

View Changes About Gender in the Nearest Three Generations

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ABSTRACT

In contemporary society, topics about gender start to appear more in people's conversations. More and more successful individuals, representatives of females or famous people, contend to be feminism due to many gender inequality events emerged in our society, such as females being always downplayed in the industry of sports or females should not participate in trades because many people believe that females are not suitable for business or that females are too weak to be involved in sports events. Some people now are aware of how these stereotypes result in a large proportion of opportunity losses in females and want to change others' minds. How these people start to change or originate their opinions about gender equality and the difference in perspectives of gender between people now possess and people used to possess. Because gender equality has been the spotlight and focus in the public eye, the author wonders how this happened. In this paper, the author used the questionnaire method, document analysis and field research to answer her questions. These methods were applied in people of different ages. In the end, the author found that different views between older people and younger people are generated by the development of modernization, better education, the spread of gender equality theory through all kinds of media, religion, and the powerful and successful representatives' influence. There were more sex discrimination ideas in the past than there are nowadays. Older people think of women and men in a different way, while younger people consider widespread gender equality as a necessary process leading to a better world. The reasons why changes in perspectives occur are the development of modernization, better education, spreading of gender equality theory through all kinds of media and the powerful and successful representatives' influence.

Keywords: *Gender equality, Feminism, Sexist, Older people, Younger people*

1. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, people are aware of some common issues that exist in our generation. One of the focus topics is gender equality. Some people, most of them at a younger age, think men and women should be treated in the same way. Others, most of them at a older age, believe that men and women are originally not equal and they are born to shoulder different responsibilities. There are stereotypes of women, such as women are beautiful if they are thin; women are not good at battles or women should stay at home to take care of their children, and let their husbands to make money, etc. However, many younger people have their contradictions to those stereotypes. For example, many young female representatives now contend that they are feminism and want to change the stereotypes to women. Representatives, like Taylor Swift, Anne Hathaway and

Emma Watson who are about 30 years old, have given a lot of speeches in public. But when the author asked her older aged grandmother and grandfather, they hold the supportive opinions to the stereotypes. Thus, the author wonders what is the difference between older people's perspectives and younger people's perspectives on gender and why this would happen. In other words, the author will study how the nearest three generations' perspectives on gender come into being and what differences in perspectives on gender are from generation to generation. According to the theme, the author will use questionnaire method and field research to accomplish the study. This paper may help people to think more about gender equality and how to react when some inequalities happen to them. Also, this paper shows how different kinds of people think in diverse ways about gender. The analysis in this paper can facilitate people to generate their own moral systems relevant to the theme. However, some phenomena shown in the paper might not be

absolute exact but they actually happen in my society. The instances are for reference only.

2. INTRODUCTION TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

There are 60 people who participated in filling with the author’s questionnaire. 30 of them are aged 16-49, and the remaining 30 are aged 50-80.

Table 1. Main Information from the Questionnaire

	Group 1(aged 16-49)	Group 2(aged 50-80)
Do you think that men and women are equal?	Yes 79% No considerations 12% No 9%	Yes 9% No considerations 35% No 56%
Do you think that women are more responsible than men?	Yes 70% No considerations 15% No 15%	Yes 8% No considerations 24% No 68%
What is the difference between men and women?	No much difference, basically physical difference	Physical and mental difference
Should countries achieve gender equality?	Yes 82% No considerations 7% No 11%	Yes 13% No considerations 35% No 52%
Do you think that girls can do better than boys?	Yes 47% No considerations 38% No 15%	Yes 5% No considerations 22% No 73%

3. GENDER VIEWS HELD BY PEOPLE AGED 50-80

From field research, the author visited her aunts and uncles, parents and grandparents. The question, “Do you think women and men are equal?” was put to them. The common answer is no, and most of them are more than 40 years old. Some said that women are physically weaker than men so they may not be good at sports like men are. Some say that women are not scientific and calm enough to make decisions in a trade, but men have the ability to make a good decision. Some also said that when a woman gets beauty, she gets everything.

From the information the author received, she found out that the older a person is, the more radical perspectives he or she holds. For instance, when a 39-year-old man hears that women are more responsible than men, he will react calmly and communicate modestly. He may not accept feminism, but he would understand it. Instead, when a 70-year-old man hears that people nowadays think that women and men are equal, he will

be surprised if he has never heard that point before and do not understand that because the new point conflicts with his innate point of view.

From the document analysis, older people agree more on the question that it is more important for boys to get into university than it is for girls.[1] Older people agree more with the idea that being a housewife is as equal as working for pay.[2] The information shows that older people see men more important than women. They think men are more crucial for this society than women who are suitable to take care of their children.

All the information shows that older people’s opinions are more radical and relatively old, and they are the contrary ones to those of younger people’s points. One common viewpoint from older people is that women are not equal to men. Women are inferior to men.

4. GENDER VIEWS HELD BY PEOPLE AGED 16-49

From field research, the author visited many of her friends. When the author asked them about what differences between boys and girls are, many of them just said that girls have some organs that boys do not have, basically some physical differences. Moreover, when the author asked, “Do you think girls can not do better than boys in many realms?”, their answer was no. They shared a lot of personal, novel and specific points of view. For instance, a girl said that pursuing gender equality is not about being above men. It is about women having equal rights, opportunities and treatments to men. Women are always downplayed by this society and there are many cases that women are treated differently from men. Many women are really competent in some fields but they do not have a platform or a stage to show how good they are. Thus, they need to find outlets to allow them to show their talents and wisdom. On the other hand, this actually will help this world to develop faster. Some others contend that women are more adept in some fields that will facilitate our society and many historic females have shown their incredible ability that many people thought they did not have and would not have some great achievements, like Madame Curie specialized in chemistry which most people think that it is for men to learn.

From questionnaire research for younger people at ages between 16 and 30 years old, they commonly stated that countries should achieve gender equality to meet female rights and let them use their power to make this world a better place. In this generation, people are more open-minded and able to see things from many dimensions considerately. They are aware of the importance of women competence to our society. One of the popular representatives is Emma Watson. She graduated from Brown University and has done a lot of wonderful speeches around the world about gender equality. She stated that females need to see equal respect, leadership and pay.

From document analysis, younger people consider that it is equally crucial for men and women to get good educations, good careers, and taking care of children is the joint responsibility for a couple.[3] With the rising rate of divorce, young people believe that both parents should take equal responsibility to raise their children instead of women giving up their careers to look after their children.[3] Young people believe that men and women should possess equal opportunities and expectations in their prospective career life and their family lives as well.[3] It seems like young people’s points of view are more likely to take gender equality seriously, but some instinctive thinking about gender still exists. For example, people can hardly see a female engineer, or a male nurse, or a female politic head.

Apparently, people from the nearest three generations own distinct points about gender.

5. THE CAUSES OF THESE CHANGES IN INDIVIDUALS’ MINDS

First of all, why would young people deem gender equality as a more important thing than older people would? The first reason for this question is education or the growing environment. Women progress in some areas starts from education.[4] Many schools now have set up some courses about social issues and have spread an idea of gender equality. People start to receive the relevant information at a really young age. As time goes by, a progressive number of people bring these ideas around them and use them, even talk about it with their friends or partners. In that case, much more people start to contact this new theory and accept it. It is like a positive circulation. For instance, some schools have a specific course like a “girl power” lunch club or encourage girls to participate in computer science classes or coding courses.[5] Also, many schools’ teachers are females. They may experience lots of inequality because of being a woman. In order to change the situation and the position where women now are in, they find methods to spread an idea like gender equality and let more females to meet the equal opportunities and needs. They may talk about the issue of sexism in class, meeting, or by doing speeches in front of millions or thousands of students. This is very influential.

Second, modernization is another factor causing change in attitudes towards gender equality. With the development of technology, the ways people get information are tremendous. For example, people now have automobile foster class and mobile phones to help this society undergo some social changes.[6] If a person has a mobile, artificial intelligent phone, he or she can receive any information on Earth even from great distances. It increases the speed at which people receive messages. It also broadens people’s horizons by allowing them to see more things and more opinions from different cultures or different areas. A country’s economic and political modernization is a key factor of achieving gender equality.[7] Development of modernization leads people’s life to be a totally different style. Especially, industrialization stands for a change from traditional to rational values.[8] In the past, people write letters and it would take about a week even a month to be received by objects. However, recently, it takes less than a second to send a message, even if your object is from another country. This is also a reason why changes in persistent ideas about gender equality that have existed for centuries take just a few generations, approximately 50 years, to be in a opposite position to what we now see. More people’s minds are opened. Accordingly, their attitudes toward something change over time. Therefore, modernization

may be a strong element that prompts the change in people's attitudes.

Moreover, the spread of gender equality through all kinds of media takes part in views change. This is much like the second reason, but they are distinct. This analysis emphasizes people's more attention on themselves and realization on some social issues. Basically, the spread of gender equality means that as people's attention on themselves grows, they are able to find problems that are barriers preventing them from getting equal rights and opportunities. Then they find a way to get support. In other words, they ally or establish a group and people in this organization are the advocates of gender equality for instance. And the idea of gender equality has prevailed from person-to-person through phones, television programs or radio. Some advertisements in television express an idea of gender equality.[9] This idea is gradually slipping into people's vision. When individuals realize the idea is practical and reasonable, they would spread it as well. Consequently, young people are more likely to accept this theory than older people since they get to know this idea at a relatively old age and it is hard for older people to change their innate idea. Some countries in the past promoted gender inequality such as telling boys to herd cattle while telling girls to do chores with their mothers.[6] These people have been immersed in this kind of situation for a long time. It is not possible for them to accept a brand new concept easily. But younger people may be born in an environment which educates them to see gender equally. Younger people are also adept in using artificial intelligent tools such as many social websites or applications in mobile phones which is a really simple thing for them to spread an idea. This is why younger people are more likely to support gender equality while older people cannot accept it.

Finally, some representatives now begin to support gender equality. The popular ones are Emma Watson, Taylor Swift or Anne Hathaway, etc. The number of followers them have is enormous. They are powerful and strong enough to make a wide transmission in the society. Some representatives give speeches to share their ideas. Some others may write articles and publish them online. There are many alternative approaches for them to spread their views, especially in a generation which owns a fast and efficient network system. Their followers are also good spreaders. They think more about gender equality because this idea comes from a person they like a lot. They pay more attention to this spontaneously. Not like people in the past, with fewer transmitting tools they can use and traditional perspectives, they were imposed to obey the rules and their rights were too weak to provide them with protection. As political laws were set free, people dared to speak out their beliefs and needs. They were qualified to express their dissatisfaction and make people change their attitudes toward gender equality. Many representatives are female and appeal to people to build a fair moral system against sexists and sex

discrimination. In order to make this world work fairly. Women have experienced too many unfair treatments such as different payment with men in the same position, being downplayed by their bosses because of gender or getting less opportunities in many fields. Rome is not built in one day. When problems are too many, there must be a strike back. The representatives' influence may account for it.

Religion may be another factor in gender discrimination. As a matter of fact, relations between religions and states always possess laws of gender discrimination.[1] This element is crucial and it has a lot to do with gender equality.[1] At this point, people should reflect on how religions affect gender equality. From the author's analysis, people's minds are widened. With liberation of mind, possibilities are everywhere and at any time. Another interest phenomenon is that there is a relationship between religion and support of gender equality. If a woman does not attend a religion, she may be supported to achieve gender equality.[10] If people do not give up putting effort into gender equality, people will achieve gender equality, racial equality or occupational equality. People need to explore more ways to solve this problem.

6. CONCLUSION

In older people's opinion, women are inferior to men. Women and men are different in the essence. They are different physically and mentally. In younger people's opinion, women and men are equal. Women should have equal opportunities to men. They are born equal. Common rights ought to be equal as well. The causes of this change in people's views are the development of modernization, better education, spreading of gender equality theory through all kinds of media, religion and powerful and successful representatives' influence. Each of the factor plays an important role in the change in attitudes toward gender equality.

However, the research in this paper still has lots of drawbacks. This paper does not have a systematic and scientific data to support the ideas provided in the paper. The gender equality will be a focus in our society and that countries will achieve gender equality gradually. But it will take a pretty long time. In addition, the author sees a tendency that men are being sex discriminated. If the author has enough time and competence, she may study on this point that there is another possibility-- male chauvinism would appear more often.

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