



**GENDER STEREOTYPES
AGAINST FEMALE LEADERS
IN THE VIETNAMESE MEDIA**



OXFAM

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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CONTEXT

Over the past years, Vietnam has undergone a remarkable economic transformation, which lifted it out of poverty to become a middle-income country. Vietnam has also been praised for its efforts in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. The literacy rate of females over 15 years old was recorded at 93.3% in 2015. Women's participation in the country's workforce had also risen to 48.4 % in the same year ¹.

Despite these promising signs, challenges still remain in relation to encouraging women's equal participation and leadership in the decision-making process, which has proven to be essential to achieving and ensuring sound social justice and sustainable development. Vietnamese women continue to face obstacles in participating on an equal footing and taking up leadership positions.

Barriers constraining women's ability to obtain leadership positions are many. One of those is voters' stereotypical attitude toward female leadership, which may have resulted in the low percentages of women in elected bodies including the National Assembly and the People's Councils.

Voters use double standards when deciding whether or not to select a female candidate, expecting a good female leader to first fulfill her role as a mother and a wife before taking on her work responsibilities. Participants of the study frequently referred to the mainstream media to back up their biased attitude to and stereotypes against women's leadership. Thus, understanding whether or not gender stereotypes exist in the news, as well as journalists' perception of female leadership, provides useful insights into which

interventions should be implemented to achieve the ultimate goal of improving public attitudes toward women's leadership.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The frequencies of female leaders being sourced in the news were far lower than those of male leaders, especially in the government sector. This demonstrates that female leaders are disappointingly under-represented in the news despite their contribution and participation in the workforce. Female leaders' invisibility in news content is an indication that their voices and perspectives are not adequately presented. **It sends messages to audiences that female leaders do not usually have the authority or do not qualify to be in positions with authority to be in the media spotlight.**

The news media perpetuate gender stereotypes against female leaders by setting the boundary of work areas that are supposedly more suitable to their femininity through their use of sources. Female sources were sought out more often for news stories on traditionally feminine issues (e.g. *children/family, women's rights, health, poverty reduction, or elderly people*). They were almost absent in areas/issues that are often weighted more heavily in the government's administration, including *military/security, real estate; economics; international relations, science and technology, etc.*

In addition, the news media have contributed to creating and perpetuating stereotypes of what a successful woman should look like in the contemporary Vietnamese society. That is: Only those female leaders who can handle their dual roles and responsibilities both in families as traditional women and in the workplace as modern women are considered ideal. There is a disconnect between journalists' general perception of gender equality and their

1 Vietnam's General Statistics Office (2016) *Số liệu thống kê*. Retrieved September 15, 2016 from: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=714>

attitudes toward female leadership. Journalists perceive that men and women should be treated equally both at home and at work, and that gender inequality is still an issue that Vietnam needs to continue to improve. But they also believe men have traits (e.g. decisive, competitive, etc.) that are congruent to those of leaders, while women do not have qualities to lead.

Three factors that influence the production process of stereotypical news against female leaders include the audience, journalists' working and living environments, and the news selection routines.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Journalists seem to have general knowledge of gender equality and gender stereotypes but lack understanding of how these manifest into their daily work routines. Future training courses should address this gap.
- We recommend incorporating “women and the news” into formal journalism training programs at different colleges in the country. This is expected to bring about longer lasting effects on future professional news workers.
- Incorporating regulations and guidelines on gender stereotypes into professional guidebooks or codes of conduct of news organizations is also recommended. More training on gender stereotypes guidelines to editorial teams is recommended so that they can apply, supervise and enforce the new rules.
- Women’s rights organizations and the existing gender justice coalition advocating for gender equality should step up their role in monitoring and holding dialogues with journalists and news organizations on a daily basis with the goal of ensuring gender-stereotype-free news media content.
- Building capacity and raising awareness for women’s rights organizations and activists should be included in future programs to avoid propagating stereotypes in the name of promoting gender equality.

1. INTRODUCTION



Photo: Le Thanh Hoa

This report is part of an effort led by Oxfam in Vietnam in order to provide empirical research on gender stereotypes and prejudices against women's leadership in Vietnam. It was conducted by a team of researchers in late 2015 and early 2016. The report seeks to answer several questions including the portrayals of female leaders in the news in Vietnam, journalists' attitudes to and perception of women's political leadership, and how these attitudes and perceptions may influence news content production. It also provides recommendations for interventions. Ultimately its goal is to contribute to changing the biased perception of women's leadership among the media and the public in Vietnam, thus helping increase the representation of women in the country's legislative, administrative and business systems.

The report is based on a review of the literature and an analysis of original data collected in late 2015 and early 2016. This report analyzes three types of data including news content, survey and in-depth interviews.

The report begins with a section on the context of women's leadership in Vietnam. The second section is a brief review of the literature. Here, we provide rationale for the project. The subsequent section focuses on the methods used in conducting the research. The fourth section presents the findings. Recommendations are discussed in the last section.

2. CONTEXT



Photo: Tran Thiet Dung

Over the past three decades, Vietnam has gone a long way in its economic development journey. Living standards have improved significantly as poverty rates have dropped from nearly 60% in the early years of *Doi Moi*, the economic reform started in the late 1980s, to 20.7% in 2010, according to Vietnam's General Statistics Office ². Besides, the country has been praised for its efforts in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. In 2015, female literacy rates in Vietnam exceeded 93%, and women accounted for 48.4% of the skilled workforce ³.

Vietnam's gender equality achievements are due in part to its strong legal framework. For example, the country ratified the U.N.'s Convention for Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1982, and passed of the Law on Gender Equality in 2006 and Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in 2007 ⁴. These were important steps in setting up a legal framework to maintain equality and encourage both men and women to participate in all fields.

In terms of structural changes, the Vietnamese government has made strong commitments to increasing women's representation in the country's political system. For example, in its action program to 2020, the government of Vietnam set a goal of increasing the number of female deputies to 35-40% as well as in having more women to hold key political leadership positions in government agencies ⁵. These

2 World Bank (2013) Poverty Reduction in Vietnam: Remarkable Progress, Emerging Challenges. Retrieved from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/01/24/poverty-reduction-in-vietnam-remarkable-progress-emerging-challenges>

3 Vietnam's General Statistics Office (2016) Số liệu thống kê. Retrieved September 15, 2016 from: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=714>.

4 United Nations (2010) "Delivering as One' for Gender Equality." U.N. in Vietnam, Hanoi Vietnam.

5 Government of Vietnam (2007) *Government*

commitments have had positive results: After the country began *Doi Moi*, the number of female deputies in the National Assembly had increased from 18% in 1987 to 27.3% in 2002 ⁶. In the latest term of the party congress beginning in 2016, three women were selected as members of the Politburo, the most powerful political body of the country.

Despite these efforts and promising signs, challenges still remain in relation to encouraging women's equal participation and leadership in the decision-making process, which has proven to be essential to achieving and ensuring sound social justice and sustainable development. Vietnamese women continue to face obstacles in participating on an equal footing and taking up leadership positions. At the national level, the latest two terms of the National Assembly saw the percentage of female deputies falling from 27.3% in 2002 to 24.4% in 2011. In 2016, the ratio of female deputies elected for the five-year term went up slightly to 25.2%. There has been a decrease in the number of elected women, as well as the number of women appointed as Heads of Committees in the National Assembly. Figures from the National Assembly show that, in the term between 2011 and 2016, women account for only one fourth of the total number of elected representatives in People's Councils at the district and provincial levels. Additionally, the number of women holding such key positions as Chairs of People's Councils or People's Committees is still low. According to a recent report by the United Nations Development Program, in the ministerial system, women are more likely to be in supportive roles

Program of Action for the Period to 2020 on Implementation of the Resolution 11- NQ/TW on the Work for Women in the Period of Accelerating Industrialization and Modernization.

6 Vandenbeld, Anita and Ha Hoa Ly (2012) "Women's Representation in the National Assembly of Vietnam - the Way Forward" – Report.

than in directive and decision-making positions ⁷.

In ministries, the proverbial 'glass ceiling' tends to hold women at the deputy director level. Membership in the Communist Party is viewed as an essential criterion for promotion to key leadership positions; yet of more than three million Party members, only about one third are women. Vietnam sets the retirement age for women at 55 years and 60 years for men. This five-year gap has been seen as a double challenge for women in obtaining leadership positions because besides education, experience, and capabilities, the length of time a person can stay in a leadership position before reaching retirement is important to consider. Retiring five years earlier than men, thus, shortens women's professional careers and limits their chance of being appointed to leadership posi-

7 United Nations Development Program (2007) *Women's representation in leadership in Vietnam*.

tions ⁸. In the business area, according to Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, women owned only 20% of the country's total registered enterprises ⁹. These statistics painted a gloomy picture of women leadership in Vietnam; posing serious risks to the success of the country's strategic plan to improve gender equality.

Admittedly, Vietnam has done a remarkable job in institutionalizing gender equality by mapping out its detailed plans on improving the situation in this area

8 Võ, An Ngọc & Strachan, G. (2008) *Gender equity in a transforming economy*. Paper presented at Ninth International women in Asia conference, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

9 Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2006) "*Hanoi Targeted Policies that support women's entrepreneurship can boost Vietnam's economic growth*." No. 13 (16) April 2006, Business Issues Bulletin Hanoi.



Photo: Dustin Barter/Oxfam

as well as in promoting women's representation in the administrative, judicial and legislative systems¹⁰. In its National Strategy on Gender Equality for the period 2011-2020, Vietnam set a target to have a minimum of 35% of National Assembly members to be female representatives. The government has also implemented numerous strategies to increase women's participation in leadership positions. These goals will not be met unless sufficient and concerted efforts are made to promote women's leadership. For example, the gender quota in people's elected bodies would not be effective without implementing strategies to increase public and potential female candidates for leadership positions. As seen in previous elections, it is possible that there may not be enough female candidates, or even if there are, voters might not select them.

Barriers constraining women's ability to obtain leadership positions are many, according to researchers and policymakers. Some are internal, while others come from external environments. For example, in a study looking at gender-related obstacles to Vietnamese female entrepreneurs, Hampel-Milagrosa, Pham, Nguyen, & Nguyen (2010)¹¹ found that women's perception of their own knowledge, skills and opportunities to succeed is a major factor in women's decisions on whether or not to start a business initiative. In terms of external, research in the area of gender equality showed that both cultural and institutional factors such as social norms, which dictate the roles of members in societies, or the regulatory environment, could bar women from attaining leadership positions.

10 Vandebeld, Anita. & Ha, Hoa Ly (2012) "Women's Representation in the National Assembly of Vietnam - the Way Forward" - *Report*.

11 Hampel-Milagrosa, Aimee, Pham, Van Hong, Nguyen, Anh Quoc, and Nguyen, Tri Thanh, (2010). *Gender related Obstacles To Vietnamese Women Entrepreneurs*. United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Vienna, Austria.

Assessing gender differences in management through its recent national survey on 8,500 people in nine provinces across the country, the Institute for Social Development Studies found that the number of men managing more than 10 staff members in government offices, companies or factories was significantly higher than that of women. At the same educational level, more men than women are in charge of larger numbers of staff. The findings demonstrated that women have fewer opportunities to be promoted to higher management positions¹².

Comparing these factors, Hampel-Milagrosa et al. (2010, p. 14) discovered that, Vietnamese women "suffered more from traditional and internal, than from regulatory factors when starting a business." In recent research, Oxfam in Vietnam found a similar result. That is, the public as well as the women covered in a large survey conducted in three provinces, view men as more culturally and socially suitable for leadership positions than women are. Specifically, besides competencies, voters also expect female candidates to have gender-related qualities (nữ tính or femininity) and to take good care of their families. These double standards become criteria, which the public relies on to make decisions on whether or not they should select a female candidate to represent them in the National Assembly or People's Councils. One of the sources participants of the study frequently referred to as to back up their biased attitude to and stereotypes against women's leadership is the mainstream media¹³.

In the coalition on promoting women's leadership, a large number of projects have been completed or are ongoing to provide training to potential candidates for women's leadership at different levels. Besides helping

12 Viện nghiên cứu phát triển xã hội (2016) Các yếu tố xã hội quyết định bất bình đẳng giới ở Việt Nam.

13 Oxfam in Vietnam & CEPEW (2014). *Public's confidence in and selection of women for political leadership in Vietnam - Report*.

female candidates or representatives deepen their knowledge of the administrative and legal system and improve their work skills, these projects are essential to building confidence among the candidates. However, changing the public's attitudes and perception of women's leadership in policymaking at all levels of the state sectors as well as in the private sector through media advocacy is also a critical measure that is expected to bring positive results.

This research is part of ongoing efforts by Oxfam to contribute to building a society that is free of gender-based injustice, in which women can actively participate in leadership positions at all levels and areas. To do that, this study seeks to (1) identify the pattern of gender stereotypes in the news, (2) determine factors that influence journalists in news production when reporting on women leadership, and (3) provide recommendations to improve news content as well as professional practices among journalists.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS



This research project is based on previous findings about the effects of the mainstream media on the public's perception. The theoretical framework used to guide our work including questionnaire design or content analysis was based on concepts in the field of mass communications effects. However, in seeking better understanding of the issue as well as the interaction between journalists in news content, we incorporated also theories on gender roles.

3.1. MASS MEDIA AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Over the past decades, a significant amount of research has found that effects of the mainstream media on public perception of social realities are strong and pervasive. For example, in examining the influence of mass media on voters in North Carolina, McCombs & Shaw (1972)¹⁴ discovered that the public tends to think issues that are high on the media agenda are important. From these findings, the two scholars concluded that the media have the ability to set the public agenda. Research along this line also found that the media could set the agendas of the government and other political actors as well. For more than four decades, agenda setting has been used to explain the relationships between the media, the public and policymakers.

McCombs and Shaw's agenda setting concept and other popular theories in mass communications are based on a common notion that a large part of our knowledge of the world does not come from our own experience, but is based on the social realities constructed by the media. For example, most of the people in a city do not eyewitness nor are victims of crimes to know that crime rates are increasing. Often, the infor-

mation they receive is either from newspapers, radios, television or online news sites.

News content can influence people's perception and behaviors, according to research in this area. Maria Elizabeth Grabe and Dan Dre (2006)¹⁵ discovered that reading news about crimes could cause fears among the public, influencing its evaluation of how effective public security forces are and leading them to adopt more protection measures. Recently there is a considerable amount of information on crimes spread on social media websites. However, if this information does not come from reports by the mainstream media, its credibility is often questioned.

With regard to social stereotypes, which are closely related to the subject of this research, mass communication scholars have found that not only can news media create, but they can also contribute to perpetuating and reinforcing social stereotypes¹⁶. Lori Irving¹⁷, for instance, found that the way the news media report on fashion models can make female readers feel bad about their body, losing their self-confidence. In addition, through images of fashion models, fashion magazines and television shows have contributed to re-defining beauty standards for men and women, influencing our evaluation of how ones look or should look. In other words, the news media have the ability to create social stereotypes.

15 Grabe, Maria Elizabeth, and Dan G. Drew. (2007) "Crime cultivation: Comparisons across media genres and channels." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 51(1): 147-171.

16 Bissell, Kim, & Parrott, Scott. (2013). Prejudice: The role of the media in the development of social bias. *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 15(4), 219-270.

17 Irving, Lori M. (1990) "Mirror images: Effects of the standard of beauty on the self-and body-esteem of women exhibiting varying levels of bulimic symptoms." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 9(2), 230-242.

14 McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public opinion quarterly*, 36(2), 176-187.

Researchers in the field of mass communications have found evidence of gender stereotypes in the news and in mainstream media's content. Researchers have also found the effects of mainstream media content with biased views on gender influence the public's perception of the issue¹⁸. For example, Baitinger¹⁹ examined highly rated Sunday television shows in the U.S. to find that these shows particularly favored male experts who were officials, journalists, and political activists over their female counterparts. Of the 1,007 guests appearing on five Sunday shows on CNN, Fox, CBS, ABC and NBC over a three-year period, only 228 (23%) were women. Armstrong and Nelson (2005) found that source use in the news is important because exposure to biased news content with a skewed distribution of men and women in occupations can lead to the development of gender prejudices among audiences. In so doing, the press perpetuates gender stereotypes against female leadership leading the audiences to perceive of a social structure where men lead and women follow.

3.2. JOURNALISTS AND FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE NEWS PRODUCTION PROCESS

The evidence of the news media's effects on the public's perception and behaviors has been well documented. But questions still exist on why biased content is produced and what factors influence the production of the news media content and the gatekeeping process in news organizations. Although there are many factors including those coming from news organizations, journalism ideologies, sources or the

18 Armstrong, Cory L., and Michelle R. Nelson. (2005) "How newspaper sources trigger gender stereotypes." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 82(4), 820-837.

19 Baitinger, Gail (2015) "Meet the Press or Meet the Men? Examining Women's Presence in American News Media." *Political Research Quarterly*.

government, obviously, these questions directly point toward gatekeepers and news content creators, who are at the center of the whole news production process. Thus, an important part of this project focused on journalists.

This project used *hierarchy of influences*, a theoretical paradigm developed by Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese in 1996. The two scholars (1996)²⁰ delineated a five-level model of micro and macro influences on gatekeepers. The first level -- the lowest -- focuses on the individual factors of the communicator (e.g., knowledge, ages, education, belief, culture and personal values, etc.). The second level is media routines (e.g., reporting using the 5 Ws and 1 H model; daily decisions to be made in the newsroom on which is a news brief and which makes a feature story, etc.). The third level of the model concentrates on the organizational influences (e.g., internal structure, ownership, goal, and policy). Extramedia forces or factors extrinsic to media organizations constitute the fourth level (e.g., sources, advertisers, audience, government control, market competition, technology). The last level is media ideology.

The relative influence and impact of factors on gatekeepers are not permanent, but vary depending on what issue is being discussed or published. For example, a factor's influence on the production process of a political news piece would be different from that of an entertainment story. It is important to note that recognizing which factor influences the gatekeeping process including multiple newsroom activities involving news selection and presentation is not easy for the gatekeepers themselves. In many cases, journalists are not aware of the influence, especially with regard to such issues that often root in traditional culture and beliefs as gender stereotypes.

20 Shoemaker, Pamela J., and Stephen D. Reese (2013) *Mediating the message in the 21st century: A media sociology perspective*. Routledge.

3.3. GENDER STEREOTYPES AGAINST FEMALE LEADERS

This research does not focus on gender stereotypes in the news media in general but concentrates on stereotypes against female leaders.

Elsewhere studying gender stereotypes against women's leadership in the news media is not new. For example, in his research on news portrayals of the candidates running for the governor positions in four states including Arizona, Colorado, Maryland and Rhode Island in 1998, James Dewitt²¹ from the University of Columbia found that when reporting on male candidates, the news media focused heavily on economic and their policies. News reports on female candidates in the same elections however emphasized their looks and personal traits. Dewitt argues that the way the news media portray female candidates helps explicate why they are less likely to succeed in the races to be governors of multiple states in the U.S.

According to women studies scholars, prejudices against female leaders originate from the society's expectations and stereotypes toward women. Alice Eagly and Steven Karau²², the two researchers who coined the term "role congruity," contend that there are stereotypes toward men and stereotypes toward women. For example, women are expected to be softer, more delicate, while men are seen as more powerful and steadfast. These stereotypes are not only expectations for each gender; they are also used to evaluate a person's capabilities and performance. According to the two role congruity theorists, there

21 Dewitt, James (2002) "Framing gender on the campaign trail: Female gubernatorial candidates and the press." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 79(2): 445-463.

22 Eagly, Alice H., and Steven J. Karau. (2002) "Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders." *Psychological Review* 109(3), 573.

exist leadership stereotypes, too, which set the expectations of qualities for leaders including competitive, powerful and decisive among others. The leadership stereotypes, however, are more "congruent" with those toward men²³.

At work, women and men are expected to follow different norms or have different ways of dealing with situations. For example, men are often viewed to be strong, decisive and goal-oriented thus deemed to suite jobs that have more pressures and require quick decisions. Women, however, with caretaking being their primary role are considered having soft traits, thus would suite jobs that are less competitive, stable and have low pressure but allow them to have fun and demonstrate their flexibility. Not only do such stereotypes influence how job selection is gendered but they also have negative impacts on women's leadership.

3.4. VIETNAMESE CULTURE AND CHANGES IN GENDER STEREOTYPES

Traditionally, the Vietnamese culture has been deeply influenced by Confucianism, especially in terms of gender equality. According to Confucian philosophy, men were expected to fight in wars that happened throughout the country's thousands of years of history. Confucianism has had a certain code of conduct that women were supposed to follow. Those are the "three obediences and four virtues" which dictate the secondary role of women for centuries, requiring them to be heavily dependent on men²⁴.

Nevertheless, Vietnam's political and social transfor-

23 Rosette, Ashleigh Shelby, and Leigh Plunkett Tost. (2010) "Agentive women and communal leadership: how role prescriptions confer advantage to top women leaders." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 95(2), 221.

24 Rowley, C., & Yukongdi, V. (2008). *The changing face of women managers in Asia*. Routledge.

mations in the first half of the 20th century brought about tremendous changes in the country, helping fuel positive progresses in liberating women. Stereotypes against women have also changed since then although the influence of Confucianism has still been strong in terms of dictating the role of women in family and in taking care of children. That explains why today the mass media as well as many women's organizations still use such slogans as "Men build a house, women build a home," "Women are the champion in housework," or "Women keep the fire on in the family," etc. Besides, there have been new standards for women set by the society and some national political organizations, including the Vietnam Women's Union, which require women to embrace more responsibilities.

According to these new standards, "new" women are expected to not only fulfill their homemaking role, but also to excel at work. Several examples include the campaigns orchestrated by the Vietnam Women's Union, which have propagated such slogans as "Excellent contributor to the country, great homemaker" or "Three traits of a good female worker and three home making responsibilities to be fulfilled." These standards, instead of promoting the representation of women in the society, have put more pressures on women, setting and reinforcing stereotypes against them²⁵.

The stereotypes against women in the formal workplace mentioned here so far, indeed, have negatively influenced how women in general and female leaders view themselves, as well as how they are viewed and perceived. For example, the new standards may harm women's confidence in obtaining leadership positions because they fear that they might not be able to do well in both roles: a good leader and a good

homemaker. In addition, these stereotypes could influence the decisions by voters, various organizations, as well as families when evaluating women's capabilities and priorities between work and family.

In short, institutionally, Vietnam has had a strong legal framework to empower women, encouraging them to participate in leadership positions at all levels. However, gender stereotypes are constraining them in obtaining these positions.

25 Viện nghiên cứu phát triển xã hội (2016) Các yếu tố xã hội quyết định bất bình đẳng giới ở Việt Nam.

4. METHODS



This research triangulates several methods that are widely used in mass communication in particular and social sciences in general. The study is divided into three major parts including content analysis, survey and in-depth interviews to respond to the three main research questions mentioned above. Each of the methods in this study helped answer one of the three main questions that are closely related. They include **(1) Is there gender bias against female leaders in the news?** We used content analysis to answer this question. **(2) What are the factors (if any) that influence the production of the news with regard to reporting on female leaders?** This question was answered by surveying. **(3) Why and how journalists are using practices (if any)?**, answered using in-depth interviews. This mixture of methods provided a more thorough examination and drew connections among the answers to the above questions. In Vietnam where media research is scarce, databases of both media content and journalists' contact details were not in place, making it impossible to draw completely random samples from national sampling frames. We followed techniques that have been used in the field of media studies to ensure that our quantitative samples best reflect the bigger pictures of the news media landscape in Vietnam, especially regarding reporting on information related to female and male leaders.

The first and most important step is to choose the media outlets to focus on. We selected media outlets based on several factors including (1) popularity (e.g. traffic for news sites, circulation and influence for newspapers, and major news broadcast providers), (2) national audience, (3) public affair news focus, and (4) VTV1 and VTV24 are the two major national TV and radio news programs broadcast multiple times daily. *VTV1* is known as the most well established news show, which is re-aired by the majority of TV news channels in the country. *VTV24* was a news show launched in 2014. It was expected to be the first start of a news channel updated every 30 minutes,

modeling after major news shows in the world including CNN and BBC. Similarly, *VOVI* is the most popular radio show focusing on general news. The selection of online news sites was made using several criteria: First, the chosen need to be among the top viewed news sites according to Alexa.com, an online aggregator that ranks websites based on traffic. At the time we began this project, *VnExpress* ranked 1st, *Dan Tri* ranked 5th and *VietNamNet* ranked 13th. Second, they have to be news sites that produce a significant amount of content on public affairs news instead of simply aggregating from other sites. Third, they are among the most well established news sites with long tradition in the market. With regard to newspapers, *Tuổi Trẻ* and *Thanh Niên* are known as two most influential and highly circulated dailies, which have the ability to set the agenda for the country's media.

4.1. IDENTIFY GENDER STEREOTYPES IN NEWS CONTENT

This part focuses on analyzing the news content in major news outlets including several news publications, online news sites, television and radio news. The timeframe for data collection is two weeks of September and one week of October 2015. Ideally, the timeframe should be two constructed weeks as designed in previous mass communication research. However, news content was not archived systematically for all news outlets. The researchers therefore selected the two weeks closest to the start date of this project. A week in October was also chosen because it included October 20 -- the Vietnamese Women's Day. We purposely selected this additional week, hoping that there would be more content on women during that week.

Our sample included only news stories about real events and real people. We excluded all stories that had unidentified sources or were fictional. As for television, we selected the evening and morning

news programs, financial and business news, and other popular newscasts. We did not choose TV reality game shows. For *VOV1*, we selected news programs that covered economic and law issues news at different time points during a day. News stories that were repeated in different shows were excluded from the analysis. Those that did not include any source with a leadership position were also discarded from the sample.

After data collection, news sample was filtered again based on two criteria including (1) in each news piece, there must be at least one leader source, from junior role such as at community level to top country leaders, and (2) these news sources have to be Vietnamese, living and working in Vietnam. Publications or programs that did not meet this criterion were ruled out of the research sample.

The research unit of analysis for printed and online newspapers was appearances. Regarding television and radio, each newscast could include a series of news or news stories. Hence, we selected each news story in a newscast, but also used appearances or quoted subjects as the unit of analysis. Based on these guidelines, a total of 2,168 news articles from newspapers, television and radio were selected for analysis, with a total of 3,429 appearances.

Our codebook contained 70 items nested in three large sections. **The first part of the codebook included questions on basic information on the news article such as the type of the story and where it was published. The second section required coders to make a decision on the focused topic of the news story such as economic, education, social services, and culture among others.** Coders also identified which topics sources were interviewed for in each news story. Based on issue categorization as proposed by Yonghwan Kim (2012)²⁶ in

26 Kim, Yonghwan. (2012) "Politics of representation in the digital media environment: presentation of the female candidate between news coverage and the

combination with our observation of gender stereotypes related to occupation in the Vietnamese society, we divided issues into two categories: *The first* were issues that have often been considered female-identified. Examples of topics in this type included civil society, ethnic minority, education, senior population, environment, healthcare, poverty alleviation, family, children, social welfare, agriculture, and issues related to women and gender equality; *The second* were male-identified issues. Issues of this type were business, budget and finance management, international relations, social security, real estate, military, science and technology. The items were coded together with the sources that mentioned each of the issues. **The third part focused on sources and how they were portrayed in each news story.** In order to detect any differences in the way the news media used male and female sources, we assessed the presence of various types of information on sources' responsibilities (e.g. family, children, role in family, caretaking role, and housework); look (e.g. body, hair, clothes, accessories, etc.), and; experience (e.g. life experience, work experience, etc.). In terms of housework, we divided it into two types. One included cooking, sewing and the other included house repairs, construction, etc.

Two research assistants were trained to code the news media content. After training the coding began on 220 news stories, which were about 10% of the total sample selected to test the reliability of the coding frame. Intercoder reliability was acceptable with average *Scott pi* values reaching 0.82. After finishing coding 10% of the sample, the two research assistants discussed the differences for reconciliation before starting to code the rest of the sample. Coding was split with the rate of 70-30 between the coders based on their availability.

Coding items were recorded presence/not presence or binary with 1 = yes and 0 = no. Thus, Chi-square

website in the 2007 Korean presidential primary." *Asian Journal of Communication*. 22(6), 601-620.

statistical tests were utilized most frequently in analyzing the data.

4.2. FACTORS INFLUENCING REPORTERS DURING NEWS PRODUCTION PROCESS, COMMUNICATION THAT MAY INFLUENCE THE PRODUCTION OF GENDER-BIASED NEWS WHEN REPORTING WOMEN LEADERSHIP

We used a survey and in-depth interviews to investigate these factors.

The survey was conducted on news reporters, photographers, editors and broadcast news producers from *VTV1*, *VTV24*, *VOV1*, *VnExpress*, *Dân trí*, *VietNamNet*, *Thanh niên* and *Tuổi trẻ*. The selection of editorial staff members only in the news outlets served two purposes. One, it was to draw the connection between the content we analyzed and those who were involved in the production of such content. Two, without a national sampling frame of journalists, this is the optimal choice for class-sampling. Participation in the survey was voluntary and the researchers did not ask for the identity of the participants.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 132 items. For the survey to yield a high respond rate, we used various ways to distribute the questionnaires to eligible participants including paper-based and online. A total of 461 journalists responded, yielding a participation rate of 41.98%. Those who were not permanent editorial staff members, or skipped too many questions were excluded. The final sample included 430 journalists. Of those, 91 worked for TV; 54 were radio journalists, and the

rest, 285, were from either news sites or newspapers.

Regarding interviews, we invited 16 reporters to participate in this study, of which three were from television, two from radio and six from online and five from newspapers.

4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RAISING AWARENESS AND CHANGING BEHAVIORS OF JOURNALISTS WITH REGARD TO WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

This section was composed based on the results of the analysis of news content, survey, interviews and relevant literature in combination with our observation of previous and current projects on gender equality and communication.

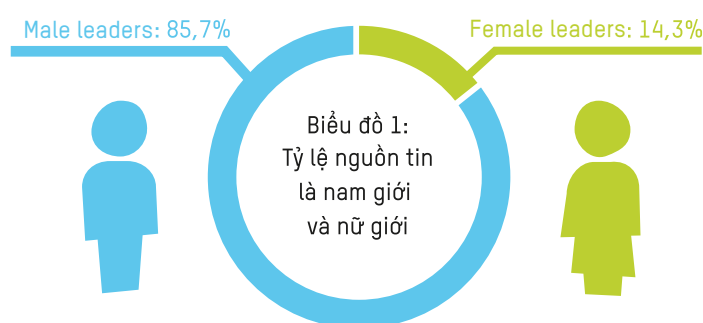
5. NEWS CONTENT ANALYSIS



5.1. COMMON ISSUES RELATED TO FEMALE LEADERS IN THE NEWS

Of the 2,168 stories, 477 stories were television news from VTV1; 404 were produced by VOV1; 494 were from newspapers; and 793 from the three news websites. A total of 3,461 leader sources were used in this sample. However, coders could not identify the sex of 32 sources via the news content and thus had to

exclude these sources from the analysis. The final number of leader sources was 3,429. According to the results male sources dominated in the news with a total of 2,938 sources or 85.7%. Meanwhile, female leaders were interviewed or quoted only 491 times, accounting for 14.3% of the total number of sources.



In assessing which sectors the sources came from, we found that of 3,429 leader sources in this sample, the majority were from the government sector (62.7%). However, the percentage of female leaders in this sector was the lowest, with only 9.8% as opposed to 90.2% male leaders. The proportion of female leaders from all other sectors was higher than the average. For example, the percentage of female leaders from

associations was 38.5%; education institutions 25.4%; civil organizations 21.8%; business sector 20.7%; and elected bodies (19.2%) (See table 1). The Chi-square test indicated a statistically significant difference between male and female leader sources with the number of male leaders being significantly higher than that of female leaders in the sample ($\chi^2 (N=3,428) = 109.1, p = 0.000$).

Table 1: Appearances of male/female leaders by sectors

Sector	Female leader	Male leader	Total
Government	211 (9.8%)	1,942 (90.2%)	2,153 (100%)
Association	5 (41.7%)	7 (58.3%)	12 (100%)
NGOs	38 (21.8%)	38 (21.8%)	174 (100%)
Business	102 (20.7%)	390 (79.3%)	492 (100%)
Education	78 (25.5%)	229 (74.5%)	307 (100%)
Elected deputy	54 (19.2%)	227 (80.8%)	281 (100%)
Others	3 (33.3%)	6 (67.7%)	9 (100%)
Total	491 (14.3%)	2,938 (85.7%)	3,429 (100%)

Statistical results indicated that male leaders were quoted on male-identified issues much more often than female leaders were. Male leader sources dominated in most male-identified areas. Of those areas, about half, including *technology & science*, *military & security*, *foreign policy*, *real estates*, *micro economic and politic & international events* saw more than 90% of the sources used in the news being male leaders, leaving the numbers of female leader sources being sought out on these issues extremely low. For

instance, for *technology & science*, only 6.1% of the sources used in the stories were female leaders. The statistics were 6.6% for *military & security*; 6.9% for issues on *foreign policy*; 7.6% for *real estate*; 8% for *micro economic* issues; and 9.9% for *politics & international events*. The other half had slightly higher percentages of female leader sources being used. The two male-identified issues that had the biggest numbers of female leader sources interviewed or quoted were *business* (16.4%) and *tax* (15.7%) (See Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage of male/female leaders in the news related to male-identified issues

<i>Area/issue</i>	<i>Female leader</i>	<i>Male leader</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>
Business	85 (16.4%)	386 (83.6%)	518 (100%)	NS
Budget	50 (12.5%)	349 (87.5%)	399 (100%)	NS
Profit	51 (12.2%)	368 (87.8%)	419 (100%)	NS
Economics	77 (8.0%)	888 (92%)	965 (100%)	44***
Foreign policy	14 (6.9%)	189 (93.1%)	203 (100%)	203 (100%)
Politic, international events	49 (9.9%)	445 (90.1%)	494 (100%)	9.12**
International trade	19 (10.5%)	162 (89.5%)	181 (100%)	NS
Management	59 (10.6%)	499 (89.4%)	558 (100%)	7.6**
Tax	27 (15.7%)	145 (84.3%)	145 (84.3%)	145 (84.3%)
Agriculture	67 (11.4%)	67 (11.4%)	586 (100%)	4.8*
Military/Security	78 (6.6%)	1098 (93.4%)	1176 (100%)	86.19***
Real estates	37 (7.6%)	450 (92.4%)	487 (100%)	21.1***
Science & Tech	15 (6.1%)	231 (93.9%)	246 (100%)	14.6***
<i>Total</i>	628 (100%)	5,729 (100%)	5,729 (100%)	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$;

Overall, for female-identified issues, the proportion of female leaders were cited and interviewed, or were the focused persons in the news stories increased significantly. The areas/issues that female leaders appeared the most included *children/family* (40.8%) and *women's rights* (35.7%). The three issues that had the least appearance of female leaders were *environment* (10.8%), *civic & ethnic minority* (15.2%)

and *social welfare* (17.1%). Thus, within 10 most female-identified issues, seven had the numbers of female leader sources higher than 20% (See Table 3). Despite being stereotyped as female-identified, none of the issues had the numbers of female leader sources up to 50%, including such areas as *family/children* or *women's rights*.

Table 3: Percentage of male/female leaders in the news related to female-identified issues

<i>Areas/issues</i>	<i>Female Leader - A</i>	<i>Male leader - A</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Chi-Square</i>
Civic, minority group	69 (15.2%)	386 (84.8%)	455 (100%)	NS
Old people	7 (25%)	7 (25%)	28 (100%)	NS
Education	135 (21.4%)	497 (79.6%)	497 (79.6%)	31.3***
Environment	73 (10.8%)	606 (89.2%)	679 (100%)	8.79**(-)
Health	143 (25.9%)	409 (74.1%)	552 (100%)	71.99***
Poverty reduction	67 (23.0%)	224 (77%)	291 (100%)	20.93***
Children/family	85 (40.8%)	123 (49.2%)	208 (100%)	127.2***
Social welfares	83 (17.1%)	403 (82.9%)	486 (100%)	3.97*
Women rights	15 (35.7%)	27 (64.3%)	42 (100%)	15.87***
Humanitarian	48 (25.7%)	139 (74.3%)	187 (100%)	20.77***
<i>Total - B</i>	725 (20.4%)	2,835 (79.6%)	3,560 (100%)	

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$; (-) The proportion of male leader appeared in news about environment in the total number of male appeared on news articles, or A/B, was higher than the proportion of female.

CONCLUSIONS:

The frequencies of female leaders sourced in the news were far lower than those of male leaders, especially in the government sector. This demonstrates that female leaders are disappointingly under-represented in the news despite

their contribution and participation in the workforce. Female leaders' invisibility in news content is not only an indication that their voices and perspectives are not adequately presented but it may also send messages to audiences as consumers of the news that female leaders do not usually have the authority or do not qualify to be in positions with authority to be in the media spotlight.

Female leader sources were sought out more often for news stories on female-identified issues such as *children/family; women's rights; health; poverty reduction, or; elder people*. They were almost non-present in areas/issues that were often weighted more heavily in the government's administration including *military/security; real estates; micro economic; international relations, science and technologies* etc. Male leader sources dominated the news in every area including those that are often seen as most suitable for women in general such as *women's rights or children/family*. These findings show that besides under-representing female leaders, the news media also perpetuate gender stereotypes against them by setting the boundary of work areas that are supposedly more suitable to their femininity.

5.2. GENDER BIASED DETAILS IN NEWS STORIES RELATED TO WOMEN LEADERS

Although the number of news stories that provided additional details on how these leader sources look was limited, it showed a statistically significant difference in how the portrayal of leaders is gendered. Specifically, female leaders tend to receive much more attention from the news media with regard to their appearance. Of the 2,938 male leader sources, journalists reported on how they looked on only 31 cases (1.06%). That rate was 5.7% for female leader sources with 28 out of a total 491 female leader sources having details on their appearance being mentioned in the news. Of the 30 leaders whose information on house chores was revealed in the news, 27 were women. Only three were men.

Similarly, 41 news stories provided details about leader sources' children, of those 20 (4%) were female and 21 (0.7%) were male. Fifty-one news stories provided information on leader sources' parents, with 19 mentioning female leaders' parents and 32 mentioning

male leaders' parents. News stories reported information on family tasks associated with female leaders more often than they did with male leaders. For instance, of the 23 leader sources being reported on how they took care of their family members, 17 were female and six were male.

It is important to note that the statistical results showed almost equivalent numbers of male and female leader sources having their personal information revealed in the news articles. However, calculations of these statistics over the total numbers of sources of both genders demonstrated disproportionate ratios between them, with female leader sources receiving much more attention from the news media than their male counterparts with regard to information on family, care taking roles, and appearance. The Chi-square test results also indicated statistically significant differences of media portrayals of male and female leader sources in this aspect (See Table 4).

The result of the qualitative data also showed a similar tendency. The majority of news stories focused on providing additional information associated with female leaders more frequently than for male leaders. For example, a news article published on *VietNamNet* described a pilot with the title: "*A female pilot who is more beautiful than a hot girl*." The article provided specific details about the appearance of this pilot although the most important news value was that she was the first ever female pilot of Vietnam Airlines.

"In 2011, the girl who is 1.7 meters tall, with beautiful and fair skin, officially joined Vietnam Airlines. She has been receiving training to be a pilot, the first ever female pilot in Vietnam."

Article: Female pilot who is more beautiful than a hot girl - VietNamNet

For female leaders who were married, the information on how they raise their children was provided in great detail, despite the fact that it was not the focus of the stories. For example, an article published in *Dân trí* about Tạ Bích Loan, a well-known television show host who is also the managing editor of VTV6 channel, began with her interviewing skills,

which, as the author claimed, were a contributing factor to her success as a journalist. The article then moved on to describe the openness and the “innocence, truthfulness, and wisdom of this famous MC.” However, the rest of the article focused extensively on how Loan raised her daughter and how she balanced her work and family life.

However, when asked about her two children, “the one hundred kilogram woman” seemed very modest and did not want to say much: “Perhaps I am also influenced by the way my parents educated and raised me and my siblings. They always set goals for their children to try hard, although I know that might have put some pressure on the us. I believe setting good goals to pursue will make us stronger... I set the goals for my kids but I also nurture their dream, creating good conditions for them to reach their goals....”

.....

“Being a movie director is a tough job ... It can be even harder for female directors ... So, when my daughter, Ly Na, chose to pursue her career in this area, honestly I did not want her to but we knew that she was passionate about it, so we respected her decision ... And we were very happy when Ly Na told us that she had chosen the Vietnam War topic for her master’s thesis ... It reminded me of the times I took her to visit the B52 Victory Museum in Hanoi, of the times my family visited the Vietnam Revolutionary Museum, and of the television shows on the country’s grand history we watched together. Using real life examples to teach children does sound clichéd, but it really works... I am happy because my daughter has grown up learning about life through those examples ...” Tạ Bích Loan said.

*Article: The story about “A hundred kilogram woman”
– Dân trí (Taken from Tiên Phong)*

A popular theme found in the news stories about female leaders was that reporters would provide information about their role in the family. Female leaders were described as having a busy life with much pressure. However, they would always try to successfully complete their work without neglecting

their traditional homemaking role. News stories also emphasized another important aspect of these female leaders’ success, which is: All of them had received generous support from their husbands, without which it would not have been possible for them to achieve the reported accomplishments.



Lieutenant Major Chu Thị Hoa said: "In general, the challenges a police officer faces fighting drug trafficking are tremendous. In many cases, it is the matter of life or death. For women, such pressure doubles.

Apart from completing our work responsibilities, we also have family to worry about and our roles as a mother and a wife to fulfill. Many times I had planned to cook a good dinner for the kids, pick them up from school, but unexpected assignments arrived and I had to go on, playing undercover roles to unveil drug trafficking rings together with my colleagues.

Article: Female police chief scaring drug dealers – Dân trí

"When asked about challenges, both Chôm and Mận said that they faced countless difficulties. "With the encouragement from the Party and the District, with the trust of other members and especially the understanding and support from our husbands, no matter how hard it was we would always overcome."

Article: Women's Union Leader under 20 years old– Dân trí



Photo: Le Thanh Hoa

CONCLUSIONS:

When writing about female leaders, journalists often described them in the context of their traditional roles, such as taking care of family, children or doing house chores. Although the number of news stories about male leaders is larger, very few provided additional information about their private lives.

The news media also portrayed the “excellence” of female leaders based on their career success. However, such “excellence” is not separated from their traditional

roles, without which it seems hard for them to be “excellent” but rather “abnormal.” At the same time, they do not appear to be independent because their success depends on the “understanding and support” from their husbands and others. With such a depiction of female leaders, the news media in general have contributed to creating and perpetuating stereotypes of what a successful woman should look like in the contemporary Vietnamese society. That is: Only those female leaders who can handle their dual roles and responsibilities both in families as traditional women and in the workplace as modern women are considered ideal.

6. JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTION AND FACTORS INFLUENCING GATEKEEPING PROCESS



6.1. FACTORS DERIVING FROM ENVIRONMENT, WORKPLACE AND SOCIETY

6.1.1 Demographic information

As stated above, our final analysis sample consisted of answers from 430 journalists. Of those, 248 were female (57.7%) and 172 male (40%). Ten journalists (2.3%) chose not to reveal their genders. The majority of journalists (54.2%) were within the age range of 26 to 35. About one third of journalists (29.5%) were from 36 to 45 years old. A little more than 1/10 of the journalists (11.6%) were between 18 and 25. Very few of the participants were between 46-55 (3.3%), 56-65 (0.9%), or over 65 (0.5%). More than half of the journalists (63%) were reporters. About 1/3 were editors or broadcast news producers (35.3%). Only seven (1.6%) were photographers. The majority (66.3%) of the journalists worked at newspapers or news sites. Ninety-one (21.2%) were TV journalists. Fifty-four journalists were from VOV1 (12.6%). About one third of the journalists (32.3%) had been in the journalism industry for between 6-10 years. Almost one-fifth (19.8%) had 3-5 years of professional journalism experience. Another close-to-one fifth (19.3%) had worked for between 11 – 15 years in the news industry. A smaller percentage (17.2%) of journalists were new to the profession with fewer than two years of experience. The rest (11.4%) had been in journalism for over 15 years.

6.1.2. Journalists' opinion of gender inequality

More than half of the journalists (53.2%) agreed that in the Vietnamese society discrimination against women still exists at a relatively high degree. More than one third of the participants (34.2%) said that there is only a "small amount" of gender discrimination. Nearly one-tenth (8.8%) stated that there is a great deal of gender inequality. Only 3.8% journalists thought that

gender inequality was presently non-existent in the society.

The majority of participants (72.5%) suggested that Vietnam needs to continue improving its gender equality situation. However, the other 28.5% thought that Vietnam "has made significant changes to create more equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace."

6.1.3. Journalists' opinion of gender equality in the workplace and family

We examined the participants' opinion of gender equality in the workplace and in families by asking them to rate their responsibility for their families and in their occupations as well as their satisfaction toward personal lives and work. The results indicated that generally speaking, journalists do not feel overwhelmed with their work ($M = 2.94/5$; $SD = 0.89$) and did not think they had to sacrifice their work to take care of families ($M = 2.83/5$; $SD = 0.83$). The majority of the journalists (77.6%) felt happy with their current jobs ($M = 3.89/5$; $SD = 0.77$). Likewise, most of them (79.1%) were satisfied with their personal lives ($M = 3.87/5$; $SD = 0.76$).

We used two questions on equal opportunities for men and women to ask about the participants' work environment. The majority of the journalists agreed that both men and women had the opportunity to be successful in journalism ($M = 4.2/5$; $SD = 0.87$) with 90.3% journalists selecting "agree" or "strongly agree." Likewise, 86% of journalists ($M = 4.08/5$; $SD = 0.88$) either "agree" or "strongly agree" that "women and men both have the opportunity to be successful in their leadership roles in media industry."

The majority of the journalists agreed that both men and women are good for a reporter and editor job. The only difference was found with regard to being a pho-

tographer. Most journalists (65.5%) thought men have better photography skills, thus would better qualify for the job as a photographer than women would.

When asked about the role of men and women in their family, most journalists agreed that both men and women should share equal responsibilities for taking care of their children (90.6%, $M = 4.3/5$, $SD = 0.90$). However, gender bias was clearly seen in how men's and women's work and family responsibilities should be prioritized. Only 27% participants agreed that "*being successful in my career is a priority for women*" and 67.4% of participants agreed that women should focus on taking care of their families. Meanwhile, 66.9% of participants agreed that career success is the most important goal for men.

6.1.4. Evaluation of "behavior" on gender equality

We used four items to examine the gender role in family setting, such as in their own families whether men or women would take the major role in generating income, doing household chores, taking care of children, and whether or not career success is more important to men and women. The items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "*strongly disagree*" to (5) "*strongly agree*." Results indicated that the majority of participants' families still maintained the traditional gender-based role division. That is, women take care of children ($M = 3.47/5$, $SD = 0.94$) with **61.6%** of participants selecting "*agree*" or "*strongly agree*," while only **20.6%** of participants selected "*disagree*" or "*strongly disagree*"; More than half of the journalists (**59.5%**) "*agreed*" or "*strongly*

agreed" that women did most of the housework in their families ($M = 3.41/5$; $SD = 0.94$); Another **48.5%** of the participants selected "*agree*" or "*strongly agree*" to indicate that in their families men were the breadwinners ($M = 3.28/5$; $SD = 0.92$); **42%** of the participants come from families where the men's careers were seen as more important than women's ($M = 3.21/5$; $SD = 0.93$).

But as shown in our qualitative analysis, in reality, the distribution of tasks in families was even more burdensome for women. According to the results, all participants revealed that in their families, women take care of the majority of housework and look after children besides their busy full-time work schedules. Some female journalists had to make decisions on whether they should focus on work or family when promotion opportunities arrived. Often, they prioritized their family. The participants in this study did recognize "inequality" in the way family and work responsibilities

are divided. However, they tended to justify the unequal division by attributing the reason to how the society is structured. For example, a female journalist, from an online newspaper said "that is the way the society goes." Another female reporter from VTV said, "we cannot do anything to change that" (*Female journalist, VTV*).

Some journalists thought that the gender-based role

designation pattern between men and women was "natural" because women are better at housework. Men were expected to do some housework, but often those are the tasks that are not daily such as replacing light bulbs, fixing appliances, etc. Many of these tasks are often done by an outside specialist. According to a

"It is highly noticeable that the proportion of women being responsible for housework was considerably high with **61.6%** looking after children and **59.5%** taking care of house chores. However, the role of men in society – making money (**48.5%**) or developing a career (**42%**) was not equally important. This result indicated that while women are still responsible for most housework, they have also taken on more responsibilities for working outside of the house, developing a career as well as earning money for their family finance."

"In my family, although my husband and I both work full time, when our kids are sick I would naturally be the one to ask for work leave or to look for alternative solutions. And my husband does not have to worry about it at all."

(Female journalist, VOV)

"For tasks such as cooking, going to the market or looking after the children, it is clear that women are better than men. Therefore, my wife has been taking care of these tasks ever since our marriage. Not that we sit and talk about that work division, it just happens naturally as it does in all other families."

(Male journalist, VTV)

"I only want to do good enough in my current career. To try to aim high in my career is really challenging. My division is very busy and if I am promoted to be the chief of the section, it is going to be very complicated because I will have to attend many meetings, travel and handle other relationship building tasks. I am a family women and I think I need to spend my time on my family."

(Female journalist, print newspaper)

female journalist from an online news site, the housework division in her family is based on the principle that *"whoever is good at one thing will be responsible for it."* She was good at taking care of the children and cooking, so she is responsible for these tasks. Women are often seen as "better" than men at doing certain tasks. The quantitative result also showed a similar result with **71.8%** of the participants believed that women were better than men in raising and caring for children.

6.1.5. Differences in male and female participants' perception of family and work

We compared male and female journalists' perception of family and work. Findings showed significant differences in several aspects: Male journalists were more likely to think that women are better caretakers of children than men ($\chi = 11.12$, $p < 0.05$); Men should be breadwinners in the family and that women's income should only be supplemental ($\chi = 15.02$, $p < 0.01$), and; Female journalists were more likely to be happier than their male colleagues in their

journalism jobs ($\chi = 13.66$, $p < 0.01$). Apart from these differences, both male and female journalists shared similar perception on other issues related to gender equality at home or at work.

It was clear that journalists do perceive that men and women should be treated equally both at home and at work. However, how to translate such knowledge and perception into reality seems problematic. In fact, gender stereotypes against women are still influencing journalists' everyday life. For instance, in most journalists' families, women are still responsible for most of the work at home including house chores, taking care of the family and looking after children. Men have limited responsibilities for housework. Men do not have the opportunity to do or do not want to do housework. Thus, the image of men taking on housework tasks has never been the norm. Gender stereotypes manifested through labor division at home have been normalized, making it harder for most members of the society in general and journalists in particular to recognize the "problems", let alone take action to change them.

6.2. JOURNALISTS' ATTITUDE TOWARD MALE AND FEMALE LEADERS

6.2.1. Gender bias related to the quality of male and female leaders

Twenty statements based on the role congruity theory by Eagly and Karau (2002) on gender stereotypes were used in the questionnaire. These items focused on both men and women's leadership traits leaders of both gender, including four agentic traits (e.g. confidence, capability, competitiveness, determination and powerfulness) and four communal traits (e.g. friendliness, flexibility, delicate,

considerate and sympathetic). We used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "not very" – and the trait – such as "confident" to (5) "very" – and the trait – "confident". As shown in Table 4, journalists tend to perceive that male leaders possess more agentic traits than female leaders, with the average mean ranging from 4.04 to 4.10 for male leaders and 3.70 to 3.90 for female leaders. On the contrary, journalists also viewed female leaders with stronger communal traits than male leaders. The means of the combined communal traits ranged from 3.78 to 3.97 for female leaders and 3.38 – 3.61 for male leaders. Results from *T*-tests confirmed that the differences were statistically significant.

Table 4. Journalists' perception of agentic and communal traits of male and female leaders

Quality	Female leader (M/SD)	Male leader (M/SD)	T-value	P
Self confidence	3.76(0.76)	4.06 (0.74)	-9.08	.000
Capability	3.89 (0.56)	4.05 (0.58)	-6.13	.000
Competitiveness	3.72(0.72)	4.05 (0.63)	-8.27	.000
Decisiveness	3.70 (0.70)	4.09 (0.73)	-11.25	.000
Powerfulness	3.75 (0.69)	4.01 (0.72)	-7.12	.000
Friendliness	3.82 (0.69)	3.60 (0.66)	5.90	.000
Thoughtfulness	3.95 (0.70)	3.47 (0.63)	14.21	.000
Understanding	3.77 (0.72)	3.37 (0.63)	10.51	.000
Dedication	3.87 (0.71)	3.49 (0.69)	10.93	.000
Sympathy	3.87 (0.71)	3.49 (0.62)	7.97	.000

We assessed the relationships between journalists' demographics including age, gender, length of time in the news media industry, family environment factors and their perception of gender stereotypes. In examining journalists' family influence, we created a

new variable based on four statements about responsibility division between men and women in journalists' families. Journalists were asked to rate whether in their family between men or women, who were responsible for "taking care of children,"

“breadwinning,” “doing housework more often than men,” and “whose career is more important.” Before combining these variables, we calculated the inter-national consistency using Cronbach’s Alpha of the variables, which showed an acceptable level of 0.69 between these four items. We also combined four variables on agentic traits for male and female leaders and four variables on communal traits for male and female leaders. Again, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients ranging from 0.75 to 0.82 demonstrated a strong internal consistency among these variables.

Results from regression tests indicated that journalists in family that maintains the traditional gender role are more likely to hold gender stereotypes against women. For these journalists, male leaders are more powerful, decisive, competitive, capable and confident ($\beta = 0.14$ $p < 0.01$). In addition, journalists’ gender also influenced their perception of female leaders’ skills and qualities. Specifically, female journalists tend to view such communal traits as flexibility, sympathy, friendliness, thoughtfulness and delication were “naturally female” ($\beta = 0.11$ $p < 0.05$). Results from our qualitative analysis using in-depth interview data provided further evidence on journalists’ gender stereotypes against female leaders. Many of our interviewees did not see communal traits as women’s strength. Instead, these traits lead to doubts about female leadership skills among those journalists. Some interpreted them as “*afraid of being confrontational*,” “*lack of self-confidence*” (Female editor, online newspaper), or “*do not want to tackle difficult tasks*” (Female reporter, online newspaper). Journalists say having to take care of their husbands and their families and to deal with petty stuff hinders female leaders’ ability to think big. Those who can overcome those challenges have to act like men or possess such “male” qualities as *decisive* (Male, reporter, TV news), and thus lose their femininity. In general, physical differences, the responsibilities

assigned to them, the caretaking role in their families can constrain women to develop their professional career, making them unfit for leadership positions, especially as compared to men. Even if they have obtained leadership positions, according to many journalists, these barriers become hindrances, making it harder for them to be “as successful as their male counterparts.”

“Clearly the family environment plays an important role in journalists’ gender stereotypes. Living in families where responsibilities are divided based on the traditional gender role negatively influences journalists’ perception of women’s leadership.”

Gender stereotypes influence how journalists evaluate leadership qualities of both men and women. Women are seen by most journalists as having “too many” disadvantages to be good leaders, be it responsibilities that they are expected to have or the “traits” they are naturally born with. Male are in strikingly more advantageous positions. They have fewer “other” responsibilities. Their gender naturally grants them traits that are congruent with the attributes essential to a good leader.

6.2.2. Gender stereotypes and news sources

Interacting with news sources is an integral part of journalists’ professional practices. Thus, we asked our participants for their opinion about male and female news sources. Although we did not mention specifically whether the news source was a male or female leader, previous research has shown that journalists prefer to quote or interview people in leadership positions²⁷. Sixteen statements were included in the questionnaire to examine participants’ views on and

27 Berkowitz, D., & Beach, D. W. (1993). News sources and news context: The effect of routine news, conflict and proximity. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 70(1), 4-12.

perception of news sources. The statements focused on skills and qualities that are seen as important to news sources such as being honest, organized and efficient, knowledgeable, decisive, intelligent, compassionate, powerful and accessible. Results showed that male sources were rated higher than

female sources in certain qualities such as being intelligent, decisive, knowledgeable, organized, efficient, and powerful. Female sources were seen as more honest and compassionate. There was no difference between the male and female leader sources in terms of accessibility.

Table 5. Journalists’ opinion toward male and female news sources

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Female new source (M/SD)</i>	<i>Male news source (M/SD)</i>	<i>T-value</i>	<i>P</i>
Intelligent	2.35 (0.70)	2.51 (0.89)	-3.89	.000
Clear decision	2.31 (0.68)	2.71 (1.00)	-9.26	.000
Knowledgeable	2.35 (0.69)	2.52 (0.90)	-4.24	.000
Organized & efficient	2.37 (0.72)	2.66 (0.96)	-6.48	.000
Powerful	2.30 (0.67)	2.53 (0.92)	-5.28	.000
Accessible	2.72 (0.94)	2.67 (0.93)	0.92	.360
Compassionate	2.94 (1.03)	2.35 (0.74)	10.61	.000
Honest	2.43 (0.76)	2.33 (0.75)	2.71	.007

We also looked at whether there is any difference in how journalists evaluate skills and qualities of male and female news sources. Results indicated no difference in journalists’ perception of skills and qualities between male and female sources.

women would be more suitable to be news sources for such areas/issues as healthcare, education as well as children and family. There was no statistically significant difference in which gender would fit better as a news source on agriculture.

In the next step, we examined journalists’ gender stereotypes through investigating their perception of news sources. Specifically, we asked our participants for their opinions on which areas/issues they think are suitable for male and/or female news sources. As seen in table 5, male news sources were viewed as more qualified to be news sources in such areas as economy, politics, military and security, science and technologies. Meanwhile, participants perceived that

Regression tests were adopted to determine the relationships between participants’ gender stereotypes in perceiving which areas men and women would fit to be news sources and journalists’ demographic variables including age, gender, length of time working in the journalism industry and family situation. We combined the five variables on five male-identified areas/issues including economic; politic; military/security; science, and sport. Similarly, four vari-

Table 6. Journalists' view on areas/issues suitable for men and women to be news sources

<i>Quality</i>	<i>Female new source (M/SD)</i>	<i>Male news source (M/SD)</i>	<i>T-value</i>	<i>P</i>
Economics	2.54 (0.71)	3.11 (0.99)	-10.61	.000
Politics	2.52 (0.70)	3.43 (0.96)	-16.59	.000
Military, security	2.35 (0.63)	3.48 (0.95)	-16.59	.000
Science	2.52 (0.69)	3.10 (0.98)	-10.51	.000
Sport	2.29 (0.69)	3.62 (0.97)	-21.53	.000
Agriculture	2.70 (0.76)	2.79 (0.86)	1.70	0.09
Health care	3.47 (0.92)	2.79 (0.86)	20.46	.000
Education	3.31 (0.88)	2.48 (0.70)	16.38	.000
Family	3.61 (0.91)	2.31 (0.68)	16.38	.000

ables on female-identified areas/issues including agriculture; healthcare, education; and family were also merged. Reliability tests showed acceptable internal consistency levels with Cronbach's Alpha ranging from 0.79 to 0.86.

Regression test results indicated that family and length of time in the media industry were the two statistically significant predictors of journalists' stereotypical attitudes in terms of gendering areas and issues for news sources. Specifically, journalists who lived in families with traditional gender roles are more likely to assign areas/issues to news sources based on their gender: Men are considered better news sources for male-identified areas/issues ($\beta = 0.25, p < 0.001$), and women are considered better news sources for female-identified areas/issues ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$). Journalists with a shorter time in the media industry are more likely to hold gender stereotypes: men are more qualified to be news sources for male-identified issues

$\beta = -0.17, p < 0.05$, and women more suitable for female identified areas/issues $\beta = -0.14, p < 0.05$.

In general, most journalists have stereotypes against women. In practicing journalism, many show stereotypical perception of and attitude toward female news sources. Journalists who live in family with traditional gender role division tend to have stronger stereotypical perception of and attitudes toward female news sources. How long a journalist has worked in the industry had positive influence on his/her perception of and attitudes toward female news sources.

6.2.3. What information about male and female leaders is important to journalists?

Statistical analyses showed that gender stereotypes influence journalists' perceived importance of personal

information when reporting on male and female leaders. Specifically, such details as education, working experience were important for both male and female leaders. However,

information about family, child care, or physical appearance was seen as more important for reporting on female leaders than it was for male leaders (See Table 7).

Table 7. Journalists’ views on the importance of personal details of male and female leaders

<i>Personal details/Level of importance</i>	<i>Female leader (M/SD)</i>	<i>Male leader (M/SD)</i>	<i>T-value</i>	<i>P</i>
Education	3.51 (0.86)	3.53 (0.82)	-0.63	0.53
Working experience	3.83 (0.69)	3.85 (0.69)	-2.04	0.04
Family	3.05 (0.97)	2.82 (0.88)	6.38	.000
Child care	3.07 (0.98)	2.83 (0.86)	2.83 (0.86)	.000
Physical appearance	3.10 (0.89)	2.95 (0.82)	5.09	.000

As shown in Table 7, statistical analyses of the survey data confirmed the findings of the content analysis, helping explain why gender stereotypes are present in the news. Analyses using qualitative data from in-depth interviews further reinforced the findings. The most interviewees applied different working standards toward female leaders. For example, most journalists we interviewed said that female leaders’ physical appearance is important because “at the end of the day, they are women” and that “they need to look good when their images are published” (*Male reporter, print newspaper*). The inclusion of personal details about female leaders’ family and children in news stories makes the leaders look “more female and more real” (*Female and male reporters, online newspaper*).

6.3. FACTORS INFLUENCING NEWS PRODUCTION

In the previous sections, we focused on examining factors related to journalists’ perception, knowledge and other factors such as their family, social and

working environments. In this section, we use the model namely *hierarchy of influences* by Shoemaker and Reese¹ to determine external factors that influence journalists. We used survey and in-depth interviews to answer our questions. The focus is on the following factors: audience; newsroom, channel; advertising; occupational habit; new source; government influence; and career ideals. Participants were asked to rate their agreement on eight five-point scale statements with (1) being “*strongly disagree*” and (5) being “*strongly agree*.” Results showed that audiences had the strongest influence on journalists in the news production process (M = 4.22/5; SD = 0.73). The factor that had the least influence on journalists was “advertising” (M = 2.90/5; SD = 1.34) (See table 8).

According to our qualitative analyses, most journalists revealed that they had used different strategies when reporting on female leaders from what they did on male leaders to attract audience attention.

28 Shoemaker PJ and Reese SD (1996) *Mediating the Message*. New York: Longman.

Table 8. Factors influencing news production

<i>Factors influencing news production</i>	<i>(M/SD)</i>
Information needed for audience/readers	4.19 (0.73)
Helpful information	4.09 (0.78)
News sources	3.67 (0.76)
Editors and producers' preferences	3.69 (0.83)
Publication's preference/style	3.63 (0.79)
Journalists' role perception	3.49 (0.95)
Government's reaction	3.38 (0.86)
Advertisers	2.83 (0.90)

The second reason for why they used different strategies for portraying male and female leaders was that they wanted to show *"what's special in each of the two genders," "the excellence of female leaders"* (Female editor, online newspaper), and to *"set an ideal image of women following the popular slogan 'women need to be great at both work and home'"* (Male editor, newspaper). A few journalists said they wanted to highlight the uniqueness of female leaders or the contradictory images of female leaders strong but delicate, tough but also understanding to capture audiences' curiosity. She argued, *"To be leaders, women need to be powerful and assertive than usual. But that's at work. So we wanted to see how delicate they are at home; Male leaders are often cold, so we wanted to see what they are like when they are with beautiful women"* (Female reporter, online newspaper).

However, when asked about how they know whether the audience is attracted to the stereotypical content they produce, journalists say they do not have clear evidence of what the audience prefers. They base their judgement subjectively on questioning

themselves *"What I would want to know if I were the audience"* (Female reporter, VTV), or *"I selected the details I think were suitable to the culture and life of the audience"* (Female reporter, online newspaper). However, as shown in previous literature, such judgement is based on the shared culture in the society. In that culture, traditional role assignments, though still maintained, have been "updated" with new aspects to serve the propaganda purposes of some organizations and institutions. The images of women propagated in new forms have contributed to the birth of new gender stereotypes, erecting higher cultural barriers against women and preventing them from obtaining leadership positions in their work and in society.

One of the interviewees, a female journalist, said she had always tried to avoid reporting the news that is stereotypical against female leaders. She admitted that the female leaders she had interviewed face far more challenges than their male counterparts do. However, she refused to include any stereotypical content in her articles just to get audience attention. The journalist showed a great disappointment in the

fact that stereotypical content is prevalent, and that journalists are willing to produce such news to “attract a better viewership” (*Female reporter, online newspaper*). In short, three important factors that influence the production process of stereotypical news against female leaders include the audience, journalists’ working and living environments, and the news selection routines.

Another important point was that a number of journalists had attended training courses on gender, however when reporting on female leaders, news workers’ practices still show gender stereotypes including focusing on information on these leaders’

families, appearance, and their caregiving roles.

Justifying for such practices, the journalists we interviewed gave several reasons. For example, a female reporter said, “the training course was carried out a long time ago and I do not remember.” According to another female editor, she is always on tight deadlines, so she does not have enough time to pay attention to whether or not her stories are stereotypical. This shows journalists’ gendering practices happen unintentionally. Most of the journalists we interviewed were not able to recognize that the content they produce have gender stereotypes in it.

“I think when we begin a new show we need to pay a great deal of attention to what the audience prefers. If I were an audience watching a show about a female leader, I’d have such questions as “how is that woman like when she is at home?” or “what does she do to balance her role at work and at home?” Thus, I have reported this kind of information to satisfy the need of my audience for the information. Over time, this routine has become natural in the way I perceive of what I need to do when reporting on female leaders. Perhaps, because of that the content I produce is influenced by our traditional culture on gender.

(Female reporter, VTV)

“Although the press praises their career success, we should not forget that readers would care about their personal lives. Why? Because female leaders are a minority. The majority of people will think that they have to sacrifice something for their work success. And these sacrifices may have fueled a conflict between people involved, which in turn would provoke readers’ curiosity...”

(Female editor, Newspaper)

“I think they (journalists) still want to promote the images of ‘women being great at both work and home’ which have turned into an ideal model for women. When doing that, ournalists show they have predetermined idea of using different reporting strategies on male and female leaders. I think most journalists do this. The audience also expects them to do that. They’d have questions like, ‘Yes, she’s successful but what about her family?’”

The description of ‘Women being great at both work and home’ is so ingrained in our minds. That expectation of women comes from both their family and the society. For example, how a woman looks should always be prioritized and paid attention to no matter how busy she is with work and family. Male leaders are not expected to be delicate.”

(Male reporter, newspaper)

7. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS



7.1. JOURNALISTS' SOLUTIONS

A major objective of this research project is to find out what solutions would help improve the situation of news media's stereotypical content against female leaders through influencing journalists. In our in-depth interviews, we asked journalists what they think would help them produce stereotype-free content. The final goal is to change the public's stereotypical perception against female leaders, which would help increase women's participation in the policymaking process at multiple levels and areas.

In general, most journalists agreed that there are still many challenges to overcome for changes to happen with regard to gender stereotypes against female leaders. Those include limited knowledge of gender issue as well as journalists' practices and selection of

information to include in news stories. These practices have been professionally routinized (*Editor, newspaper*) to become a formula for portraying female leaders.

Solutions that journalists recommended include (1) increasing knowledge of gender equality through longer training courses that provide relevant information to journalism practices; (2) gender equality content needs to be incorporated into codes of conduct of each news organization to ensure that they will provide guidelines to news workers in their everyday work; and (3) the monitoring and supervisory role of social organizations working in this area needs to be stepped up. These organizations need to react promptly to news publications on stereotypical content against female leaders being. These reactions, if presented properly, would raise awareness of gender equality among journalists, building a mechanism



Photo: Le Thanh Hoa

through which news workers can be held accountable for stereotypical content against female leaders they produce.

The above-mentioned recommendations are aligned with various projects in this area. For example, Oxfam, CSAGA and UNDP have provided training courses on gender equality to journalists. Besides, Oxfam and CSAGA, in partnership with the Ministry of Information and Communications, have developed guidelines for journalists with regard to gender equality. However, the fact that journalists, including those who participated in previous training courses, have limited knowledge of gender stereotypes against female leaders shows a great need for the training courses to be reviewed, together with ongoing efforts to mainstream gender equality guidelines into news organizations' codes of conduct.

7.2. CONCLUSIONS

This study is set out to answer three major research questions: (1) Are there stereotypes against female leadership in the news? (2) If there are stereotypical news content against female leadership, then what factors are influencing how such a type of news in its production process? and (3) Through analyzing qualitative data from in-depth interviews with journalists and reviewing previous literature as well as together with our own observation, the research team provides recommendations for measures to make news content gender stereotype-free.

- Are there stereotypes against female leadership in the news? Gender stereotypes against female leaders were found to be present in the way female leaders are portrayed or not portrayed. Specifically, news reports are more likely to include information about women's personal lives. Journalists frame female leaders' images

in association with double standards and additional responsibilities including highlighting their caregiving roles and appearance. Gender stereotypes are also found in how issues/areas that journalists look for news sources are assigned to a specific gender. It is important to note that journalists do not intentionally pick male leaders to be their news sources for issues that are male-identified. In reality, female leaders in those areas may just be scarce, making it harder for journalism sourcing in terms of gender stereotypes. If this is the case, it points to a need for greater gender equality at the decision-making level.

- Which factors influence journalists shaping the production process of news content that is heavily stereotyped against female leaders? Findings of this research show the most influential factor is journalists' family environment. Those who live in families which maintain traditional gender role divisions tend to have biased views against female leaders. They tend to evaluate men's leadership skills and traits as more agentic, and thus more congruent with essential skills and qualities of good leaders.
- Living in traditional gender role divisions leads to journalists' normalization of gender stereotypes, influencing their ability to become gender-sensitive. Their stereotypical perception of roles, skills and traits of male and female leaders is largely based on their personal experience in everyday life. Thus, they produce news content without being able to detect how gender stereotypical it is.
- The second most influential factor is

audience. According to our analyses, journalists say they select gender-stereotypical details when reporting on female leaders because they want to attract audience attention, although they do not have clear evidence of what information on female leaders their audiences would prefer. Only those who work for online news sites can use reader metrics to base their editorial decisions on. Others rely on their own reasoning on readers' preferences to make editorial adjustments if necessary.

- Other factors such as requests from editorial teams, professional routines and news sources, among others also influence the news production process in terms of stereotypical content against female leaders. However, compared to journalists' family background and audience, these factors are not as influential as the two above-mentioned ones.
- The limited time and resources for this study did not allow for an expanded examination of other types of media content including gameshows, talk shows, or opinion pieces besides news. However, this is a suggestion for future research for a more thorough investigation of gender stereotypes against women in mainstream media content.

7.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Journalists are able to lead public discussions and thus be pioneers in social change. Changes in news media content can have multiplied influence on the society. For that reason, we expect that relevant government bodies, social organizations as well as individuals

can utilize the findings from this research to design responsive interventions ultimately aiming to promote gender stereotype-free media content.

Admittedly, fostering behavioral changes that are deeply rooted in traditional culture is not easy and cannot be done in a short time. It is the same for gender stereotypes. Thus, the recommendations below need to be translated into interventions with various timeframes and diverse strategies to be effective.

Fostering changes in journalists' perception of and traditional views on female leaders' skills and traits

- In order to foster changes in journalists' perceptions of female leaders' skills and traits, more training courses are needed to provide knowledge of gender stereotypes and gender-sensitive content to different groups of journalists. The length of the courses needs to be carefully considered for journalists to have enough time to capture the complex and subtleness of gender stereotypes as well as to connect them journalism work. Trainers need to have deep knowledge of journalism, with a strong understanding of newsroom practices and news content production process in order to design relevant training programs.
- Incorporating gender stereotypes topics into formal journalism education at universities in the country. In many journalism training programs in the world, "Women in the news" is a semester-long class instead of only one short session as part of a general class. In that women-focused class, student journalists participate in various discussions, researching the issue of gender equality and women in the news



Photo: Le Thanh Hoa

from multiple perspectives including ethical guidelines, standard newsroom practices or news content monitoring. From our knowledge of journalism training in Vietnam, there has not been such a course focusing on the issue of gender stereotypes in the news in general and with regard to female leaders in particular. Thus, we recommend the introduction of a semester-long course for journalism students. The impact of this intervention may not be immediate. However, it is expected to foster long-term changes among future journalists. Activities for this work may include supporting colleges in designing courses, providing expert knowledge, engaging colleges and journalism students in the topic.

- Developing sound journalism training with a focus on changing journalists' perception of gender stereotypes and their daily routines

with regard to gender issues. If we wish to improve news media content in terms of gender stereotypes, undeniable changes need to originate from journalists or the content producers should be our major target group. Fostering changes in journalists' behavior and professional practices with respect to gender stereotypes will not be achieved without journalists recognizing what is gender-stereotypical. Using two different sets of standards, one for work and one for family, will not help ensure sustainable changes in journalists' perception of gender stereotypes. In other words, for changes in their perception of gender stereotypes and professional practices to happen, changes in journalists' understanding of gender stereotypes in their families need to happen, too. Thus, we recommend that besides focusing on gender stereotypes related to journalism work, training courses need to

aim at changing journalists' perceptions and behaviors with regard to gender issues at home. Apart from training, we also recommend communication campaigns taking journalists as the target group. Some general suggestions for campaign activities include workshops, communications publications, stickers, short films, television and radio talk shows with scenarios that journalists can relate to. These campaigns could be done in partnership with professional associations such as the Journalists' Association and Club for Young Journalists, among others. Messages for these campaigns need to show consistency and relevance to journalism.

- Organizing trainings into which gender stereotypes should be incorporated to build capacity and improve professional skills for journalists.

Institutional and organization changes in terms of gender stereotypes

- Incorporating regulations and guidelines on gender stereotypes into professional guidebooks or codes of conduct of news organizations. We recommend providing training on gender stereotypes guidelines to editorial teams so that they can apply, supervise and enforce the new rules. The target groups for this activity should be editorial senior members including editors-in-chief, deputy editors-in-chief, managing editors and section editors.
- Continuing to develop networks of core members among journalists who will serve as agent for changes by sharing their knowledge of gender equality and stereotypes to their colleagues. However, selec-

tion of core members should be based on whether the selected journalists have the ability to influence, set routines, introduce new practices or create changes in their news organizations.

Stepping up the role of social organizations in monitoring media content

- We recommend capacity building for social organizations working in the field of women's rights. These organizations should step up their role in monitoring and holding dialogues with news organizations with the goal of ensuring gender-stereotype-free news media content. Recent years of success by children rights organizations using similar monitoring mechanisms show that gender stereotypical news content against women in general and female leaders in particular could be improved through closely monitoring the content and holding timely dialogues with news organizations and journalists.
- Currently in Vietnam, a number of double standards that can create or reinforce gender stereotypes have been propagated by local women's rights organizations. An example of this is the campaign to encourage "women to be great at both work and home." Since the end of 2015, VnExpress launched a section which was part of the campaign "Honoring women who are confident advancers" under its partnership with the Vietnam Women's Union. Numerous articles with gender stereotypical content have been published in this section. Examples of the titles of these articles include: "The woman who are excellent both at work and at home," "Singer Thuy Tien: Don't just

focus on advancing in your career without paying attention to your family,” or “Five laundry tips every mother should know” among others. This is a national campaign targeting women with various activities. However, when women’s rights activists continue to cooperate with the news media to propagandize gender stereotypes through news content, it would hinder efforts to eliminate gender bias among the public. Thus, building capacity and raising awareness for workers of women’s rights organizations are crucial in any campaign and advocacy work in this area.

- Besides ongoing efforts in publishing a quarterly newsletter to point out mainstream media content that is gender stereotypical (Ban tin nhat san gioi), reactions and dialogues between social and news media organizations on this issue need to be diversified in terms of approach and level of engagement. A stronger collaboration

among social organizations working in the area of gender equality such as members of the Network of Organizations in the area of women’s rights is needed to have concerted efforts and consistent measures for news media advocacy campaigns on this issue. Ultimately, these efforts and measures need to be translated into changes in journalists’ perception of and behaviors toward gender equality and stereotypes.

- We also recommend strengthening, stepping up and extending the existing monitoring work run by the gender justice coalition. This work requires the engagement of multiple parties and should be completed under a mechanism that provides close monitoring, liaison and consultation to journalists and media outlets on a daily basis. This will have immediate impacts on the two main target groups of audience including working journalists and operating media organizations.



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