

GENDER STEREOTYPES AND CHILDHOOD VIOLENCE: AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW

ГЕНДЕРНІ СТЕРЕОТИПИ ТА НАСИЛЬСТВО В ДИТИНСТВІ: АНАЛІТИЧНИЙ ОГЛЯД

The present study contributes to the existing literature on the complex relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence. The study's findings suggest that gender stereotypes are positively associated with childhood experiences of violence, and that various influential factors such as family environment, peer relationships, media exposure, and school and community contexts may contribute to this relationship.

The implications of this study are significant for policymakers and practitioners. The identification of potential influential factors provides valuable insights for the design and implementation of effective prevention and intervention programs. Such programs could challenge traditional gender norms and promote healthy and diverse portrayals of gender roles in media. They could also promote gender-sensitive parenting practices and non-violent conflict resolution strategies. These programs could help to reduce the internalization of harmful gender stereotypes and mitigate the impact of gender stereotypes on childhood experiences of violence.

However, the study also has limitations that need to be considered. The study's cross-sectional design limits the establishment of causality, and future research should consider more rigorous research designs, such as longitudinal or experimental studies, to establish the directionality of the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence. Future research should consider alternative measures, such as observational measures or peer reports, to increase the reliability and validity of the data collected.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence, highlighting potential influential factors that can inform the development of prevention and intervention strategies. However, further research is necessary to establish the directionality of this relationship and consider alternative measures and diverse populations to increase the validity and generalizability of the findings.

Key words: gender stereotypes, gender roles, violence, childhood experiences of violence.

Це дослідження доповнює наявну літературу про складний зв'язок між гендерними стереотипами та досвідом насильства в дитинстві. Результати дослідження

свідчать про те, що гендерні стереотипи позитивно пов'язані з досвідом насильства в дитинстві, і що різні впливові фактори, такі як сімейне оточення, стосунки з однолітками, вплив ЗМІ, а також шкільний і громадський контекст можуть сприяти цьому зв'язку.

Наслідки цього дослідження важливі для політиків і практиків. Виявлення потенційних впливових факторів дає цінну інформацію для розробки та реалізації ефективних програм профілактики та втручання. Такі програми можуть кинути виклик традиційним гендерним нормам і сприяти здоровому та різноманітному зображенню гендерних ролей у ЗМІ. Вони також можуть сприяти гендерно-чутливим практикам батьківства та стратегіям ненасильницького вирішення конфліктів. Ці програми можуть допомогти зменшити інтерналізацію шкідливих гендерних стереотипів і пом'якшити вплив гендерних стереотипів на дитячий досвід насильства.

Однак дослідження також має обмеження, які необхідно враховувати. Перехресний план дослідження обмежує встановлення причинно-наслідкового зв'язку, і майбутні дослідження повинні розглядати більш суворі плани досліджень, такі як лонгітюдні або експериментальні дослідження, щоб встановити спрямованість зв'язку між гендерними стереотипами та досвідом насильства в дитинстві. У майбутніх дослідженнях слід розглянути альтернативні заходи, такі як заходи спостереження або звіти експертів, щоб підвищити надійність і достовірність зібраних даних.

На завершення це дослідження дає цінну інформацію про зв'язок між гендерними стереотипами та досвідом насильства в дитинстві, висвітлюючи потенційні впливові фактори, які можуть сприяти розробці стратегій запобігання та втручання. Однак необхідні подальші дослідження, щоб встановити спрямованість цього зв'язку та розглянути альтернативні заходи та різноманітні популяції для підвищення достовірності та можливості узагальнення результатів.

Ключові слова: гендерні стереотипи, гендерні ролі, насильство, дитячий досвід насильства.

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Introduction. The pervasive influence of gender stereotypes on individuals and society cannot be understated. These stereotypes, ingrained from a young age, are believed to significantly affect various aspects of life, including identity formation, social interactions, and well-being [2]. While a substantial body of research has been dedicated to understanding the impact of gender stereotypes on children's development, relatively less attention has been given to the potential con-

nection between these stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence.

Childhood experiences of violence can have profound short- and long-term consequences on physical, mental, and emotional health [9]. Furthermore, these experiences have been associated with increased risk for various negative outcomes in adulthood, including substance abuse, mental health disorders, and involvement in violent relationships. As such, investigating

the potential relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence is critical for developing effective intervention and prevention strategies to reduce the prevalence and impact of violence on children's lives.

It is crucial to establish clear definitions for the primary concepts of this study: gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence. Gender stereotypes are socially constructed beliefs that assign certain traits, behaviors, roles, and expectations to individuals based on their perceived sex [6]. These stereotypes often manifest as oversimplified generalizations, which contribute to the perpetuation of rigid gender roles and inequalities within society. Examples of gender stereotypes include the belief that boys are inherently more aggressive than girls, or that girls are inherently more nurturing and empathetic than boys [11]. Childhood experiences of violence encompass various forms of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to family or community violence [10]. These experiences can be further categorized into direct victimization, where the child is the target of violence, and indirect victimization, where the child witnesses violence against others. In the context of this study, the focus will be on both direct and indirect experiences of violence, with particular emphasis on exploring how gender stereotypes may contribute to the prevalence, nature, and consequences of these experiences.

The topicality of the problem. In recent years, the intersection between gender stereotypes and childhood violence has gained increasing attention within academic, social, and policy discourse. The perpetuation of harmful gender norms and expectations often contributes to a climate where childhood violence thrives. This analytical overview delves into the topicality of the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood violence, exploring how these concepts intersect and reinforce each other.

Purpose of the article. This article aims to bridge this gap in the literature by examining the association between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence, considering both the victimization and perpetration aspects. By investigating this relationship, the findings will contribute to a better understanding of the complex interplay between societal factors and individual experiences, ultimately informing policies and interventions to promote healthier, violence-free childhoods.

Main part

1. Theoretical framework

In our study, two key theoretical perspectives: Social Learning Theory and Gender Schema Theory are employed. Social Learning Theory posits that individuals learn and acquire behaviors, values, and norms by observing and imitating others in their social environment. This theory empha-

sizes the role of modeling, reinforcement, and punishment in shaping human behavior. In the context of gender stereotypes and childhood violence, Social Learning Theory can help explain how children may internalize and reproduce gendered behaviors and expectations through observing their caregivers, peers, and media representations. As a result, children exposed to violent environments may learn to associate aggression with masculinity and passivity or victimhood with femininity, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence [1]. Gender Schema Theory suggests that children develop mental frameworks, or schemas, to categorize and interpret gender-related information in their environment. These schemas are shaped by socialization processes and cultural influences, and they guide children's understanding of what is considered appropriate behavior for their gender. Consequently, children may conform to or reject certain behaviors based on their perceived alignment with their gender schema [11]. In the context of this study, Gender Schema Theory can help explain how the internalization of gender stereotypes might influence children's vulnerability to experiencing or perpetrating violence. For instance, boys may engage in aggressive behavior to align with the masculine schema, while girls may be more likely to experience victimization due to traditional feminine schemas that emphasize passivity and vulnerability [6].

By employing both Social Learning Theory and Gender Schema Theory, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence.

Gender stereotypes have been found to significantly influence children's development in various domains, including cognitive, emotional, and social. For example, research has demonstrated that exposure to traditional gender stereotypes can restrict children's interests and aspirations, leading to the reinforcement of gender inequalities in educational and occupational choices [7]. Moreover, gender stereotypes can also impact children's self-esteem, emotional expression, and interpersonal relationships, as they may feel pressured to conform to societal expectations and suppress non-conforming traits or behaviors [13].

Childhood Violence Experiences: Childhood experiences of violence have been consistently linked to adverse outcomes across various domains of functioning, such as physical and mental health, academic achievement, and relationship quality [16]. For example, children who have been exposed to violence may exhibit increased levels of internalizing and externalizing behaviors, such as anxiety, depression, and aggression. Furthermore, childhood experiences of violence can have lasting effects on adult well-being, with individuals who have experienced violence in childhood being at greater risk for psy-

chiatric disorders, substance abuse, and involvement in violent relationships.

Gender Stereotypes and Childhood Experiences of Violence: Despite the growing body of literature on gender stereotypes and childhood violence, few studies have directly examined the relationship between these two factors. However, existing research suggests that gender stereotypes may contribute to the perpetuation of violence in various ways. For instance, the endorsement of traditional masculine norms, such as aggression and dominance, has been linked to increased rates of bullying and dating violence perpetration among adolescent boys [8; 14]. Conversely, traditional feminine norms that emphasize passivity and submission may increase girls' vulnerability to victimization [3]. Additionally, some studies have suggested that exposure to gender-stereotyped media, such as violent video games or television programs, may reinforce aggressive behaviors and attitudes, particularly among boys [1].

In summary, the literature review highlights the importance of examining the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence. The current study aims to expand upon this body of research by systematically investigating the association between these factors, considering both victimization and perpetration aspects.

Study Design

In this study a convergent mixed-methods design, which involves the concurrent collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to explore the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence will be employed [5]. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research question by capitalizing on the strengths of each method and providing a more nuanced perspective on the topic. After the separate analyses of the quantitative and qualitative data, the results will be integrated using a side-by-side comparison approach [5]. This involves examining the convergence, divergence, and complementarity of the findings, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence. By employing a mixed-methods approach to data analysis, robust understanding of the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence, ultimately informing the development of targeted intervention and prevention strategies are aimed.

Implications and Limitations

The study's findings have important implications for practice and policy, particularly in the development of targeted intervention and prevention strategies to reduce the impact of gender stereotypes on childhood experiences of violence. The identification of potential influential factors, such as family environment, peer relationships,

media exposure, and school and community contexts, provides valuable insights for the design and implementation of effective prevention and intervention programs [1; 4; 8; 13]. For example, programs that aim to challenge traditional gender norms and promote healthy and diverse portrayals of gender roles in media may be effective in reducing the impact of gender stereotypes on childhood experiences of violence. Similarly, parenting programs that promote gender-sensitive parenting practices may help to reduce the internalization of harmful gender stereotypes and promote non-violent conflict resolution strategies [7; 15].

Limitations: Limitations should also be considered in interpreting the results. First, the study's cross-sectional design prevents the establishment of causality, and future research using longitudinal or experimental designs is necessary to establish the directionality of the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence [3]. Second, the study relies on self-report measures, which are subject to potential biases such as social desirability and recall bias [14]. Third, the study's sample consists of a convenience sample of university students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other populations [12].

Future research should address these limitations and explore the potential protective factors that may mitigate the impact of gender stereotypes on childhood experiences of violence. Moreover, the intersectional approach should be used to consider the role of other social identities, such as race, ethnicity, in the relationship between gender stereotypes and childhood experiences of violence [15].

Conclusions. The intersection of gender stereotypes and childhood violence is a pressing concern with far-reaching implications. As societies strive for greater inclusivity and social justice, acknowledging the role of harmful norms in perpetuating childhood violence is crucial. By challenging these norms, fostering respectful relationships, and providing support to survivors, we can work towards a future where all children can thrive free from the constraints of gender-based violence and stereotypes.

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