

**Gender Education Project on the Film "She Objects"**

Final Report

**Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies**

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

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## **Executive Summary**

With the collaboration of The Women's Foundation and Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Gender Education Project on the Film "She Objects" promoted gender sensitivity and media literacy by school outreach in the school year of 2015/2016. The project covered 8 secondary schools and 2 universities, in forms of classroom lessons of Liberal Studies and documentary screening with structured discussion. In total, 1,112 students participated in the teaching events, in which 1,032 students from secondary schools and 80 from 2 universities in Hong Kong.

As for the development of teaching materials for gender education, 3 teaching kits on 'Gender Role and Stereotype and Social Media', 'Self-Image and Gender Role and Identity' and 'Gender Role and Stereotype And Consumerism' are then moderated based on feedbacks from teachers and students after the trial teaching, in line with the need for values education and relevance to the curriculum of Liberal Studies. To facilitate the schools in organizing the documentary screening, a guide of structured discussion was developed. To reach a larger population of audience, teacher training workshop was conducted to brief the teachers how to trim and adopt the materials.

School outreach in the project was well received by the students of different levels. Almost 90% of secondary school students were then aware of the contents discussed in the lesson: gender roles and stereotypes, and the influence of social media and mass media on perceptions. And more than 90% of university students reported the same situations as the secondary school students. The positive feedback may imply that the contents and discussion on gender stereotypes are appropriate to adopt in educating different levels of students in Hong Kong.

Most student participants of the project took part in the evaluative survey research. The majority of secondary school students tended to think that 9 selected conventional gender specific characteristics both masculine and feminine, with 4 characteristics (Understanding, Sympathetic, Shy and Gentle) visibly more students thought as feminine. University students showed the same tendency as well. Secondary school students tended to be more gender neutral than university students, in addition to their changing perception towards traditional gender roles.

Given students' more exposure to media, while peers, family members and new media are more influential to secondary school students on gender socialization, new media and teachers are more to undergraduates.

To explore the composite effect on secondary school students' perceptions of masculine and feminine stereotypes, five factors in total are used to test their composite effect on the Masculine Characteristics Index and Feminine Characteristics Index. Masculine Characteristics Index cannot be explained by different forms of media consumption or socializing agents. Only gender is found to have effect on the score of Masculine Characteristics Index. On the other hand, feminine characteristics can be explained in terms of media consumption and gender of students. More use of online media led to the tendency to perceive feminine characteristics in a lesser feminine way. The more use of social network service, the tendency was to perceive feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine. Likewise, female students perceived the feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine. Our findings exhibit the influence of media and socializing agents are not enough to explain the perception of masculine characteristics.

# **1. Project Background**

## **1.1 Social Background**

Research shows that mass media often depict women in a way emphasizing an "ideal" but unrealistic physical appearance and their sexuality. These gendered messages throughout the media may have a profound influence on the public, particularly teenagers' perceptions about sex and body image. Influenced by the media, girls and women tend to evaluate their own value based on appearance. Many women feel pressured to conform to the beauty standards generally accepted in the society. Some of them will seek ways to alter or "disguise" their faces and bodies through make-up, slimming or even extreme measure like plastic surgery.

Although the situation in Hong Kong media seems to be relatively more positive and balanced than the past, gender stereotyping and uneven representations through the Hong Kong media is still highly visible. In addition, the rise of social media has even greater effect on the reproduction and reinforcement of gender differences and stereotypes. Social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are highly interactive platforms through which teenagers stay connected, share, comment, and debate with all the user-generated contents.

These special features such as sense of peer presence, and exchange of a multitude of visual images, suggest that social media, working via negative social comparisons and peer normative processes, can significantly influence body image concerns.

Under such circumstance, it is important for the community to come up with measures to promote gender equality and counteracting media negative impacts on teenagers

## **1.2 Highlights of Project Deliverables**

Through the gender education project based on the documentary “*She Objects*”, The Women’s Foundation and Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong jointly promoted gender sensitivity and media literacy at local secondary schools and universities in the school year of 2015/2016.

Through different classroom lessons and film screening of several themes, the project aims to encourage students to reflect on gender roles and outlook of life, so as to unleash personal potentials from stereotypical shackles. 3 teaching kits and discussion guide for film screening in the report are designed to enhance critical thinking of the young generation and raise their concerns about media impacts in the society.

Project outcomes are shared with frontline teachers at teacher training workshop, which is included in the training calendar of the Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Also, evaluative survey research was also conducted in the project to explore students’ media habits and gauge the perception of students towards gender stereotypes.

This project is also as a response toward to the advocacy of promoting gender education and conducting more gender-related research as proposed in the report *Gender Stereotypes in the Hong Kong Media: a Scoping Study* (The Women’s Foundation, 2015), under the 2013/2014 subsidy of Equal Opportunities Commission.

## **2. Project Deliverables**

## **2.1 Teaching Events**

### 2.1.1 School outreach – Timeline, content and beneficiaries

For **1,112 students** of different abilities and interests in the school year of **2015/2016**

When?	Where? Who?	What?
<b>2 Universities</b>		
March 23	2 lectures at 2 universities	On self image & gender identity
April 1		On self image & gender identity
April 22		On gender stereotype and social media
<b>8 Secondary schools</b> 5 events of film screening with structured discussion • 3 Liberal Studies lessons		
April 14	S.1 Liberal Studies lesson	On self image and gender identity
May 6	School-based forum for S.1 - S.3 students	Emcee training and material preparation based on the video clips extracted from the documentary
May 10		Film screening and student-led discussion at school forum
May 11		Film screening and student-led discussion at school forum
Jun 23	School-level post-exam activity for S.1 - S.2 students	Film screening and structured discussion
Jun 24	Collaborative event of school library and Liberal Studies for S.4 students	Film screening and structured discussion
Jun 27	Collaborative event of school library and Liberal Studies for S.5 students	Film screening and structured discussion
Jun 29	A themed event at Other Learning Experience week for S.3 and S.4 project learning	On consumerism
Jul 4	A post-exam activity of Liberal Studies Society for S.5 students	Film screening and structured discussion
Jul 5	A post-exam activity of Liberal Studies Society for S.5 more-able students	- On consumerism - As a follow-up consolidation after its gender-related drama workshop in June

Students' lesson evaluation is reported in Section 3.

### **2.1.2 Teacher Training Workshop – Content and beneficiaries**

As the dissemination of project deliverable, the teacher training workshop aims to share the experiences of school outreach with the frontline Liberal Studies (LS) teachers, as well as to demonstrate how to adopt the teaching materials in LS lessons and other school events e.g. film screening and forum.

Scheduled on 19<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 with 30 participants, the event was on the teachers' training calendar of the Education Bureau, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Course code: CDI020170727). At the occasion, officers from Education Bureau also encouraged the teachers to apply concrete examples and issues in teaching the knowledge and concepts of gender roles and stereotype. In designing the relevant teaching strategy, various resources of teaching and learning should be adopted from different channels to guide the students to understand the gender issues from multiple perspectives and from different contexts (e.g. China and different parts of the world), in order to build up the values of gender equality among students.

The project outcomes will be available to all serving registered LS teachers for knowledge enrichment, in the hope of enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning LS. Teachers' feedback on the design and implementation of teaching plans is reported in Section 3.

## **2.2 Teaching materials**

## 2.2.1 Overview

### 2.2.1.1 Design Rationale

This teaching package was designed as an introduction for broadening students' knowledge, and to enhance their *social* awareness and *personal* reflection towards gendered messages and personal growth in the *social context* of Hong Kong.

The teaching materials guide students to:

- understand more about gendered message and concepts in Hong Kong;
- identify main ideas and impacts about gender stereotyping from video analysis;
- explore how media creates and exacerbates gender biases and stereotypes; and
- build up the positive attitudes and perception of gender towards oneself and others

We hope this teaching package can help teachers master the extracted segments from the film, "*She Objects*", as key motivating device for the classroom discussions, at school events of *Moral and Civic Education*, and lessons of *Liberal Studies*, particularly relevant to the Module 1 Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships. The teaching plans are also practical for teaching junior secondary school students of the Key Learning Area "Personal, Social & Humanities Education", to enrich their knowledge in gender sensitivity and media literacy.

## 2.2.1.2 Relevance to the Liberal Studies Curriculum

### Themes of 3 Teaching Plans in the Project

### Relevant themes and enquiry questions of Liberal Studies Curriculum

<p>(1) Gender role and stereotype and Social Media</p>	<p><i>Theme 1 Understanding Oneself</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do messages and values from the media influence adolescents?</li><li>• What are the current salient trends that pose particular challenges and opportunities to adolescents in Hong Kong and how do they respond to these trends?</li></ul> <p><i>Theme 2 Interpersonal relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are adolescents' identities developed and roles embedded within different relationships?</li><li>• How does communication technology influence adolescents' relationships with others?</li></ul>
<p>(2) Self-image and Gender role and identity --- A case study of a stylist, a pop singer and an ex-pop star in Hong Kong</p>	<p><i>Theme 1 Understanding Oneself</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do messages and values from the media influence adolescents?</li><li>• What are the current salient trends that pose particular challenges and opportunities to adolescents in Hong Kong and how do they respond to these trends?</li><li>• What factors influence the self-esteem of adolescents? How is it related to adolescents' behavior and aspiration for the future?</li></ul> <p><i>Theme 2 Interpersonal relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are adolescents' identities developed and roles embedded within different relationships?</li><li>• How does adolescents in Hong Kong reflect upon their interpersonal conflicts and develop relationships with others?</li></ul>
<p>(3) Gender role and stereotype and Consumerism</p>	<p><i>Theme 1 Understanding Oneself</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do messages and values from the media influence adolescents?</li><li>• What are the current salient trends that pose particular challenges and opportunities to adolescents in Hong Kong and how do they respond to these trends?</li></ul> <p><i>Theme 2 Interpersonal relationships</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are adolescents' identities developed and roles embedded within different relationships?</li></ul>

Source: Curriculum Development Council (2014). *Liberal Studies Curriculum and Assessment Guide (Secondary 4-6)*. Hong Kong: Education Bureau.

Design of teaching materials is also in line with the ‘teaching and learning focus’ highlighted in *Liberal Studies Curriculum Resources Booklet Series: Personal Development and Interpersonal Relationships*. (Education Bureau, 2016). Retrieved from the Resource Booklet, the concept ‘Roles’ is also introduced in all the teaching plans accordingly.

Besides, rundown and lesson activities used in the three teaching plans and discussion guide of film screening are with reference to ‘overall design rationale of teaching and learning exemplar’ of the Resource Booklet. Different from the drama approach adopted in the teaching and learning exemplar, our teaching plan includes role play as lesson activity, so as to allow the teachers to accommodate the limits of lesson time and students’ workload. More details are as follows:

i) Teaching and Learning Focus

on *Identity and role expectations within different relationships* (p.14)

- “While taking part in the activities of a variety of groups, adolescents need to **understand the identities, roles and expectations within different relationships**, master the behavioral norms of various social roles and formulate personal concepts of values and behavioural style. They also need to cope with opposing ideas and resolve conflicts within groups.”
  
- “Teachers may consider taking examples from the news or daily life anecdotes to analyse how this data reflects gender role expectations in society and whether gender stereotypes exist to understand **how gender roles affect people’s behaviours**. In addition, teachers are advised to select some television programmes as an example to discuss **why traditional**

**concepts of gender roles still affect the views and expectations presented by the media or adopted by some people in the society to let students reflect on the value of gender equality.”**

ii) Basic Concept: Roles (p.32)

- “Roles refer to the corresponding behavioral patterns and attitudes that individuals perform in accordance with the prescribed positions and expectations by the society. Roles form the foundation of social groups or organizations. Without these roles, such organizations will be dissolved or their nature will be changed.”
  
- “In addition, the general public **tends to stereotype certain roles**. For example, girls are gentle while boys are tough. In the past, clear gender roles helped maintain the stability of the family and society. However, as our society has become increasingly equal and the socio-economic status of women has risen, the gender role division has become blurred. In fact, the traditional division of family roles “Men as Breadwinners and Women as Homemakers” is not necessarily inevitable.”

iii) Learning and Teaching Exemplar - Gender Roles in the New Generation (p.152)

- “As the modern society gradually moves towards equality with women gaining higher socioeconomic status, gender roles in Hong Kong today are no longer the same as they used to be in the old days. The exemplar is designed **to let students learn about the public views on gender roles nowadays and understand the public beliefs and expectations about the gender roles** in the workplace and the household in Hong Kong today.”

- “Through case studies and various surveys, **students are guided to think about whether gender stereotyping is still common in Hong Kong nowadays and then think about the changes and continuity in the gender roles.** Through a drama activity, students could **reflect on values related to gender equality** and investigate the roles taken by adolescents within the family.”

Also, the assessment concern and its level of difficulty are also of the paramount consideration in developing the teaching materials, with the view to facilitate the teaching and learning of teachers and students in preparing for the public examination. Thus, design of the teaching plans makes reference to the data-response questions of Liberal Studies in Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), namely Paper 2 of 2012 Practice Paper and Paper 1 of 2013 HKDSE on gender roles and expectation, and the values behind.

Different assessment tasks, together with various lesson activities, are then to echo the elements of gender role and stereotypes in the curriculum of Liberal Studies. It is also for catering for learner diversity in mastering the gender-related knowledge and concepts.

Also, to build up the media literacy of students, instead of introducing the definition nor the step-by-step procedures of critical review, the discussion on re-examining the role of mass media and social media in information flow is based on the Basic Concept ‘*media*’ in the Resource Booklet (p.37-38):

“Mass media, also known as media, generally refers to various tools that deliver and transfer messages from disseminators to receivers, including movies, TV, radio and printed text (such as books, magazines and newspapers). During the 21st century with the widespread use of the Internet, the media technologies have become more diversified. As a result, the speed of transferring messages of modern electronic media and the interactive new media far exceeds that of traditional print media.

Amid the fast-moving development of information technology, social media (such as social networking websites and Weibo) have become the tools and platforms for people to share opinions, experiences and views. On the other hand, due to their highly interactive nature, social media networks can help companies establish relationships with customers. They are therefore used by many sectors for marketing purposes to promote their businesses.

**Our lives are often occupied by media of various forms and the media messages usually consist of different ideologies and value judgment, which significantly affect the thoughts and behaviours of their audience.**

Adolescents, especially those who are still developing their personalities, are **particularly susceptible to these influences**. It is therefore vital for adolescents to understand the messages and means of expression of media products. They should also analyse the impacts, merits and shortcomings of the media, and the following attitudes should be adopted in receiving media information:

- Verifying the sources of information (are they credible?), identifying their stances (are they supported by logical and reasonable justifications?) and previous performance

- Collecting, understanding and analysing relevant information from multiple perspectives
- Making comparisons with other information and accepting information that contrasts with their own viewpoints”

### 2.2.1.3 Background of the documentary "*She Objects*"

“Commissioned by The Women’s Foundation, in partnership with Women Helping Women, and directed by rising young talent, 27-year old Nicola Fan, *She Objects* is the first documentary of its kind in Hong Kong to explore how traditional and new forms of media create and exacerbate gender stereotypes with often damaging consequences.

At once provocative and inspiring, *She Objects* challenges viewers to think critically about and resist the biased and often dehumanising portrayal of women in media. The film explores the impact of this on Hong Kong society and breaks new ground in bridging local, regional and global research and trends. Featuring engaging insights from celebrities including singer-writer-actress Joyce Cheng and real-life stories and interviews with leading experts, the documentary explores the correlation between the media’s portrayal of women and eating disorders and self-esteem issues for girls, violence against women and girls, and the erosion of female ambition, and how social media and the selfie culture are contributing to the phenomenon.

The film’s call to action is for all of us – from governments to the media to brands to individuals – to be more thoughtful about this issue and to take action to object. Individuals in particular can stop being passive consumers and instead use social media and other platforms to bring about real and positive change.” --- Derived from ‘ABOUT THE DOCUMENTARY’, the official website of “*She Objects*”

## 2.2.2 List of Teaching Materials Developed and Some Practical Advices

i) 5 Choices of Warm-up Tasks	ii) Teaching kit (1) Gender Stereotype and Social Media	vi) Further reading – Reference list for students and teachers
	iii) Teaching kit (2) Self-image and Gender identity – A case study of a stylist, a pop singer and an ex-pop star in Hong Kong	
	iv) Teaching kit (3) Gender Stereotype and Consumerism	
	v) Discussion Guide for Film Screening – Note and Questions	

### **More tips about adopting the 5 warm-up tasks and 3 teaching kits**

To allow more flexibility for teachers, 5 warm-up tasks are developed with presentation slides and other ready-to-use teaching aids. It is to fit in the very tight teaching schedule of teachers and cater for learner diversity.

With different objectives of teaching and learning, 3 teaching kits for LS lessons include various themes, concepts and video segments of She Objects. The materials are expected make the knowledge enrichment educational and fun, together with the direct teaching of concepts, suitable for exam-oriented lessons. Each teaching kit consists of teachers' guide, video segments extracted from She Objects, other teaching aids e.g. presentation slides, bingo & role play cards, concept list and assessment task(s). The use of Google Forms for poll enables the teachers to collect and present the real-time response of students, which makes the classroom discussion dynamic and develop the group for further discussion and reflection afterwards. Besides, including the up-to-date search result of different keywords (e.g. 'Goddess' and 'God' of pop idols) from search engines for presentation slides can inject students' everyday

experience into the discussion. Through the comparison of graphics of idols in different ethnics, contexts and history, changing concepts of beauty is made a concrete idea to students and construct the ground for reviewing one's expectation and the need for conformity. It is to guide the student to re-think the gendered messages ingrained in the media portrayal which are of much relevance to personal growth of individuals.

### **More tips about film screening and its structured discussion:**

To cater for the needs of teachers in organizing educational events of different functional teams and purposes, discussion guide and note of film screening are prepared, to make the crowd control easier and teachers' workload lighter. This set of teaching materials was designed when the work team of School Outreach realized the relevant demand of teaching materials from teachers in gender education.

Instead of showing the whole film, segments of video clips are extracted from the documentary "*She Objects*", so as to bring in the best learning experience for students to participate in structured discussion when students get fresh memory to the documentary content and are spongy to receive more focused messages, which are constructive conditions for values education. It is also to exclude some topics including bullying in school campus, compensated dating and sexual desires of adolescents, which can take much time for in-depth and comprehensive discussion among student in, preferably, small groups. The favourable condition of this discussion includes the teachers who understand much about the very personal experience and family background of students, so as to take care of the emotional needs of students. Such topics are then also be sensitive to and challenging to handle some conservative schools and teachers.

Also from the experiences of school outreach, the attention span of students and operational needs of school for event duration posed many challenges to programme execution. When adopting the teaching materials of film screening, delivery skills and charisma of moderator should be put into consideration to arouse students' interests, both male and female students, and handle the interaction with students right after their sharing on personal experience and ideas from group presentation. Moderator should be confident and efficient to engage the students to contribute ideas to group discussion and, more importantly, build up the trust between the facilitator and the audients right at the first encounter.

Reference list is also prepared to facilitate the lesson preparation by teachers, and self-directed learning of students who are interested in the topic, in order to extent the teaching and learning outside the confine of classroom. Teachers can assign reference reading appropriate to the abilities and interest of students.

The full package of teaching materials will be submitted to The Women's Foundation after further moderation based on valuable feedback from different stakeholders. Sample teaching materials on self-image, gender role and identity used in the classroom teaching during school outreach are placed in Appendix I.

### **3. Findings of Evaluative Survey Research**

### **3.1 Research Design and Administration**

Two questionnaires were designed to gauge the perception of students towards gender stereotypes. The research was designed to administer as pre-lesson and post-lesson evaluative surveys. Some questions asked in the two questionnaires were identical, including background information and perceptions of some selected gender roles. The post-lesson evaluation contained more questions to evaluate the teaching effectiveness, ask for students' comments, and measure perceptions of gender stereotypes. The questions on gender stereotypes are used to compare and contrast with the corresponding survey findings conducted in 2007 by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC 2009).

In total, 1,112 students participated in the teaching lessons, in which 1,032 students from 8 secondary schools and 80 from 2 universities in Hong Kong. The teaching lessons were conducted in Cantonese.

Initially it was planned to have students answered the pre-lesson questionnaire some days before the lesson was conducted. However, due to avoiding overload of school teachers, the pre-lesson questionnaires were actually administered just before the start of each lesson. The majority of post-lesson questionnaires were answered immediately after the lesson ended. Due to tight class schedules, not every student had time to answer the questionnaire after the lesson. We collected as many questionnaires as we could immediately after the lessons, and tried to seek teachers' cooperation to collect for us afterwards.

## 3.2 Findings from the Survey

### 3.2.1 Lesson Evaluation

#### 3.2.1.1 Secondary School Students

Six items were used to evaluate the clarity of teaching contents. Table 3.1 reports that almost 90% of secondary school students were aware of the relevant contents discussed in the lesson. The teaching contents covered gender roles and stereotypes, and also the influence of social media and mass media on perceptions of such roles and stereotypes.

Table 3.1 Got following messages from the lesson? (Secondary Students)

	Yes	No	
	%	%	(N)
1) Gender stereotyping in HK advertisement	88.9	11.1	(783)
2) Reinforcing gender stereotypes in social media	87.4	12.6	(783)
3) Female stereotype in mass media	91.6	8.4	(782)
4) Sex appeal in HK advertisement	66.8	33.2	(782)
5) Respect different genders	88.5	11.5	(782)
6) Mainstream gender roles expectation affects personal growth	87.1	12.9	(780)

Another 8 items were asked to evaluate teaching effectiveness of the lesson. They covered the effect on students in understanding gender roles and stereotypes, and also the performance of the instructor. Table 3.2 reports again that almost 90% of secondary school students found the lesson helpful to their understanding gender issues in Hong Kong. Teaching materials, video and the performance of instructor also helped them learn in the lesson.

The positive evaluation from the secondary school students indicate that the current education project is effective and suitable to conduct in local secondary education community. We hope the teaching materials to be released for school teachers to use will also bring about the same level of success in the future.

Table 3.2 Teaching Evaluation (Secondary Students)

Do you agree the followings?	Strongly agree / Agree %	Strongly disagree / Disagree %	(N)
1) Lesson helps me understand gender stereotypes in HK.	90.7	9.3	(778)
2) Lesson helps me reflect on gender biases.	88.3	11.7	(781)
3) Lesson helps me understand gender relationships deeper.	87.0	13.0	(782)
4) Lesson raises my concern of gender equality.	87.4	12.6	(782)
5) Lesson helps me understand media construction of gender roles.	88.5	11.5	(782)
6) Teaching materials help me understand course contents.	85.6	14.4	(782)
7) Video helps me understand course contents.	88.5	11.5	(782)
8) Instructor's lecturing helps me understand course contents.	87.7	12.3	(782)

### 3.2.1.2 University Students

University students showed hugely favourable to the clarity of teaching contents. Table 3.3 reports that more than 90% of university students were aware that the lesson discussed gender roles and stereotypes, and the influence of social media and mass media on perceptions of such roles and stereotypes.

Table 3.3 Got following messages from the lesson? (University Students)

	Yes	No	
	%	%	(N)
1) Gender stereotyping in HK advertisement	97.7	2.3	(43)
2) Reinforcing gender stereotype in social media	97.7	2.3	(44)
3) Female stereotype in mass media	95.6	4.4	(45)
4) Sex appeal in HK advertisement	66.7	33.3	(15)
5) Respect different genders	90.9	9.1	(44)
6) Mainstream gender roles expectation affects personal growth	90.5	9.5	(42)

Table 3.4 reports again that more than 90% of university students found the lesson helpful to their understanding gender issues in Hong Kong. Teaching materials, video and the performance of instructor also helped them learn in the lesson.

Table 3.4 Teaching Evaluation (University Students)

Do you agree the followings?	Strongly agree / Agree %	Strongly disagree / Disagree %	(N)
1) Lesson helps me understand gender stereotypes in HK.	93.4	6.6	(45)
2) Lesson helps me reflect on gender biases.	82.2	17.8	(45)
3) Lesson helps me understand gender relationships deeper.	93.3	6.7	(45)
4) Lesson raises my concern of gender equality.	88.9	11.1	(45)
5) Lesson helps me understand media construction of gender roles.	97.8	2.2	(45)
6) Teaching materials help me understand course contents.	95.6	4.4	(45)
7) Video helps me understand course contents.	97.8	2.2	(45)
8) Instructor's lecturing helps me understand course contents.	97.8	2.2	(45)

Secondary school and university students positively evaluated towards the contents and teaching of the lessons. University students showed favourable responses to a greater extent than secondary school students. Such positive feedback may imply that the contents and discussion on gender stereotypes are appropriate to adopt in educating different levels of students in Hong Kong, with the help of suitably designed teaching materials.

### 3.2.2 Masculine and Feminine Stereotypes

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) conducted a survey on the public perception of portrayal of female gender in the Hong Kong media in 2007 (EOC

2009). The target respondents were age 18 or above. The sample was different from the present evaluative survey. The demographics of respondents from the present survey are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (%)

Secondary Students		University Students	
Gender	(N=713)	Gender	(N=44)
Female	76.7	Female	70.5
Male	23.3	Male	29.5
Age		Age	
	(N=697)		(N=43)
12-14	62.6	18-19	41.9
15-17	34.3	20-24	55.8
18-20	3.0	25	2.3
Place of birth		Place of birth	
	(N=708)		(N=43)
Hong Kong	83.8	Hong Kong	79.1
Not in Hong Kong	16.2	Not in Hong Kong	20.9

The demographic characteristics are non-comparable to the EOC 2007 survey in which adults of aged 18 and above were included. However, we may use the EOC findings as the benchmark to examine to what extent our students are near or away from the adults.

As report in the Study on Public Perception of Portrayal of Female Gender in the Hong Kong Media (EOC 2009), 9 items on masculine and feminine characteristics

were used to examine the masculine and feminine characteristics as perceived by the respondents. Table 3.6 is reproduced from the EOC report. The report reads "[the Table] shows that for Leadership abilities, Defends beliefs, Independent, Aggressive, Understanding, [and] Assertive, the majority of the respondents thought they were both masculine and feminine. The exceptions were Sympathetic, Shy and Gentle, which were all seen more often as feminine" (EOC 2009: 49).

Table 3.6 EOC 2007 Survey: Response to Characteristics (% of the respondents)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Leadership abilities	40.7	55.0	4.1
Independent	27.7	54.6	17.7
Defends beliefs	29.5	53.9	16.7
Aggressive	33.1	53.5	13.4
Understanding	7.0	51.9	41.1
Assertive	34.7	50.2	15.1
Sympathetic	4.4	46.7	48.8
Shy	14.9	35.2	49.9
Gentle	3.1	17.0	79.9

Source: Table 8, p. 49, EOC 2009

Table 3.7 shows that the majority of secondary school students tended to think that all 9 characteristics both masculine and feminine. However, the "feminine" proportions of Understanding, Sympathetic, Shy and Gentle followed the same pattern of the EOC survey. These 4 characteristics had visibly more students thought as feminine.

Table 3.7 Secondary Students' Response to Characteristics (% of the respondents)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Leadership abilities	12.4	85.4	2.2	(711)
Independent	11.1	83.3	5.6	(712)
Defends beliefs	11.4	84.5	4.1	(710)
Aggressive	13.7	82.7	3.6	(710)
Understanding	3.4	78.0	18.6	(710)
Assertive	11.5	83.3	5.2	(711)
Sympathetic	2.3	73.9	23.8	(709)
Shy	3.7	51.4	44.9	(710)
Gentle	2.8	55.4	41.8	(708)

For university students (Table 3.8), they showed the same tendency as the secondary students. Understanding, Sympathetic, Shy and Gentle had visibly more students thought as feminine, follow the same pattern of the EOC survey.

Table 3.8 University Students' Response to Characteristics (% of the respondents)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Leadership abilities	20.0	80.0	0.0	(25)
Independent	11.5	80.8	7.7	(26)
Defends beliefs	19.2	76.9	3.9	(26)
Aggressive	19.2	80.8	0.0	(26)
Understanding	0.0	76.9	23.1	(26)
Assertive	15.4	84.6	0.0	(26)
Sympathetic	0.0	61.5	38.5	(26)
Shy	0.0	50.0	50.0	(26)
Gentle	0.0	42.3	57.7	(26)

Although the EOC survey was conducted 9 years ago, and the target respondents were adults aged 18 or above, the findings are still a benchmark for local research. With reference to the EOC findings, we may interpret that the students in our sample showed stronger tendency to think the 9 characteristics gender neutral.

### 3.2.3 Masculine and Feminine Characteristics: a Trend of Gender Neutrality

EOC had surveyed the perceptions of the general public towards the masculine and feminine characteristics twice in 1997 and 2007. The mean scores in Table 3.9 were "scaled using a scale of -1 for very masculine, -0.5 for masculine, 0 for both, +0.5 for feminine and +1.0 for very feminine to make it easier to see the stereotypes" (EOC 2009: 61). It was found that for the male characteristics, the change in mean scores were of positive values (except "Defending own beliefs"), meaning that the general public became less likely to rate them as masculine from 1997 to 2007 (EOC 2009: 61). Likewise, except "Sympathetic", the female characteristics were seen to a lesser extent as feminine, illustrated by the negative change in mean scores.

Table 3.9 EOC 1997-2007 Changing Gender Stereotypes

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>2007 Mean Score</b>	<b>1997 Mean Score</b>	<b>2007-1997 Mean Score Change</b>
Having leadership abilities	-0.24	-0.27	0.06
Defending own beliefs	-0.08	-0.04	-0.08
Independent	-0.06	-0.19	0.26
Aggressive	-0.12	-0.34	0.43
Assertive	-0.13	-0.28	0.30
<b><i>Masculine Characteristics Index</i></b>	<b><i>-0.13</i></b>	<b><i>-0.22</i></b>	<b><i>0.19</i></b>
Shy	0.20	0.26	-0.13
Gentle	0.47	0.51	-0.08
Sympathetic	0.25	0.20	0.09
Understanding	0.18	0.21	-0.05
<b><i>Feminine Characteristics Index</i></b>	<b><i>0.27</i></b>	<b><i>0.30</i></b>	<b><i>-0.04</i></b>

Source: Table 15, p. 62, EOC 2009

Table 3.10 shows that students in 2016 followed the general trend of perceiving more gender neutral to the traditional masculine and feminine characteristics. They were in line with the direction of change from 1997 to 2007 as reported by EOC. Secondary school students tended to be more gender neutral than university students. In particular, the masculine characteristics were almost regarded as neutral description to both male and female, as the scores were approaching to zero value. Feminine characteristics, on the other hand, were found to still have a trace of female stereotype. At the present stage, we cannot conclude that the younger the generation is, the tendency towards gender neutral would be more obvious. Gender education is not yet included in the curriculum of secondary education in Hong Kong. To ensure that our younger generations in the future will uphold gender neutral attitudes, any form of gender education is worth to introduce to secondary school students.

Table 3.10 Students' Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>2016 Secondary School Students Mean Score</b>	<b>2016 University Students Mean Score</b>	<b>EOC 2007 Mean Score</b>
Having leadership abilities	-0.06	-0.10	-0.24
Defending own beliefs	-0.04	-0.06	-0.08
Independent	-0.03	0.00	-0.06
Aggressive	-0.05	-0.08	-0.12
Assertive	-0.03	-0.06	-0.13
<b><i>Masculine Characteristics Index</i></b>	<b><i>-0.04</i></b>	<b><i>-0.10</i></b>	<b><i>-0.13</i></b>
Shy	0.22	0.3	0.20
Gentle	0.21	0.3	0.47
Sympathetic	0.12	0.2	0.25
Understanding	0.08	0.1	0.18
<b><i>Feminine Characteristics Index</i></b>	<b><i>0.17</i></b>	<b><i>0.2</i></b>	<b><i>0.27</i></b>

Table 3.11 further examines the gender difference in perceptions of gender stereotypes among secondary students. With regard to the masculine characteristics, female students perceived all as neutral description to both genders. On the other hand, male students rated the characteristics as slightly masculine. The differences in perceptions between male and female students were found to be statistically significant. The magnitude of difference in very item was about 0.1, which is not a big gap on a scale from -1.0 to +1.0, 0 as neutral.

On perceiving the feminine characteristics, female students rated slightly towards the feminine direction, although the magnitude was small. Male students also perceived

the characteristics a bit feminine, but to a lesser extent than their female counterparts. The difference between female and male students was less than 0.1 (on a scale from -1 to +1) in each item, and all but 1 were found statistically significant.

Table 3.11 Gender Difference in Perceptions of Gender Stereotypes  
among Secondary School Students

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>		<b>p</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	
Having leadership abilities	-0.02	-0.17	***
Defending own beliefs	-0.01	-0.13	***
Independent	0.01	-0.17	***
Aggressive	-0.02	-0.16	***
Assertive	0.00	-0.14	***
<b><i>Masculine</i></b>	<b><i>-0.01</i></b>	<b><i>-0.16</i></b>	<b><i>***</i></b>
<b><i>Characteristics Index</i></b>			
Shy	0.24	0.15	**
Gentle	0.22	0.19	<b>n.s.</b>
Sympathetic	0.13	0.07	*
Understanding	0.09	0.03	*
<b><i>Feminine</i></b>	<b><i>0.18</i></b>	<b><i>0.12</i></b>	<b><i>**</i></b>
<b><i>Characteristics Index</i></b>			

\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ , n.s. = not statistically significant

Since the sample size of university students participating in this research was small, the statistical test for difference between female and male students is then not performed here.

### **3.2.4 Perceptions of Gender Roles**

The perceptions of different gender roles by secondary school students were in line with the findings in previous sections. Table 3.12 reports that some traditional gender specific roles involving personal interests or attainment were visibly overturned. For example, secondary school students disagreed that "sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters". They agreed the "women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men". They also agreed that "men should share in household tasks". They disagreed that "it is acceptable a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first", as well as "beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career". Other traditional gender roles prescribing gender division were not visibly supported by the secondary school students.

Table 3.12 Perceptions of Gender Roles by Secondary School Students

	Mean Score *	(N)
<b><i>Gender Stereotypes</i></b>		
Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1.8	(714)
Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.	2.1	(714)
Woman should keep slim body shape and wear makeup to attract men.	2.1	(712)
Men should be the major bread winner in family.	2.2	(702)
<b><i>Career</i></b>		
Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.	3.3	(709)
Beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career.	1.8	(710)
No matter how successful in career, only having marriage and a family can offer a woman happiness.	2.6	(712)
<b><i>Dating</i></b>		
The man should pay for the date with a woman.	2.2	(710)
The initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.	2.4	(710)
<b><i>Family</i></b>		
Men should share in household tasks.	3.1	(704)
It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.	1.9	(704)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

Table 3.13 further examines the gender difference in perceiving gender roles. Female students in general were more resistant to take up traditional gender role expectation on females. Comparing with their male counterparts, female students were more obviously uncomfortable with lesser opportunities in education and career

development, subsuming women career under marriage, family and beauty. That being said, both male and female students perceived gender roles largely in the same direction. Both genders did not tend to endorse traditional gender roles.

Table 3.13 Gender Difference in Perceptions of Gender Roles  
among Secondary School Students

	Mean Score #		
	Female	Male	p
<b><i>Gender Stereotypes</i></b>			
Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1.6	2.2	***
Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.	2.0	2.5	***
Woman should keep slim body shape and wear makeup to attract men.	2.0	2.3	***
Men should be the major bread winner in family.	2.1	2.5	***
<b><i>Career</i></b>			
Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.	3.3	3.1	***
Beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career.	1.8	2.0	**
No matter how successful in career, only having marriage and a family can offer a woman happiness.	2.6	2.6	n.s.
<b><i>Dating</i></b>			
The man should pay for the date with a woman.	2.0	2.1	*
The initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.	2.4	2.4	n.s.
<b><i>Family</i></b>			
Men should share in household tasks.	3.2	2.9	***
It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.	1.8	2.2	***

# Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

\*\*\* p < 0.001, \*\* p < 0.001, \* p < 0.05, n.s. = not statistically significant

The perceptions of gender roles were also measured before the lesson started. Table 3.14 presents the change in perceptions among secondary school students. Although the changes were found statistically significant, the magnitudes were small, not more than 0.2 on a 4-point scale. The small magnitudes are not unexpected, however. First, most of the respondents answered the two questionnaires just before and after the lesson. Therefore, the perceptions were not expected to be changed drastically in such short duration, as the questions being asked did not involve correct or wrong answers. Secondly, education or socialization would not be effective in hour time, especially involving change in attitudes and perceptions. The results here show that the lesson at least offer students opportunity to learn about gender issues. The change in perceptions (although small) was mostly in the direction of challenging traditional thinking. It was a sign that the teaching contents and materials were effective in introducing new ideas to students.

Table 3.14 Change in Perceptions of Gender Roles by Secondary School Students

	Mean Score #		p
	Before Lesson	After Lesson	
<b><i>Gender Stereotypes</i></b>			
Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1.9	1.8	***
Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.	2.3	2.1	***
Woman should keep slim body shape and wear makeup to attract men.	2.1	2.1	n.s.
Men should be the major bread winner in family.	2.4	2.2	***
<b><i>Career</i></b>			
Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.	3.4	3.3	***
Beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career.	1.7	1.8	**
No matter how successful in career, only having marriage and a family can offer a woman happiness.	2.8	2.6	***
<b><i>Dating</i></b>			
The man should pay for the date with a woman.	2.1	2.2	**
The initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.	2.6	2.4	***
<b><i>Family</i></b>			
Men should share in household tasks.	3.2	3.1	*
It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.	2.0	1.9	n.s.

# Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

\*\*\* p < 0.001, \*\* p < 0.01, \* p < 0.05, n.s. = not statistically significant

University students also overturned some traditional gender specific roles involving personal interests or attainment. From Table 3.15, university students disagreed that "sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters", "the man should pay for the date with a woman ", as well as "beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career". They agreed the "women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men", and "men should share in household tasks". They did not visibly support other traditional gender roles prescribing gender division.

The sample size of university students participating in this research was small, therefore the statistical test for difference between female and male students, and also change in perceptions before and after lesson are not performed here.

Table 3.15 Perceptions of Gender Roles by University Students

	Mean Score *	(N)
<b><i>Gender Stereotypes</i></b>		
Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.	1.9	(714)
Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.	2.4	(714)
Woman should keep slim body shape and wear makeup to attract men.	2.3	(712)
Men should be the major bread winner in family.	2.4	(702)
<b><i>Career</i></b>		
Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.	3.2	(709)
Beauty of a woman will earn her a wealthy husband, therefore no need to work hard in career.	1.9	(710)
No matter how successful in career, only having marriage and a family can offer a woman happiness.	2.6	(712)
<b><i>Dating</i></b>		
The man should pay for the date with a woman.	1.9	(710)
The initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.	2.6	(710)
<b><i>Family</i></b>		
Men should share in household tasks.	3.2	(704)
It is acceptable for a woman to have a career, but marriage and family should come first.	2.2	(704)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

### 3.2.5 Online Media Consumption for Information on Gender Issues

#### Discussed in Lesson

Students were asked to recollect their online media consumption in the past 4 weeks for searching information on any gender issues discussed in the lesson. The question

itself did not state any specific gender issue to recollect, but a general recollection of what had been introduced in the lesson. Table 3.16 shows the 4 most used online media channels by secondary school students, namely multimedia websites (e.g. Youtube), search engines, music/movie websites, and online games. Other online channels such as forum, blog, shopping, local media websites (e.g. newspapers) were rarely used by secondary students.

Table 3.16 Most used Online Media to Search for Information on Gender Issues by Secondary Students

	<b>% Used</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Multimedia websites (e.g. Youtube)	79.3	(714)
Search engines	73.0	(714)
Music/movie download websites	48.7	(714)
Online games	33.5	(713)

The first 2 most used online channels by university students were the same as secondary students, i.e., multimedia websites (e.g. search engines) and search engines. Some other sources shared lesser popularity among university students. Table 3.17 reports the results. As their cognitive power is expected to be higher than secondary school students, university students using more diverse sources of information is not surprising.

The multimedia websites and search engines becoming the most used online channels are not unexpected. The collapse of popularity of local media, even though they provide online version, is not shocking but poses a challenge to educators on gender issues. It implies that attention should not be solely placed on traditional media contents. On the other hand, the gigantic volume of online media contents will far

exceed the capacity of educators to handle.

Table 3.17 Most used Online Media to Search for Information on

Gender Issues by University Students

	<b>% Used</b>	<b>(N)</b>
Multimedia websites (e.g. Youtube)	84.4	(45)
Search engines	78.8	(45)
Online Forum	37.8	(45)
Music/movie download websites	35.6	(45)
Online shopping websites	35.6	(45)
Online games	31.1	(45)
Commentary websites	31.1	(45)
Local media websites (e.g. newspaper)	28.9	(45)

When students were asked about the time spent on online media to search for information on gender issues discussed in the lesson, the results suggest they were already interested in knowing something about gender issues. Table 3.18 shows that only 8.3% of secondary students did not search information on gender issues. Nearly 60% of them spent 3 hours or more per week on gender issues.

Table 3.18 Time used per week in Online Media to Search for

Information on Gender Issues by Secondary School Students

	<b>%</b>
Not used	8.3
Less than 1 hour	14.5
1 hour to less than 3 hours	20.2
3 hours to less than 5 hours	22.6
5 hours or more	34.4
Total	100.0
(N)	(712)

For university students, only 4.4% did not spend time on gender issues. Nearly 70% of them used 3 hours or more per week to search information on gender issues (Table 3.19).

Table 3.19 Time used per week in Online Media to Search for Information on Gender Issues by University Students

	%
Not used	4.4
Less than 1 hour	13.3
1 hour to less than 3 hours	13.3
3 hours to less than 5 hours	15.6
5 hours or more	53.4
Total	100.0
(N)	(45)

Online social network service (SNS) is another popular communication channel in online world. Secondary and university students also commonly used 4 types of SNS to know and discuss about gender issues. Whatsapp and Facebook were the two most popular ones, followed by Instagram and Snapchat. The latter two, however, are comparative more well-received among younger generation. Educators then must keep in pace with the young adults in order to communicate effectively with them. Table 3.20 reports the results.

Table 3.20 Most used Social Network Service to Search for Information on and / or Discuss Gender Issues by Secondary School Students

	Secondary Students		University Students	
	% Used	(N)	% Used	(N)
Whatsapp	82.4	(714)	88.5	(26)
Facebook	73.7	(715)	80.0	(45)
Instagram	67.1	(717)	64.4	(45)
Snapchat	44.5	(717)	36.4	(44)

Regarding the time used in SNS, Tables 3.21 and 3.22 report that students were not heavy users for gender issues. About 20% of secondary school students and university students did not use SNS for gender issues. Only 22.6% of secondary school students and 20.0% of university students used 5 hours or more weekly to know and discuss gender issues.

Table 3.21 Time used per week in Social Network Service to Search for Information on and / or Discuss Gender Issues by Secondary School Students

	%
Not used	23.2
Less than 1 hour	20.5
1 hour to less than 3 hours	17.7
3 hours to less than 5 hours	16.0
5 hours or more	22.6
Total	100.0
(N)	(712)

Table 3.22 Time used per week in Social Network Service to Search for Information on and /or Discuss Gender Issues by University Students

	%
Not used	20.0
Less than 1 hour	24.4
1 hour to less than 3 hours	20.0
3 hours to less than 5 hours	15.6
5 hours or more	20.0
Total	100.0
(N)	(45)

### 3.2.6 Gender Socialization

Regarding the sources of gender socialization, Tables 3.23 and 3.24 report the similar patterns of responses. To secondary school students, family members were the more likely source of gender socialization agent, but teachers, conventional media, new media and peers came close behind.

To university students, conventional media, new media and family members shared the same extent of likelihood of gender socialization. And teachers and peers came also close behind.

Table 3.23 Gender Socialization for Secondary School Students

Tell me about gender specific behaviours	Mean Score *	(N)
Conventional media	2.6	(712)
New media	2.6	(712)
Family members	2.9	(716)
Teachers	2.7	(716)
Peers	2.6	(714)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

Table 3.24 Gender Socialization for University Students

Tell me about gender specific behaviours	Mean Score *	(N)
Conventional media	3.0	(43)
New media	3.0	(43)
Family members	3.0	(43)
Teachers	2.9	(42)
Peers	2.9	(43)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

Regarding the intensity of gender socialization, Tables 3.25 and 3.26 report a bit different results. Secondary school students tended to slightly agree that family members and new media always told them about gender specific behaviours.

Conventional media, teachers and peers were little lower than these two sources.

University students tended to agree that conventional media was always telling about gender specific behaviours. New media and family members were other frequent sources, but peers and teachers were rated with lesser agreement.

Students in general only slightly agreed that the five sources listed in the Table 3.20 intensively inform about gender specific behaviour. However, to examine the socialization effects, in-depth interview should be an important inquiry method to adopt.

Table 3.25 Intensity of Gender Socialization for Secondary School Students

Always tell me about gender specific behaviours	Mean Score *	(N)
Conventional media	2.4	(708)
New media	2.5	(710)
Family members	2.5	(710)
Teachers	2.3	(712)
Peers	2.4	(711)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

Table 3.26 Intensity of Gender Socialization for University Students

Always tell me about gender specific behaviours	Mean Score *	(N)
Conventional media	2.9	(43)
New media	2.7	(43)
Family members	2.6	(43)
Teachers	2.3	(43)
Peers	2.5	(43)

\* Four-point scale is used: 1=Very disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Very agree

Table 3.27 shows that more secondary school students had chosen peers, family members and new media as the influential or most influential socializing agents for their perception of gender issues. To them, peers were more the influencers of knowledge on gender. We may assume that most of their peers are also secondary school students. Then they would have been exposed to similar sources of information on gender issues before exerting influence on each other. Surprisingly, teachers were almost the least influencers. On one hand, it would be due to the less influential power of teachers on non-curriculum issues. On the other hand, however, it would be due to lack of formal teaching and learning of gender issues in secondary school curriculum, and hence teachers could only do minimal education on this. As

new media was a popular source of information seeking, educators outside formal school system could pay more attention on its influence to students.

The situation of university students was different. New media and teachers were the more influential socializing agents on gender issues to university students. Without doubt, new media is an essential component in the online world for information and ideas sharing. University students are more prone to be influenced through this channel. It would be due to relevant humanities courses available to students in university curriculum so that teachers were the second most chosen socializing agent.

The different influencers of gender socialization between secondary school and university students can be regarded as the difference in immediacy of social circles. New media replacing peers as the most immediate social circle among university students should not be surprising. Secondly, university education is more likely to offer courses relating to gender issues than secondary school curriculum, and hence university teachers become more influential than teachers in secondary schools. The findings here suggest that gender socialization would still be going on in the stage of university education with changing agents.

Table 3.27 Most Influential Socializing Agents of Gender Issues  
to Secondary School Students

	% chosen as influential / most influential *	
	Secondary School Students	University Students
Peers	46.6	40.9
Family members	41.4	34.1
New media	41.1	50.0
Teachers	34.5	43.2
Conventional media	34.0	40.9

\* Five-point scale is used: 1=Least influential, 5=Most influential

### **3.2.7 Composite Effects on Perceptions of Masculine and Feminine Stereotypes among Secondary School Students**

In Section 3.2.3, gender effect was found in perceptions of masculine and feminine stereotypes among secondary school students. Female students tended to be more gender neutral than male in perceiving traditionally gendered characteristics. With further information on media consumption and influential socialization agents, we may explore the composite effect on students' perceptions.

Two factors measuring media consumption are included: weekly time spent on online media (Table 3.18) and social service network (Table 3.21). Both factors were transformed to measure on a 5-point scale: non-user, rare user, light user, medium user, and heavy user. The score range is 1 to 5, and larger value means more usage.

Another two factors measure the degree of influential socializing agents of gender

issues (Table 3.27). One factor is created to measure the media effect (conventional media and new media). Another factor is to measure the interpersonal effect (peers, family members and teachers). When students rated the two forms of media as most or second most influential, the corresponding score of 1 or 0.5 is added accordingly to the media effect scale. On the other hand, when peers, family members and teachers were rated as most or second most influential, the corresponding score will be added in this scale of "interpersonal effect". The scale range for both is 0 to 1, the larger the value is, the more influential is the socializing agent type.

Another factor to be included is gender of the students. Therefore, five factors are used to test their composite effect on the Masculine Characteristics Index and Feminine Characteristics Index (Table 3.10). Linear Regression is used to analyze the composite effect.

Table 3.28 shows that the Masculine Characteristics Index cannot be explained by different forms of media consumption or socializing agents. Only gender is found to have effect on the score of Masculine Characteristics Index. Female students had a tendency to perceive masculine characteristics in a lesser masculine way (positive value of coefficient). Formation and upholding of perceptions are gradual and complex. Our findings here reflect that the influence of media and socializing agents are not enough to explain the perception of masculine characteristics among secondary school students.

Table 3.28 Composite Effects on Perceptions of Masculine Characteristics Index

Factors	Relative Strength on Perception (standardized regression coefficient)	Absolute Effect on Perception (regression coefficient) ##
Model R <sup>2</sup> = 0.092		
Online Media Consumption	- 0.010	-0.001
Social Network Service Consumption	0.022	0.003
Media Socialization Effect	-0.070	-0.024
Interpersonal Socialization Effect	-0.069	-0.023
Sex – Female	0.314 ***	0.149

# Regression coefficient indicates the amount of change in Masculine Characteristics Index given a one-unit change in the value of each factor, given that all other factors in the model are held constant.

\*\*\* p < 0.001

On the other hand, feminine characteristics can be explained in terms of media consumption and gender of students (Table 3.29). More use of online media led to the tendency to perceive feminine characteristics in a lesser feminine way (negative value of coefficient). The more use of social network service, the tendency was to perceive feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine (positive value of coefficient). Likewise, female students perceived the feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine (positive value of coefficient). These three factors have statistically significant effect on the feminine characteristics index, however, the magnitude is small. The media and gender effects can only explain very little of the perceptions of feminine characteristics among secondary students. We need to acknowledge the gradual and complex process of perception formation.

Table 3.29 Composite Effects on Perceptions of Feminine Characteristics Index

Factors	Relative Strength on Perception (standardized regression coefficient)	Absolute Effect on Perception (regression coefficient) #
Model $R^2 = 0.011$		
Online Media Consumption	- 0.091 *	-0.018
Social Network Service Consumption	0.104 *	0.018
Media Socialization Effect	0.035	0.015
Interpersonal Socialization Effect	0.050	0.022
Sex – Female	0.091 *	0.056

# Regression coefficient indicates the amount of change in Feminine Characteristics Index given a one-unit change in the value of each factor, given that all other factors in the model are held constant.

\*  $p < 0.05$

### 3.2.8 Summary of Survey Findings

The lesson in gender education was well received by the students. Almost 90% of secondary school students were then aware of the contents discussed in the lesson: gender roles and stereotypes, and the influence of social media and mass media on perceptions. They also found the lesson helpful to their understanding gender issues in Hong Kong. Teaching materials, video and the performance of instructor also helped them learn in the lesson. And more than 90% of university students reported the same situations as the secondary school students. The positive feedback may imply that the contents and discussion on gender stereotypes are appropriate to adopt in educating different levels of students in Hong Kong, with the help of suitably designed teaching materials. We hope the teaching materials to be released for school teachers to use will also bring about the same level of success in the future.

The majority of secondary school students tended to think that 9 selected conventional gender specific characteristics both masculine and feminine. In particular, 4 characteristics (Understanding, Sympathetic, Shy and Gentle) had visibly more students thought as feminine. University students showed the same tendency as the secondary students.

Secondary school students tended to be more gender neutral than university students. In particular, the masculine characteristics were almost regarded as neutral description to both male and female. Feminine characteristics, on the other hand, were found to still have a trace of female stereotype. With regard to the masculine characteristics, female students perceived all as neutral description to both genders. Male students rated the characteristics as slightly masculine. On perceiving the feminine characteristics, female students rated slightly towards the feminine direction. Male students also perceived the characteristics a bit feminine, but to a lesser extent.

In addition, some traditional gender specific roles involving personal interests or attainment were visibly overturned by secondary school students. Education opportunity, career and achievement were rated as gender neutral. Female students in general were more resistant to take up traditional gender role expectation on females. However, both male and female students perceived gender roles largely in the same direction, and did not tend to endorse traditional gender roles.

University students also overturned some traditional gender specific roles involving personal interests or attainment. They did not visibly support other traditional gender roles prescribing gender division.

Gender education is not yet included in the curriculum of secondary education in Hong Kong. To ensure that our younger generations in the future will uphold gender neutral attitudes, any form of gender education is worth to introduce to secondary school students.

Students were asked to recollect their online media consumption in the past 4 weeks for searching information on any gender issues discussed in the lesson. The 4 most used online media channels by secondary school students included multimedia websites (e.g. YouTube), search engines, music/movie websites, and online games.

The first 2 most used online channels by university students were the same as secondary students, i.e., multimedia websites (e.g. YouTube) and search engines. Some other sources shared lesser popularity among university students.

With regard to the time spent on online media to search for information on gender issues discussed in the lesson, students were already interested in knowing something about gender issues. Only 8.3% of secondary students did not search information on gender issues. Nearly 60% of them spent 3 hours or more per week on gender issues. For university students, only 4.4% did not spend time on gender issues. Nearly 70% of them used 3 hours or more per week to search information on gender issues.

Online social network service (SNS) is another popular communication channel in online world. Secondary and university students also commonly used 4 types of SNS to know and discuss about gender issues. Whatsapp and Facebook were the two most popular ones, followed by Instagram and Snapchat. Educators then must keep in pace with the young adults in order to communicate effectively with them.

To secondary school students, family members were the more likely source of gender socialization agent, but teachers, conventional media, new media and peers came close behind. On the other hand, conventional media, new media and family members were the likely gender socialization agents for university students.

More secondary school students had chosen peers, family members and new media as the influential or most influential socializing agents for their perception of gender issues. University students reported somewhat different situations: new media and teachers were the more influential socializing agents on gender issues. The different influencers of gender socialization between secondary school and university students may be due to different immediacy of social circles. The findings here suggest that gender socialization would still be going on in the stage of university education with changing agents.

Two factors of media consumption and other two about influential socialization agents are added to explore the composite effect on students' perceptions. Together with gender of the students, five factors in total are used to test their composite effect on the Masculine Characteristics Index and Feminine Characteristics Index.

Masculine Characteristics Index cannot be explained by different forms of media consumption or socializing agents. Only gender is found to have effect on the score of Masculine Characteristics Index. Female students had a tendency to perceive masculine characteristics in a lesser masculine way. Formation and upholding of perceptions are gradual and complex. Our findings here reflect that the influence of media and socializing agents are not enough to explain the perception of masculine

characteristics among secondary school students.

On the other hand, feminine characteristics can be explained in terms of media consumption and gender of students. More use of online media led to the tendency to perceive feminine characteristics in a lesser feminine way. The more use of social network service, the tendency was to perceive feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine. Likewise, female students perceived the feminine characteristics in the direction towards gender neutral to feminine. The media and gender effects can only explain very little of the perceptions of feminine characteristics among secondary students. We need to acknowledge the gradual and complex process of perception formation.

### **3.2.9 Highlights of Students' Reflection and Teachers' Feedback**

#### **Students' Reflection**

As shown in the samples of students' reflective assessment, most students indicate that they will not judge themselves and/or their female girls with the criteria set by the mass media and the society. A few edit their photos before uploading to social networking platforms for showing their perfect self in selfie/on Instagram and Facebook, as looking beautiful and charming is for others' praise and recognition. Most students understand they can choose not to be perfect, since human is not born to be perfect and only need to show their real self.

Facing the existing social standards, most students feel stressed and thus choose to 'succumb a bit' to the social expectation, while only few 'stick to their own principles'. Students feel the society focuses much on body shape, appearance and materialistic life. Yet, the definition of 'perfect' is about individuals having both inner

and outer beauty, and inner beauty (e.g. kindness and helpfulness) should be emphasized. Their ways to reducing such stress include doing what they are interested (e.g. singing, listening to songs) to chill out. They are willing to comfort and talk to their stressed-out friends and remind themselves not to evaluate others with own standards.

Students better themselves without succumbing too much to social standards and do not pay too much attention to how others look at them e.g. some choose to stay a bit chubby, instead of slimming down blindly, but they would wish to lose the belly fat to dress nice.

To conclude, they understand they have to know their bodies and feel their bodily needs. They promise to: (1) behaviourally speaking, respect and love their bodies they are born with and stay confident, physically and mentally healthy; and (2) psychologically speaking, understand no one is perfect, nor same as ourselves and most importantly, to do what we want to do and be our real self. One does not need to pay too much attention to others and own body figures and appearances. To stay flexible, they are aware of the importance of review and reflection from time to time.

### **Teachers' Feedback**

Feedback from frontline teachers is positive from the school outreach. The event content is interesting and educational, with assessment tasks on knowledge and values. Teaching materials of such topic are not common and thus serve as very useful tools for teachers. The video segments extracted from She Objects on the gender sensitivity and media literacy provide much inspiration to students as well as the room for discussion.

Some schools already invited The Women's Foundation to re-visit again in the school year of 2016/2017 for film screening and junior-form forum discussion. Some teachers planned to use the teaching plans and introduce different concepts e.g. consumerism to students. The segments extracted from *She Objects* provide cross-module teaching materials relevant to the curriculum and assessment guide of Liberal Studies (LS). The film segments are used to introduce the gendered messages in Hong Kong society (Module 2); students' reflection on self-image and self-esteem are used in Module 1; understanding health information and side-effects of taking weight-loss pills from the case studies are for Module 5. The materials developed link up the teaching and learning of LS and students' everyday life.

*Given different school contexts, feedbacks from schools with students of different abilities and different teaching styles of teachers are diverse.* Some LS teachers hope to polish students' examination skills, thus they feel lesson activities can be replaced by lecturing on concepts, or with the use of video clips as the major teaching aid. They expect students should be able to apply the concepts for framing their ideas. Some schools need the materials to introduce basic concepts relevant to Liberal Studies curriculum (e.g. ideal self/ real self). To enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, some materials, e.g. worksheets on fact finding, can be distributed, or some simple research tasks assigned to students as pre-lesson preparation in LS.

For schools with fast-learning students, teachers prefer longer period for students to share their thoughts and tend not to use worksheet to limit how their students digest the materials. Their students are used to brain-storming ideas at group discussion and

taking note on A3-paper with ink pen, before presenting to their peer. Sharing more intellectual inputs of academic research will be more convincing to these confident learners.

Limited by the duration of lesson time, LS teachers find it too little time and space for students' reflection while few find the reflection part unnecessarily long with unclear messages. In addition to encourage students developing their potentials, skills of conflict resolution of both genders can be raised as conclusive message by the end of lessons on gender identity. Such approach is close to moral education and more suitable for junior-form students.

The documentary content focuses mostly on female, teachers find it difficult to arouse male students' interest in the topic. Addition of male perspective is needed to engage male students and also present a more comprehensive picture to cultivate the gendered understanding of students. Some teachers reflect that the elements of bullying, sexual impulse and compensated dating in the documentary sensitive and challenging to handle in lessons for tens of students, or school events for hundred. Some teachers demand the availability of alternative video segments to choose according to their own teaching needs. And corresponding guiding questions for the post-screening structured discussion are also needed.

## **4. On the Way Forward**

## **Implication of Teaching and Learning Gender Issues in Hong Kong**

Through the gender education project, The Women's Foundation and Hong Kong Institute of Asia Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong jointly sow the seed and plough the soil for cultivating the gender sensitivity and media literacy of the undergraduate and secondary school students. It is delightful to see more than 80% of student participants find the lesson helpful to their understanding gender relationship deeper and gender stereotypes in Hong Kong. The lesson has also raised their concerns of gender equality and reflection on gender biases. Built upon the initial success, materials of male perspective can be designed to present a balanced view to students for understanding gender relationship. The school outreach and relevant development of teaching materials have been a successful attempt to cater for the need of gender education, especially in secondary school level.

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