Table 4.4): 42.9% strongly agree, 42% agree → 85% of respondents feel judged when they don't conform.

Changing behavior to avoid criticism (Table 4.5): 55.5% agree or strongly agree → Many individuals modify their behavior to fit societal norms.

Discouragement in expressing emotions (Table 4.6): 63.9% agree or strongly agree → Stereotypes restrict emotional expression.

Neglecting habits not aligned with gender (Table 4.7): 69.8% agree or strongly agree → People adjust behavior to match expected gender roles.

Conclusion: The data strongly supports the hypothesis that societal expectations significantly shape individual behaviors.

Hypothesis 2:

Influence of stereotypes on career choice (Table 4.8): 68.1% agree or strongly agree → Many feel pressured to choose gender-appropriate careers.

Equal access to careers (Table 4.9): 73.1% disagree or strongly disagree → A majority believe men and women do not have equal career opportunities.

Discouragement from pursuing non-traditional careers (Table 4.10): 68.1% agree or strongly agree → Gender-based career restrictions exist.

Conclusion: The data confirms that gender stereotypes significantly hinder career choices and access to opportunities.

Hypothesis 3:

Liberty to make decisions regardless of gender (Table 4.11): 71.4% disagree or strongly disagree → Most feel limited in decision-making due to gender norms.

Household chores distribution (Table 4.12): 65.5% agree or strongly agree → Chores are not equally divided between men and women.

Influence of society on personal life (Table 4.13): 71.5% agree or strongly agree → Most feel pressured in life choices.

Facing discrimination due to gender (Table 4.14): 69.8% agree or strongly agree → Gender-based discrimination is common.

Criticism for breaking norms (Table 4.15): 67.2% agree or strongly agree → People face backlash for challenging stereotypes.

Society shaping marriage & family planning decisions (Table 4.16): 71.4% agree or strongly agree → Marriage and family decisions are largely shaped by societal norms.

Conclusion: The findings strongly support the hypothesis that societal expectations impact personal life decisions.

Hypothesis 4:

Social media promotes stereotypes (Table 4.17): 77.3% agree or strongly agree → Most believe social media reinforces gender norms.

Social media encouraging non-traditional careers (Table 4.18): 66.4% disagree or strongly disagree → Most believe social media does not support gender-neutral career choices.

Social media perpetuating traditional roles (Table 4.19): 65.6% agree or strongly agree → social media reinforces conventional gender roles.

Conclusion: The data supports the hypothesis that social media promotes traditional gender stereotypes rather than challenging them.

Discussion

The findings of the study shows that gender stereotypes and societal expectations have the deep and persist impact on individuals. By conducting 5 point Likert scale questionnaire survey among 119 university students, it is observed that adults are most likely influenced by traditional gender roles and stereotypes which are set by society and it also restrict their role not only in society but also in pursuing career of their own choice.

The first research question examined was impact of societal expectations and gender stereotypes on individuals´ behavior in Sialkot. The analysis led to the results that mostly individuals have changed their behavior to avoid criticism from society. In stereotypical society, different behaviors are associated with specific gender like men are assumed to be strong so they are emotionally suppressed and they are not allowed to cry which has the bad impact on their psychological and mental health. While on the other hand, women are not allowed to talk more in serious conversations and their advice is not taken seriously.

The second research question explored the influence of gender stereotypes on personal life decisions and career choices in Sialkot. The results indicate that mostly individuals are felt pressured in life choices and they are discouraged if they pursue career that doesn´t align with their gender. Mostly family planning or marriage decisions are shaped by stereotypical societal norms and values and also household chores are not equally distributed among men and women in this society according to results. Moreover, it is observed that men and women don't have the equal access in pursuing career of their own choice.

The third research question analyzed the role of social media in promoting stereotypes in Sialkot. The findings suggest that mostly individuals agree that social media perpetuates traditional gender roles of both gender genders like portraying women in beauty products ad and showing men in outside home responsibilities. It is observed that mostly individuals believe that social media promotes gender stereotypes and encourage traditional careers.

The overall findings suggest that traditional gender stereotypes and societal expectations influenced personal life decisions, individuals' behaviors and career choices in Sialkot. Also, results explored that social media promotes stereotypes as mostly adults use social media, that's why I selected adults from UMT & USKT, Sialkot to fill the questionnaire.

Conclusion

The study conclude that despite progress in modern era, still traditional norms and societal expectations shape the individual behaviors, affect personal life decisions and influence career choices of both genders. Despite progress and emergence of social media, stereotypes still determine specific roles and responsibilities for specific gender. It restricts their role not only in society but also in pursuing career of their own choice which is an obstacle to success. Even, social media also portray stereotypical content by representing men and women in their traditional roles. While on the other hand, social media has the potential to challenge stereotypes, run campaigns for equal career opportunities, use social media for breaking traditional gender biases and inclusivity and try to modify the societal perceptions regarding gender.

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