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Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Mainland Chinese Television Dramas: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Stereotypes and gender roles are terms used to describe cultural standards and expectations about the roles, actions and characteristics which are considered suitable for men and women. This research examines the complex setting of gender representation in television dramas produced in Mainland China, examining the relationship between changing socioeconomic dynamics, traditional beliefs and the influence of global media styles. Historians have perpetuated traditional gender roles by portraying men as providers and women as caring characters. These roles have their roots in Confucian beliefs. However, TV stories changed to represent a more varied and progressive view of gender as China saw rapid socioeconomic transformations. Narratives portraying women as multifaceted people defying conventional norms have become more prevalent due to the entrance of Western concepts, globalization and social media platforms. Though there has been a significant movement, gender stereotypes exist, especially in plays aimed at a younger audience, where they reinforce certain conventions and place emphasis on beauty standards. Using public chat datasets that represent modern discussion patterns, the research uses hypotheses to examine topics including male dominance, vocational diversity and the persistence of preconceptions. The concept of "transnational media consumption dissonance" is examined, presenting how exposure to contradictory gender representations in TV dramas, both local and foreign, affects people's Gender Role Ideology Measure (GRIM). The findings show a dynamic and changing gender representation that includes advancements and obstacles on the path to equality. In order to dismantle rooted prejudices and advance a more inclusive and varied depiction of gender in Mainland Chinese television plays, the research emphasizes the need of ongoing analysis and criticism.

Keywords: Gender, Media, Drama, Stereotypes, Mainland, China.

Introduction

The significance of gender in Mainland Chinese television dramas, which portray both traditional values and the changing social dynamics of the nation, have been an intriguing and developing part of the country's cultural environment [1]. Confucian values, which placed a strong emphasis on hierarchical relationships and mandated certain roles for men and women in the family and community, had a significant effect on mainland Chinese television dramas. Men were presented as providers and guardians, while women were regarded as loving, family-oriented people [2]. Gender roles in television dramas started to evolve in the late 20th century as China saw fast economic and social transformation. Globalization and the flood of Western ideas upended established conventions and forced the film industry to investigate a wider range of gender identity depictions [3]. The changing position of women in Chinese society was mirrored in this era, which was a notable break from past conventions. A more complex and progressive representation of gender roles is emerging from a greater understanding of gender equality concerns [4]. An increasingly inclusive image of women in the media is made possible by the growing number of female characters who are shown as complex people with goals outside of conventional roles [5]. Stereotypes in the

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mainland character and story representation in Chinese television dramas are influenced by a complex web of historical, cultural and sociopolitical variables. These preconceptions reinforce current society norms and expectations by aiding in the creation of certain archetypes [6]. Mainland Chinese television features historical dramas, a genre that perpetuates stereotypes by idealizing or romanticizing certain periods. Historical characters and events are portrayed in a way that conforms to preexisting narratives, which supports patriotic feelings around the different people perspectives [7]. The portrayal of ethnic minorities is a common cliché in television dramas produced in Mainland China. Despite attempts to incorporate a broad cast of characters, minority groups are exoticized or marginalized, reduced to token parts that serve to confirm preexisting views [8]. Dramas tend to oversimplify social and economic differences, which feeds into the persistence of preconceptions based on class. This representation creates a narrow view of the variety of experiences inside Chinese society by perpetuating social hierarchies and distorting the realities of rural living [9]. Despite these obstacles, a few television shows in Mainland China have started to question preconceptions and push their limits. The effect of such progressive storytelling on a broader scale is up for dispute, while these attempts are confronted with obstacles [10]. Mainland gender roles of Chinese television show influence and upholds social norms. The way that gender is portrayed on Chinese television is evolving in a way that is more inclusive, encouraging conversations about equality and dispelling long-standing preconceptions.

Related Works

The research [11] conducted in China focuses on marginalized populations, particularly low-wage rural migrant laborers. They examined how research on stigma was affected by online contexts, focusing on anonymity and modest traceability. Through an analysis of three female groups, (i.e) the "Fu girls," female PhDs and the "Green Tea Bitch", they highlighted the uneven right to express between genders in China and drew connections between gender problems, literary works and Boy's Love television. The research [12] examined the gender dynamics in China changed over the Republican, Maoist, post-Mao and post-2000 periods of history. Applying a qualitative methodology and referencing feminist theories such as Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* along with Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, as well as Confucian concepts. The research [13] examined the impacts of conventional channels and online consumptions on acceptance for homosexuality, using data from the 2015 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) and moderating the effects were conventional gender role ideas. The results show that although exposure to conventional media lowers tolerance, internet usage increases it and gender role assumptions reduce the liberalizing effects of internet use. The study [14] examined the paucity of research on how Chinese and Chinese American characters were portrayed in Western media, especially in television dramas. It revealed enduring underrepresentation and adherence to long-standing preconceptions. The research [15] examined a Taiwanese TV drama "Letter 1949" and "Fathers Don't like Each Other," with an emphasis on capitalist patriarchy. By analyzing the divergent depictions, it revealed the impact of Cross-Strait's dynamics. The research [16] focused into feminist media analysis, looking at Chinese reality programs from the post-millennial era, especially *Supermom*, in light of the repeal of "the one-child policy and an aging population". They examined the celebrity moms chosen for the show, the construction of female voices and the promotion of forced motherhood through critical discourse analysis, throwing light on how television shapes public perceptions of women's life choices and post-socialist motherhood ideals. The research [17] examined on women's visibility changed on Chinese television after 2010, concentrating on Yu Lei, a female director and producer along with their work on the program

"National Treasure." It examined Yu Lei's extra textual resources, demonstrating how they shape the concept of female authorship and drawing attention to issues associated with neoliberal post feminist theory and neonationalist ideology. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Yu Lei's prominence in a field dominated by men was seen as an impressive, although imperfect, agency.

Hypotheses Development

The ideas address gender depiction across settings, occupations and social roles, expecting differences and preconceptions. The hypotheses manage the study's detailed assessment of gender dynamics in many circumstances. They are:

H1: *Male characters dominated over female figures in the preceding scene.*

H2: *Characters that are female and male differs value in many of characteristics associated with sex.*

H3: *Several characteristics of appearances are more common in a particular gender than another.*

H4: *Certain characteristics of appearance are more common in one gender than the other.*

H5: *Male characters are more powerful in society or in their families.*

H6: *Compared to Western cartoon characters, Japanese cartoon characters are more stereotypical of sexual roles.*

H7: *Males make up the majority of characters.*

H8: *Compared to male characters, female characters play a higher proportion of key roles.*

H9: *A broader spectrum of professional roles is depicted for male characters compared to their female counterparts.*

Dataset

Open-domain discussion over the last several years, there has been a variety of open-domain chat datasets. These datasets are scraped from Twitter, OpenViDial, Cornell Movie Dialogue Corpus, Ubuntu Dialogue Corpus, blogs, forums and TV series subtitle websites. Open-domain discussion over the last several years, there has been a variety of open-domain chat datasets [18]. These datasets are scraped from Twitter, OpenViDial, Cornell Movie Dialogue Corpus, Ubuntu Dialogue Corpus, blogs, forums and TV series of subtitle websites. Chinese conversation uses corpuses that are scraped from social networking sites like the Douban Conversation Corpus. In order to fully train the pre-training model in the field of open-domain conversation production, 1.4 billion unique conversations from a dataset were used. Interestingly, sentiment analysis and individually annotated data are not included in this collection. Because of this, models like CDialGPT or DialoGPT may be trained to identify sentimental or customized emotions by using the contextual data from one- or multi-modal talks in the corpus.

Conflicting Gender-Role Standards in Marriage and International Media Usage

From the standpoint of cognitive dissonance, individuals adjust their beliefs and activities to improve the distress caused by discovering information that contradicts their prior beliefs. The mechanics of international media consumption give rise to discordant media content. Media material serves as the "processes of discursive formation," allowing it to become deeply entwined with historical and cultural values. Through their characters and stories, transnational media goods promote a variety of cultural values to local audiences. For example, romantic relationships and their dynamics are the main focus of American dramas, but romantic interactions are embedded

inside the framework of the "Confucian familial framework" in Korean dramas. Chinese viewers see gender stereotypes in American and Korean dramas that are distinct from those shown in home productions, providing different viewpoints.

The phenomenon of transnational media consumption dissonance is hypothesized when customers encounter with conflicting media content from domestic and international markets. The idea centers on how people total media tastes are shaped by the patterns of combined local and international media consumption.

Transnational Media and Marriage Gender Roles Conflict

According to the hypothesis of cognitive dissonance, individuals change their beliefs and behaviors to lessen the humiliation that comes from learning something that goes against what they believed. The proactive tendency towards selective exposure to avoid dissonance has been the subject of several researches. A variety of contexts, including news stories, TV news and scientific messaging. An important area of study has examined how discordant media messages affect people's political beliefs, providing insight into the complex interactions between information, thought and action. Studies have examined how discordant media messages affect people's political beliefs, providing insight into the complex interactions that occur between knowledge, thought and action. For example, romantic relationships and their dynamics are the main focus of American dramas, whereas romantic interactions are usually embedded inside the framework of the "Confucian familial framework" in Korean dramas. Chinese audiences notice discrepancies in gender norms between domestic dramas and Korean or American dramas, giving a distinct arena for local viewers to explore and investigate gender dynamics in foreign countries.

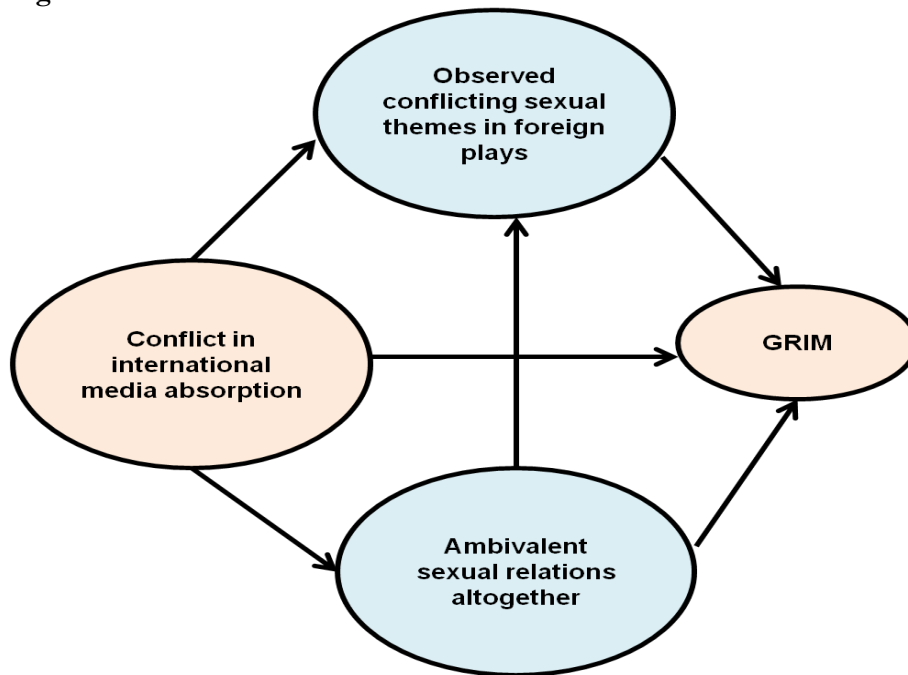
Foreign Plays' Ambivalent Sexism and Global Media Dissonance Affect Marital Gender Roles

In international plays, an individual's subjective perception of contradictory gender roles is called perceived ambiguous sexism. Identifying friendly and hostile sexist views in the material shows a complex and conflicting gender dynamic. Additionally, general ambivalence suggests a wide variety of conflicting or contradictory social beliefs and attitudes concerning gender roles. Consuming media from different cultural settings can lead to a feeling of dissonance or inconsistency in social ideas about married gender roles, particularly when the media portrays gender roles in contradictory or equivocal ways. The cohabitation of disparate values, beliefs and norms which question or go against accepted social views presented in foreign plays causes this dissonance. Global conceptions of marital gender norms are shaped and influenced by a multitude of media influences; especially those provide conflicting or confusing signals about gender roles in marriage. Through the great range of global media material, this international exposure fosters a dynamic and varied knowledge that contributes to the shifting nature of contemporary views regarding married gender roles.

Both benign and aggressive sexism have been shown by researchers to be favorable indicators of a person's propensity to agree with Gender Role Ideology Measure (GRIM). In comparison to aggressive sexism, benignant sexism has a less impact. Basically, how someone feels about GRIM is determined by how they personally see both types of sexism. In TV dramas, gender norms are shaped via the development of characters and plots that include aspects such as age, education, employment, money, attractiveness and personality variations amongst protagonists. Because foreign TV programs provide local viewers a different perspective on gender relations, the dissonance brought by transnational media consumption can have an impact on people GRIM directly and indirectly. Thus, the complex processes impacting people's views about gender-role norms, as evaluated by GRIM, are a result of the interaction between individual beliefs, media

depictions and the cultural environment of global media consumption.

Figure 1: Global Media Effect on GRIM Model.



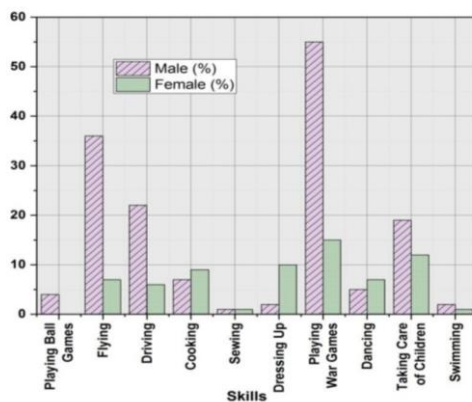
More specifically, the difference in the amount of time spent watching dramas from home and abroad affects how people see sexism in general, both positively and negatively. Furthermore, the GRIM of an individual can be influenced by these generalized values of hostile and benign sexism. The concept model illustrating transnational media consumption dissonance is shown in Figure 1.

Results

Table 1 and Figure 2 show the findings of ten talents along with activities and two characteristics confirmed the hypothesis, according to the study. It was established that female characters enjoy dressing up and dance. The findings indicate its significance for careful examination when examining gender-related characteristics in media portrayals, highlighting the possibility that generalizations can prove to be constant across a range of skills and interests.

Table 1: Gender Skills and Activity Distribution (%).

Skills	Male (%)	Female (%)
Playing Ball Games	4(2.2)	0(0)
Flying	36(19.5)	1(0.5)
Driving	22(11.9)	7(9.2)
Cooking	7(3.8)	6(7.9)
Sewing	1(0.5)	9(11.8)
Dressing Up	2(1.1)	1(1.3)
Playing War Games	55(29.7)	10(13.2)
Dancing	5(2.7)	15(19.7)
Taking Care of Children	19(10.3)	7(9.2)

Figure 2: Gender Differences in Activities.

The skills and activities are described in Table 1, which includes a gender-based breakdown and participation rates. As an example, among the two genders, fight fly is connected with men (19.5% of them), but 0.5% of females fly. In a similar vein, males participate in war game play (29.7%), whereas women participate less (13.2%). Hobbies like sewing and dance show more female involvement 11.8% and 19.7%, respectively than minimum male participation.

The classification of characters in a program according to three factors: Bears more responsibility, is final decision maker and gets the most important job. There is a disagreement in data given in Figure 3 and Table 2. Male characters get the most essential position, but they don't make the ultimate decisions or necessarily have greater responsibilities than female ones.

Table 2: Program responsibility and decision-making by gender

Graded offerings	Male (%)	Female (%)
Bears more responsibility (Yes)	52 (30.40)	20 (29)
Get the most important job (Yes)	44 (25.60)	6 (9.40)
Is final decision maker (Yes)	60 (33.70)	22 (32.40)

Figure 3: Disparities between male and female roles.

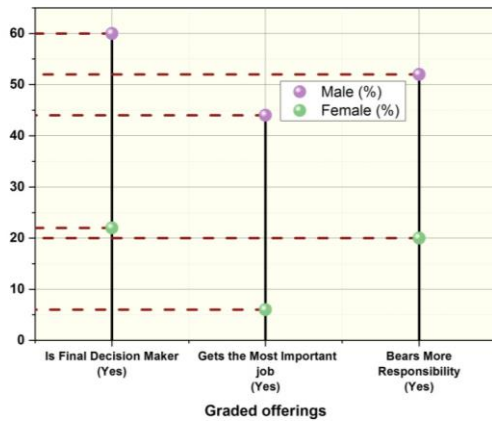


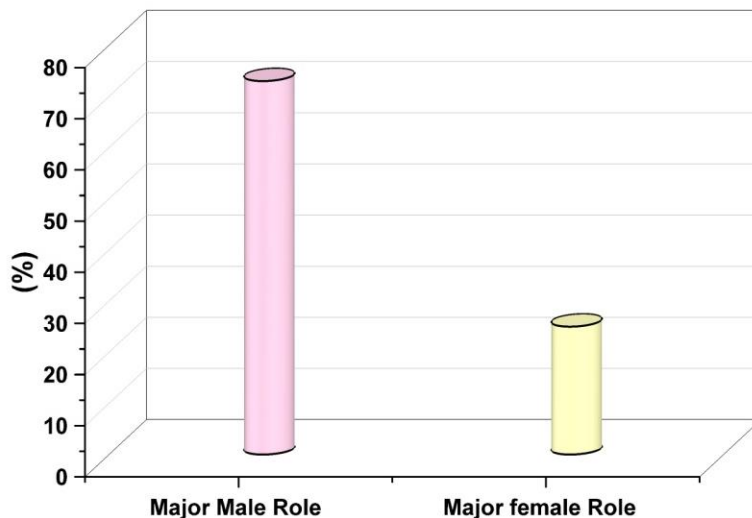
Table 2 illustrates the roles in decision-making and duties are assigned to different genders in a given situation. The majority of women and thirty-seven percent of men are assigned the position of ultimate decision-maker in circumstances when it is relevant. Similarly, 9.40% of women occupy positions where people are entrusted with the most vital tasks, compared to 25.60% of men in same positions. The study suggests that men have somewhat greater responsibility (30.40%) than women (29%), in similar jobs.

The Table 3 and Figure 4 representations of men and women protagonists in play; no significant results are shown in Table 3. The information emphasizes a fair representation, suggesting that women were as likely as men to have major parts in the plays under study. The lack of statistical significance casts doubt on the idea that there is a gender difference in the representation of protagonists, suggesting that male and female characters in the plays under study are distributed evenly in main roles.

Table 3: Gender Distribution of Play Major Roles (%).

Roles	(%)
Major Male Role	73 (39.5)
Major female Role	25 (32.9)

Figure 4: Roles of Major Men and Women in Drama.



The gender distribution of roles is seen in table 3, where significant male roles make up 39.5% of all roles and major female roles make up 32.9%. The information highlights possible differences in the distribution of important positions and invites discussion on gender representation in the scenario. In media to guarantee that male and female characters are portrayed fairly and diversely.

Male characters are more probable than female characters to take on prominent positions, according to the study's analysis. The distribution of important roles between male and female characters is shown by the analysis findings, which are presented in Table 4 and Figure 5.

Table 4: Gender Representation in Protagonist and Antagonist Roles.

Roles	Male (%)	Female (%)
Protagonists	142 (76.8)	62 (82.7)
Antagonists	43 (23.2)	13 (17.3)
Overall	185(100)	75(100)

Figure 5: Gender Disparity in Distribution of Significant Roles.

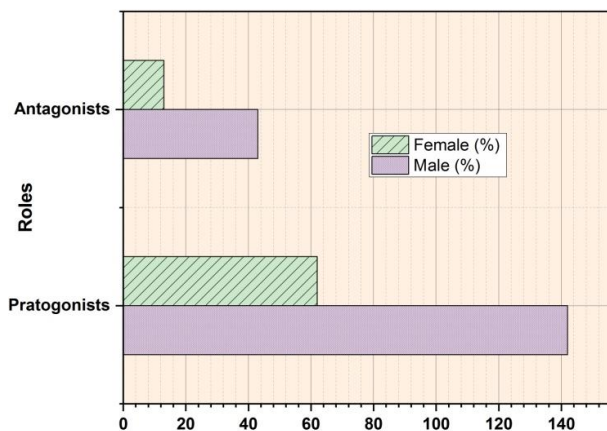


Table 4 presents a distribution of roles based on gender representation, dividing them into protagonist and antagonist categories. In this setting, 76.8% of the characters are male and 82.7% are female in the protagonist and antagonist roles, respectively. Gender disparity is shown by the distribution overall, where male characters make up 76.8% of all roles while female characters make up 100%. The findings demonstrate the unequal portrayal of genders, with males assuming a disproportionate number of protagonist roles and women, while slightly less so, taking on a sizable share of antagonist roles.

Conclusion

The study provide information on the convoluted past of gender representation in Mainland Chinese television plays. Even with the encouragement of portrayals that are more inclusive and the problems remain same. These include the simplifying of social and economic divisions and the persistence of stereotypes in certain genres. The results highlight how crucial the media is influencing public opinion and how different stories can upend established historical patterns. Dissonance in global media consumption offers a novel perspective, highlighting the influence of contradictory gender representations in national and global settings on people's beliefs. This research contributes to the current discourse on gender representation, Cultural Revolution and the media's role in advancing inclusive narratives since television dramas reflect and change societal norms. The research examined gender roles in Chinese TV programmes, finding nuance but preconceptions. Transnational media affects gender values, thus inclusive storytelling and questioning stereotypes are important. Further studies should focus on breaking down enduring preconceptions, promoting diversity and delving deeper into the media's changing impact on gender roles.

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