Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research 2024

Morgan Purdy
Pepperdine University, morgan.purdy@pepperdine.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/pjcr

Part of the Communication Commons

Recommended Citation

Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research

The Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research seeks to pursue truth and academic excellence in the field of communication by recognizing outstanding student scholarship that explores interpersonal, organizational, rhetoric and leadership, and intercultural communication. Through rigorous peer-review, the Journal strives to contribute to ongoing discussions in communication studies by publishing student papers that investigate a variety of contemporary topics and issues.

Submissions explore the many contexts of personal and professional communication, unveiling the shifting goals, strategies, and relationships that define interactions in our society. Papers may take the form of book reviews, research articles, persuasive campaigns, or essays. We encourage application from students throughout the public relations, advertising, integrated marketing communication, journalism, communication studies, and sports administration programs.

Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research

Volume 12 Editorial Board

Table of Contents

Editor's Note

This volume's theme of "legacy" unites our collection of diverse articles, offering insights into the enduring impact of communication practices across various contexts. As we navigate through a post-pandemic and evolving world, it is imperative to confront communication issues that have often been overlooked. The contributions from our authors provide a multifaceted exploration of legacy, touching on attachment styles, gender dynamics in leadership and academia, and the complexities of intersecting identities and personal experiences.

The articles present compelling cases for reevaluating institutional obligations and redefining hierarchical structures to foster gender equality in communication. They delve into attachment styles shedding light on how early experiences shape communication patterns. Additionally, exploring intersecting identities and the complexities of cultural expectations emphasizes the challenges individuals may face when navigating societal and familial norms.

Through the insights shared by each author, this year's publication highlights the importance of understanding the underlying messages that shape our assumptions and opinions. For aspiring undergraduates embarking on a journey in this expansive field, we hope this volume inspires reflection on the imperfections of our communication systems and our capacity for growth. By exploring the intricate intersections of communication practices, we can amplify diverse voices and cultivate more inclusive and effective strategies for the future.

Morgan Purdy

Editor-in-Chief

Pepperdine University Class of 2024

The Meanest Thing He Ever Did: A Theoretical Analysis of "A Boy Named Sue"

Henry Scott, Pepperdine University[1]

Abstract

This paper examines the attachment style between two characters, Sue and his father in the song *A Boy Named Sue*. Shel Silverstein originally wrote the song and then it was later performed at San Quentin Prison by Country Hall of Fame singer Johnny Cash, in 1969. By analyzing Sue's narration of his life, the listener comes to contextualize Sue's perception of the world based on his attachment style to his father.

Keywords

attachment style, *A Boy Named Sue*, Shel Silverstein, Johnny Cash, San Quentin, country music, family dynamics, attachment theory, secure attachment, anxious-avoidant attachment, anxious-ambivalent attachment, family identity, symbolic interactionism, semantic communication, reconciliation

---

[1] Henry Scott is a Communication Studies Major at Seaver College.

Introduction

Originally written by American poet and songwriter Shel Silverstein, Johnny Cash's performance of *Boy Named Sue* at San Quentin State Prison in 1969 solidified the song's place in country music history (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). Cash's *Boy Named Sue* is a story of a young boy who was abandoned by his father at a young age. To toughen up his son and expose him to the cruel realities of the world, Sue's father gave him an unconventional name to attract unwanted attention. The enduring popularity of *Boy Named Sue* highlights its resonance with many audiences. For the inmates at San Quentin, the song likely served as a cathartic release of emotion or a distraction from their current situation as prisoners. Other listeners may simply enjoy the humor and the tune. Outside of the song's musical value, *Boy Named Sue* provides insight into dysfunctional family systems and attachment styles. By applying the theoretical lens of Attachment Theory, and analyzing Sue's experience based on his family's identity, Sue's resentment towards his father is contextualized.

Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory seeks to explain how children's relationships and proximity with their parents influence their behavior (Segrin & Flora, 2018, p. 38). The theory was originally developed by John Bowlby, who spent hours observing children separated from their parents during World War II (Segrin & Flora, 2018, p. 38). Bowlby observed that humans work to remain proximal to their caregivers at a young age when social and emotional development begins to occur. Bowlby explained that the desire to remain proximal to one's parents can be explained biologically. Animals who remain near their caregivers have a greater likelihood of survival and therefore have a higher chance of passing on their genes to a new generation.

There are three attachment styles for infants: secure, anxious-avoidant, and, anxious-ambivalent (Hazan & Shaver 1987, p. 39). Secure attachment styles are denoted by caregivers who are responsive and present to the needs of the child. Anxious-avoidant attachment styles involve caregivers who are present but neglect the needs of the child. Lastly, anxious-ambivalent attachment styles occur when caregivers are absent and or abusive to the child. Children with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style may act in a highly emotional manner when compared with children who display secure and anxious-avoidant attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 1980, p. 69). Upon separation from their parents, children will display extreme emotional distress, but when reunited with their parents the child will lash out in a violent rage. Sue's experience as a child and his behavior when he reunites with his father points to an anxious-ambivalent attachment style.

In the first stanza of *Boy Named Sue,* Cash proclaims that Sue's father abandoned him and his mother when Sue was just three years old, leaving nothing but "a guitar and an empty bottle of booze." Before Sue's father left, he named his son "Sue", which condemned Sue to a life of torment from his peers. Without any male role model in his life to guide behavior or deal with torment, Sue "grew up mean." He resorted to violence to deal with bullies and not pursue romantic interests out of fear of being ridiculed (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). Sue's highly emotional reaction of immediate anger response in all situations marks his anxious-ambivalent attachment style. As Bowlby explained in his Attachment Theory, in the animal kingdom, the presence of a caregiver increases the offspring's chance to reproduce by providing safety. When applied to human interpersonal relationships, secure attachment styles provide children with a safe environment to develop their emotional intelligence. Sue's father was absent; he did not have a male role model or caregiver to teach him how to navigate his youth intelligently. Sue

resorted to violence, a survival behavior, out of necessity because he lacked the security of a paternal relationship which would provide him with much-needed insight into how to cultivate his interpersonal tact.

Later in the song, Sue finds his father at a bar and the years of resentment towards his father culminate in a violent outburst with the two "kicking and a-gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer" (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). Sue had gone his entire life living in an anxious-ambivalent attachment style, so his first reaction was to "hit him [his father] hard right between the eyes" (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). Sue resorted to the only form of relational interaction he knew by establishing physical dominance. Engaging his father in conversation and eventually asking his father why he abandoned him and his mother, or why he decided to name him Sue would require a higher level of interpersonal skills diminished in people with insecure attachment styles. Sue is a product of his circumstance (fatherless upbringing) and environment (constant ridicule from peer group). His violent behavior, orientation towards his peers, and interactions with his father exemplify the lingering behavioral implications of children with anxious-ambivalent attachment styles.

Family Identity

Social interactions between members of a family influence the identity of individuals within the organic family system. It is often assumed that a "normal" family includes two heterosexual parents and children who look like their parents (Segrin & Flora, 2018, p. 48). When compared against the criteria of a normal family outlined by Segrin and Flora, Sue's family is not normal. Sue's absent and seemingly malicious father continues to impact his life long after abandoning the family. Forced to navigate most of his life alone, Sue is constantly tormented for having an abnormal name. Researchers Galvin and Braithwaite explain that

through semantics people create new meanings to internalize and process the dysfunction that may be present in their organic family system (Galvin and Braithwaite, 2014, p. 110). Through communication, familial relationships can be dissolved or restructured to reflect the perceived status of a relationship. Sue uses semantics to emotionally and relationally detach his father from his life and family system for the majority of the song, referring to his father as "that man" or "that snake" (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). Sue uses symbols in the form of verbal language to convey how his father is more deserving of an impersonal or crass title. His decision to refer to his father as a "snake" or "that man" convey the absence of relational connection between Sue and his father (Cash & Silverstein, 1969).

Later in the song Sue and his father fight in the street. Sue gains the advantage and pulls a gun on his father. When faced with the reality of his demise, Sue's father breaks down the barrier that had accumulated through years of absence and resentment. He explains that he chose the name Sue to strengthen his son. Sue's father knew he would not be present to raise Sue and guide him through the challenges of childhood and early adult life. He chose an unconventional name to draw negative attention to Sue, hoping that his son would become resilient to the harsh realities of the evil inherent to human nature. Upon hearing his father's explanation for giving Sue his name, Sue's barrier of hatred and resentment towards his father dissolves immediately. Cash sings, "Well, I got all choked up and I threw down my gun. I called him my pa, and he called me his son" (Cash & Silverstein, 1969). It is in this instance where the use of semantics reframes Sue's relationship with his father. He refers to his father as "pa" validating his father's apology and affirming his relationship as his son.

Through the application of symbolic interactionism in the context of family identity; Sue's reunion with his father exemplifies the theoretical perspective of pragmatic

communication scholars John Dewey and William James (Segrin & Flora, 2018, p. 49). Dewey and James assert that a family's relational dynamics are fluid and constantly changing (Segrin & Flora, 2018, p. 49). Sue went through most of his life insecurely attached, hating and resenting his father, only to forgive him and reestablish a relationship during a single brief interaction. According to the principle of symbolic interactionism, participants in a communicative process jointly contribute to constructing social reality through semantics. Through this process, participants can redefine social relationships through the creation of shared meaning. When Sue refers to his father as "pa" and his father refers to him as "son", a new social relationship has been created through the use of semantics. The words "pa" and "son" signify the creation of a new relational dynamic that has been created through social interaction. Up until this point in the song, Sue had no relational connection with his father, but both parties exchanged a few words and an entirely new relationship was formed. This brief interaction takes place at the end of the song. It highlights the importance of symbolic interactionism in the context of family identities as it relates to the creation of new relationships.

Conclusion

Johnny Cash's performance of *A Boy Named Sue* is on the surface a comedic song that comes full circle and provides the listener with a satisfying and uplifting ending. When analyzing *Boy Named Sue* through the theoretical lens of Attachment Theory and Sue's family identity, the complex and constantly evolving nature of family systems is realized. Analyzing Sue's experience without his father through the lens of Attachment Theory serves to explain his behavior and perception of his father up until their reunion. Examining Sue's family identity through symbolic interactionism highlights the pivotal role semantics play in relationship creation and evolution. The theoretical insight into Sue's experience provides an entirely new

layer of depth to the song. Regardless of whether *Boy Named Sue* is analyzed through a

theoretical framework or enjoyed in a state penitentiary, the song will forever remain a timeless

classic.

Appendix A:

Lyrics of a *Boy Named Sue*

Well, my daddy left home when I was three

Didn't leave very much to my mom and me

Except this old guitar and an empty bottle of booze

Now I don't blame him 'cause he run and hid

But the meanest thing that my daddy ever did

Was before he left, he went and named me Sue

Well, he must've thought that it was quite a joke

And I got a lot of laughs from a lots of folk

Seems I had to fight my whole life through

Some gal would giggle and I'd turn red

And some guy'd laugh and I'd bust his head

I tell you, life ain't easy for a boy named Sue

But I grew up quick and I grew up mean

My fist got hard and my wits got keener

Roam from town to town to hide my shame

But I made me a vow to the moon and stars

I'd search the honky tonks and bars

And kill that man that gave me that awful name

Well, it was Gatlinburg in mid-July

And I just hit town and my throat was dry

Thought I'd stop and have myself a brew

At an old saloon on a street of mud

There at a table, dealing stud

Sat the dirty, mangy dog that named me Sue

Well, I knew that snake was my own sweet dad

From a worn out picture that my mother had

Knew that scar on his cheek and his evil eye

He was big and bent and gray and old

And I looked at him and my blood ran cold

And I said, "My name is Sue, how do you do?

Now you gonna die", that's what I told him

Well, I hit him hard right between the eyes

And he went down, but to my surprise

He come up with a knife and cut off a piece of my ear

Then I busted a chair right across his teeth

And we crashed through the walls and into the street

Kicking and a-gouging in the mud and the blood and the beer

Well, I tell you, I've fought tougher men

But I really can't remember when

He kicked like a mule and he bit like a crocodile

Well, I heard him laugh and then I heard him cuss

And he reached for his gun but I pulled mine first

He stood there lookin' at me and I saw him smile

And he said, "Son, this world is rough

And if a man's gonna make it, he's gotta be tough

I knew I wouldn't be there to help you along

So I give you that name, and I said goodbye

And I knew you'd have to get tough or die

It's that name that helped to make you strong"

He said, "Now you just fought one heck of a fight

And I know you hate me, and you got the right to kill me now

And I wouldn't blame you if you do

But you ought to thank me, before I die

For the gravel in ya gut and the spit in ya eye

'Cause I'm the son of a bitch that named you Sue"

What could I do?

Well, I got all choked up and I threw down my gun

I called him my pa, and he called me his son

Come away with a different point of view

And I think about him, now and then

Every time I try and every time I win, and if I ever have a-

Well, if I ever have a boy, I'll name him

Frank or George or Bill or Tom, anything but Sue

I don't want him go around, man call him Sue all his life

That's a horrible thing to do to a boy trying to get a hold in the world

Named a boy a Sue

References

Ainsworth, Wall, Waters, & Belhar. (1980). Patterns of attachment: A psychological study of the

strange situation. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, *1*(1), 68–70.

https://doi.org/10.1002/1097-0355(198021)1:1<68::aid-imhj2280010110>3.0.co;2

Cash, Silverstein. (1969). *A Boy Named Sue Lyrics*. GENIUS. https://genius.com/Johnny-cash-a-

boy-named-sue-lyrics

Galvin, K. M., & Braithwaite, D. O. (2014). Theory and research from the Communication Field:

Discourses that constitute and reflect families. *Journal of Family Theory & Camp;*

Review, *6*(1), 97–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12030

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal*

of Personality and Social Psychology, *52*(3), 511–524. https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-

3514.52.3.511

Segrin, C., & Flora, J. (2019). Family communication. Routledge.

The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement Through the Lens of Liberal Feminism

Morgan Croshal, Nelly Figueroa-Herrera, Rylee Gonzales, Elizabeth Kresse, & Angelee Valdez,

Pepperdine University[2]

Abstract

This study looks at how the film, The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (The Princess Diaries) portrays a liberal feminist view of the social structures in the made-up country of Genovia, and communicates to viewers that women are capable and respectable in leadership roles. Princess Mia, in giving her speech to parliament, effectively challenges gender expectations which convinces the men in her society to accept that she can rule independently. By enabling women in a way with a variety of rhetorical choices, the audience is to feel empowered and encouraged to move against patriarchal structures. Emphasizing the difference between men and women in this culture results in their differences being valued and seen as positive.

Key Words

liberal feminism, rhetorical choices, patriarchy, empowerment, media

---

[2] Morgan Croshal, Nelly Figueroa-Herrera, Rylee Gonzales, Elizabeth Kresse, & Angelee Valdez are Communication Studies Majors at Seaver College.

Introduction

The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement (*The Princess Diaries*) conveys a liberal

feminist message that challenges the patriarchy and empowers young women. The film

dismantles the typical fantastical stereotype seen in many movies about princesses of a woman

marrying a man to achieve self-actualization. This is demonstrated by the principal female

characters relying on their own knowledge and experiences in order to bring change to a

patriarchal societal structure. The movie follows Princess Mia of Genovia and her time finding a

husband after college so she can inherit the title of Queen of Genovia. Under the guidance of the

queen, her grandmother, she begins to evolve into a leader of the country. Throughout the film,

Mia demonstrates qualities of liberal feminism by advocating for equality while still abiding by

the laws and traditions in place. Liberal feminism is the idea that both men and women should

have equal opportunities to be able to reach their goals (Steeves, 2009). She implores Parliament

to change the marriage law and allow her to be queen without a king. The rhetor utilizes various

rhetorical devices through Mia's progression establishing credibility with Parliament, and her

tactics appealing to the Genovian people and culture. Mia employs verbal and nonverbal

persuasive tactics and successfully convinces Parliament to allow her to be crowned queen

without the support of a man.

Princess Mia specifically seeks to accomplish this by speaking at her wedding in a full

church. Rather than going through with her marriage ceremony, standing tall in her wedding

dress on the church's altar, she speaks to her family, the people of Geneovia, and specifically the

Genovian parliament made up exclusively of white older men to try and convince them that she

does not need to be wed to be a queen. Shocked, the audience, composed mainly of wealthy and

noble citizens, began to whisper amongst themselves. Mia, with the help of the Prime Minister, does not become intimidated as she explains to Parliament that she refuses to get married.

The church adorned in pink and white wedding decorations quickly becomes grounds for voting, as the previously doubtful Parliament all agree with Princess Mia that women do not need to be married to become queen and rule Genovia.

Literature Review: Media and Leadership

Many scholars have researched the impact of *The Princess Diaries* novels rather than the movies. This series continues to demonstrate struggles with self-confidence and actualization, breaking the norms of ideal femininity, and the role model impact that this series has on young women. Similar to the books, the movie demonstrates these themes. This literature review will focus on the leadership of Princess Mia as a factor of encouragement for many through the lens of liberal feminism.

The research that has been done on *The Princess Diaries* novels recognizes that Princess Mia immediately connects with the audience due to her issues with self-confidence and self-image. However, encouragement comes from the process of Mia finding more confidence and continuing to get closer to self-actualization (Raflis & Oktaviane, 2018). At the very top of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is self-actualization and throughout this series we see Mia achieving the lower needs and eventually getting closer to the top of this diagram. Additionally, although this series connects to an audience by addressing authentic issues that many girls experience, this series also focuses on the classic princess narrative, where the beautiful princess is sitting around and waiting for her Prince (Liljeqvist, 2016). Princess Mia challenges this traditional view, but even by examining the issues that the rhetor reveals with this typical narrative further relates to the audience.

Media Depictions

In *The Princess Diaries,* the dissection of the book and film in comparison to the media needs to be analyzed in order to understand how liberal feminism is being represented. Liberal feminism encompasses the idea that both men and women in pursuit of a goal should be able to have equal opportunities to be able to reach it (Steeves, 2009). However, the media often distorts this, especially concerning literature (Steeves, 2009). For example, women are commonly stereotyped by always making their "images of women" the same, and further "devaluating work" that offers encouragement to women according to societal push (Steeves, 2009, p. 100). The book series was published in the early 2000s, meaning that although feminism was already constructed, there was increased support for the defeat of patriarchy as men still held the majority of power. Furthermore, the evolution of films and feminism has also created an impact. This is a cause of the societal permission to have women in the media, such as princesses, be able to rise against the patriarchy to get equal rights whilst still being feminine (Fuentes Vera, 2020). Princess Mia in the books and movies does not conform to the patriarchal norms of the society, however, she still exudes feminine qualities in her pursuit of equality.

Feminist ideals and concepts in the media, movies, films, and television specifically, have been arising as filmmakers realize how important the portrayal of feminism is for younger audiences. Scholars have conducted research regarding this increase in feminist representations and why this has been occurring. Monaghan (2022) discusses the reworked portrayal of classic tropes conveyed within teen cinema to focus more on feminist beliefs to target these younger audiences. To switch the narratives, the movies "are directed by women and foreground young women's experiences in stories that are traditionally associated with young men" (Monaghan, 2022, p. 3269). The current trend in teen storytelling presents a "feminist" perspective within the

teen genre and how it delves into the realm of social justice by showcasing narratives of teenage girls in settings and plots typically centered around youthful male experiences. This represents women in ways that were lacking beforehand and offers a sense of empowerment. Media scholars should find this insightful and focus their research on the rhetoric surrounding feminist qualities and appeal. Adding women into the story is crucial because "media-friendly and accessible politics of empowerment that connect to both neoliberal values of individualization and liberal feminism's critique of gendered exclusion" (Monaghan, 2022, p. 3262). Gender exclusion has been an issue within movies that has slowly begun to be addressed and more forms of femininity have been introduced.

Femininity portrayal in the media is displayed in various ways because it doesn't exist in one form. Blue (2012) writes about the presentation of girlhood within teen shows and films and discusses how "girls have access to power in a culture that imbues them with so much potential and fortitude while it strives to exploit their consumption and visibility" (p. 663). She brings this up to emphasize how girls are typically treated within this industry and how essential it is to take this power back. She continues to discuss the portrayal of Miley and Lilly in the Disney Channel show *Hannah Montana* and the different ways these girls perform femininity. The show contains valued messages that challenge gender expectations through Miley's character because she can publicly address any contradictions that may come to her life and use her powerful voice (Blue, 2012). Miley's character, similar to Princess Mia, challenges gender expectations because typically girls and women are expected to remain quiet and accept the way life goes for them. Instead of complying with these outdated gender norms, she goes against them and demonstrates feminist ideals of being able to do what men can do.

Using media as a tool to market liberal feminism to youth is seen evidently in Disney Movies. According to Gerbner (1999), "media is a key influencer of children's understanding of gender based on the meanings, relations, and representations they portray" (p. 661). Gerbner examines feminism as seen in many children's Disney movies, like *The Princess Diaries* film series. Disney uses themes of women as heroes breaking stereotypes and achieving self-actualization.

Leadership

Women in leadership emerges as a theme in two articles discussing both Disney realms and the real world regarding liberal feminism. One article looks at the role of women in leadership positions. The article problematizes how women in leadership are understood by their male counterparts (Garlen & Sandlin, 2017). The authors specifically look at the Prime Minister of New Zealand in 2017 to emphasize their point. The researchers argue that women are expected to be held up to masculine standards but are also expected to concurrently maintain feminine ideals. For example, it is typical for "caring" to be a feminine trait, but women are supposed to show less care to appear more masculine and communicate authority. However, the researchers strive to change the idea that women need to become more masculine to lead and instead value women's traits and abilities in their own right – and for people to stop looking at only the differences between men and women in authority. Similarly, another article criticizes Disney's romantic ideal for princesses (Pullen & Vachhani, 2020). In the second article, the researchers point out that true love is viewed as an object that must be earned for a princess to lead. Garlen and Sandlin note that Disney princesses' search and sacrifice for love become their sole purpose and create an unrealistic ideal for the audience. Thus, the true love ideal reinforces the patriarchal structure.

Analysis: Female Representation & Rhetorical Devices

Does the representation of women suggest that women are essentially the same as or different from men?

Mia Thermopolis in *The Princess Diaries* is set to be queen. The course of the movie revolves around the princess' search for a husband, as the Genovian law states she must be wed in order to ascend to the throne. The community surrounding Princess Mia suggests that women are essentially different from men. Princess Mia is subjected to essentialization, or assuming groups are essentially the same and follow a "'script'" (Wood, 1992, p. 5). Specifically, all women are expected to be docile, submissive, and married in order to take the throne. Princess Mia, however, attempts to break the "script" by petitioning for a law reform that allows women rule without a husband. In her speech, an underlying theme of natural rights emerged. Natural rights suggest that all men and women are created equal (Locke, 1690/1980). Based on the concept that men and women are created equal, Princess Mia asserts that women should be allowed to ascend to the throne unwed, just as a man could. In order to support her petition, Mia is told to present more masculine qualities, like intensity when she is told to "stare them [the audience] down," (Marshall, 2004). This representation of Princess Mia and the community in which she presides initially sees women as essentially different from men but shifts their view by the end of her speech.

If women are portrayed as being different from men, how are their differences valued or devalued?

Further, the movie creates a clear depiction of how women are portrayed as being different from men. Women by the standards of patriarchy are first devalued, but then become valued as they speak up for themselves. The process of being devalued begins when Princess

Mia is not allowed to rule as queen until she is wed, and is furthered when she tries to make her own decisions and is told she cannot because she is a woman. The distinction here is clear, as men would have never been discredited and would be able to rule whether with a spouse or not. This is a cause of the patriarchal hierarchy where women are seen as less in political instances and men are held to a higher standard. This then transitions into her stereotypical feminine characteristics and her portrayal of being a strong independent woman being valued. This transformation comes at the cause of men in the Parliament having a change of heart and realizing that the differences between men and women should be valued. Although Princess Mia is biologically different from men, this does not hinder her ability to think for herself and does not mean she is incapable of ruling a kingdom. This ties back into liberal feminism as men and women are equal because women just like men can "...reas[on], [are] independent, autonomous human beings," (Donovan, 1992, p. 8). Women are just as capable as men as they can think, act, and make choices according to what they believe is right.

How are the goals of assimilating women into the existing economic and socio-political structures advanced or hindered by the message?

The predominant existing economic and socio-political structures are distant and unrealistic, as the European country of Genovia was created for this storyline, and not many people grow up in line to rule a kingdom. However, many plots to stories with royalty in them are not created to cultivate a sense of connection but instead a sense of possibility. Many people can relate to each other in not being in the same circumstance as seen in this movie and yet still relating to many of the situations that Princess Mia finds herself in. By assimilating women into the existing social and economic structures of society, it can be assumed that they will further connect with each other and the ideals that are presented as both distant and relatable. Donavan

(1985) shares that natural rights indicate that "all humans, men and women of all colors and creeds are created equal" (p. 8). These natural rights are demonstrated in the structure of ruling the country of Genovia and further in the bonding of the audience of this film. By the message of equality being in the film and assuming that the many women watching this film will be influenced by this message, the assimilation of women into these socioeconomic categories further advances the meaning and intent behind the movie.

Do the representations of women perpetuate their exclusion from the mainstream economic and social systems or encourage their inclusion?

The representation of women perpetuates both their exclusion and inclusion in mainstream economic and social systems. *The Princess Diaries* consists of a plot that showcases traditional gender roles and expectations surrounding royalty and monarchy. Princess Mia is encouraged to find a husband, which reinforces the narrative that marriage is the key to success. This aspect of the storyline conveys the stereotype that a woman should find a partner while also emphasizing the traditionality of a Queen having a King by her side and that the only way a woman can be seen in the context of royalty is if she is with a man. But as the film goes on, Princess Mia is portrayed as a woman with power and influence in the country of Genovia. She is depicted as a strong, independent woman who does not need a man to be able to hold a position of royalty.

The outdated laws and regulations that Genovia had were fought against by Princess Mia. She challenges the patriarchal norm of needing to be married to hold power by claiming that she can rule with or without a husband. At this point in the film, inclusion is being perpetuated as Mia breaks the barriers and challenges the established norms within a patriarchal system. This showcases female empowerment and independence, aligning with liberal feminism which argues

that women are entitled to the same inalienable, "natural" rights as men because they are also independent, autonomous human beings. If roles were reversed, the man would not need to search for a woman to serve as head of the kingdom, but women are portrayed to need a man in order to be successful and thriving.

What Rhetorical Devices Serve Those Ends?

The Princess Diaries utilizes various devices in order to convey a liberal feminist message of including and assimilating women into economic, social, and political structures. Princess Mia establishes her credibility by demonstrating her ability to become queen and rule Genovia. She does this over time while also following the political laws put in place, which include forcing her to find a husband. She learns from her grandmother, a matriarch who ruled for decades after her husband passed. Slowly, Mia changes the patriarchal minds by proving to Parliament she can be a Queen without a King. Her actions communicate to viewers that assimilating women into existing economic and socio-political structures is not only possible but beneficial.

Princess Mia continues to progress, taking on her role as the future Queen. She appeals to the Genovian people in multiple ways while still staying true to herself. Mia walks with the local orphans and children in the parade instead of sitting in her car. This shows her people her heart and dedication to Genovia. Additionally throughout the film, Mia appeals to Genovian customs by presenting herself as properly dressed and mannered. Mia inspires women to strive to achieve their goals and spark change through her inclusion in a patriarchal structured government. At the end of the film, Mia appeals to Genovia's political structure by asking Parliament to abolish the marriage law. She addresses the crowd with confidence, leading Parliament in the vote. She integrates herself into the male-dominated government by establishing her credibility, by

appealing to the people and Parliament over time, resulting in the abolishment of the marriage law.

Why were certain rhetorical choices made by the rhetor(s) or creator(s) of the message? How do the rhetorical choices made compare to other possible choices the rhetor(s) could have made?

The rhetor in *The Princess Diaries* chooses various rhetorical elements to convey the message of creating equality through the means of assimilating into the political structure in order to enact change. Disney purposely adds fantastical elements to keep the attention of the viewers. Although some may criticize that the legislative structure does not properly represent reality, Princess Mia's journey navigating the patriarchal political sphere encourages young women to persevere and achieve their goals despite society's patriarchal structure. She proves her credibility by following the parliamentary procedure for voting. She is purposeful with her words, commanding the audience and calling upon the men in Parliament to vote in favor of the abolishment of the marriage law.

The way in which the creator of this message presents Princess Mia before the large room of people, Parliament included, allows her to exude confidence. Her great posture demonstrates discipline and formality, and her tone is direct and eloquent, allowing the audience to attribute credibility to her. Mia's unbreaking eye contact shows assurance and further persuades other movie characters, and the audience to place trust in her. The rhetor additionally employs patterns of repetition in order to strengthen the message. When Princess Mia proposes her change to Parliament, which requires a vote, the members of Parliament each stand and one by one voice their support for this change by stating, "Aye." This pattern of repetition emphasizes the

endorsement that these men have for Princess Mia in her position of power, and echoes confidence in her ability to lead without a male figure beside her.

Interpretation and Evaluation

The Effects on the Audience

What impact might the rhetorical choices have on different audiences? Would the impact be the same for different people?

Although the rhetorical choices Princess Mia used worked to convince the Parliament, it does not mean this would work for all audiences. The fictitious kingdom of Genovia fits the standards of a Western society, being more open to women speaking and ruling. In some cultures, women are not allowed to have any credibility, regardless of what they may do.

Princess Mia's speech may have had no effect entirely due to the fact that she is a woman. Rhetorical choices such as standing with confidence, making eye contact, and speaking loudly may not impact some cultures positively. Instead, her choices could be seen as too radical and untraditional. Depending on culture, women's rights in the area where the clip is being seen, and education, Princess Mia's delivery of a speech and its success will impact people differently.

What do the rhetorical choices and patterns indicate about the audience, society, or culture in which the message sits?

The rhetorical choices and patterns in Princess Mia's speech indicate that the society in which this movie was produced values masculine traits in leadership. Princess Mia was able to shift the audience's view of herself within the movie by employing traits typically viewed as masculine. Initially, Princess Mia was seen as poised, quiet, and timid as she learned how to be part of the Genovian royal family. However, her traits were seen as feminine, and not appropriate for a strong queen who could rule by herself. By strengthening eye contact with the audience,

speaking assertively, and standing with a rigid posture she creates the image of confidence that contrasts with her initially feminine traits. Thus, Parliament votes in her favor to rule without a husband.

On another note, Princess Mia's rhetoric reveals that the culture and society in which the movie was created is beginning to value women in leadership roles. The subject of the movie and Princess Mia's speech suggests that the concept of women leading is new, but is something to be celebrated. We see the audience within the movie celebrating Princess Mia's ability to rule by clapping, smiling, and hugging one another. To the audience watching this movie, the scene is heartwarming and emphasizes how society should embrace a woman's ability to lead with joy. More specifically, the movie is rated G and directed towards young girls in particular. This leads us to believe that Disney and the filmmakers producing *The Princess Diaries* strive to encourage young girls to be strong on their own, without the help of a man or husband. Support for Princess Mia represents support for women ascending into leadership roles, which challenges the standard patriarchal structure in both the fictional country of Genovia and the American context in which the movie was created.

Effective Portrayal in The Princess Diaries

The Princess Diaries effectively portrays liberal feminist ideas that go against patriarchal views regarding royalty and women in positions of power. Princess Mia's character asserts her independence throughout the film by fighting against the societal expectation of a queen needing a man alongside her. She prioritizes the capabilities she has over holding power rather than her marital status. This message depicted in the film argues against the patriarchal norm that a woman's worth is dependent on being in a relationship with a man. Princess Mia challenges these gender expectations by refusing to conform to the expectations of marrying a man and

advocates for her ability to rule independently. Additionally, the Queen of Genovia, Mia's grandmother, currently holds the power by herself. She demonstrates being a matriarch in a typically patriarchal society. Since the Queen's husband had passed away, she was the sole leader of the kingdom of Genovia. This effectively conveys that a woman being in charge by herself is possible and not out of the ordinary.

The promotion of female empowerment is evident in *The Princess Diaries* in many aspects. Princess Mia's character is a powerful, independent woman who promotes her skills and strength without needing to rely on a man, she displays female empowerment to younger audiences to encourage them that they also can be successful on their own. Despite the movie being based in a fictitious country, it exhibits concepts that can apply to real life. The film consists of rhetorical choices such as repetition and patterns to effectively illustrate the liberal feminist view that women should have equal opportunities and the qualifications to reach them.

Conclusion

The impact that this film has on women is remarkable. It reinforces the idea that women are capable and sufficient on their own, and do not need a male figure to emphasize their ability. The rhetorical choices made in *The Princess Diaries* disregard the gender expectations that Princess Mia is not able to rule on her own and reiterate the message in many other inspirational films for young women. The ideals of self-confidence and credibility are used as values to encourage other young women in their independence and further highlight the beliefs of liberal feminism.

Ultimately, Princess Mia's rhetoric in *The Princess Diaries* can be analyzed and evaluated through a liberal feminist lens. Princess Mia advocates for women to have the same rights as men, and to be able to lead without a spouse. Her speech suggests that women are

essentially the same as men: autonomous human beings. Although her feminine traits are slightly devalued, she adheres to the traditional socio-political guidelines of her country and chooses to formally change the law in order to perpetuate her inclusion in the mainstream social and economic systems. Princess Mia acts with confidence, adapts her demeanor to appear more masculine, and ultimately establishes her credibility with both the fictional and real audiences. Her rhetorical choices lead the audiences to value women in leadership roles and be seen as equal to their male counterparts; therefore, she is effective in promoting female empowerment. Given these points, Princess Mia in *The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement* delivered a valuable speech through the eyes of a liberal feminist lens.

References

Blue, M. G. (2012). The best of both worlds? *Feminist Media Studies*, *13*(4), 660–675.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2012.724024

Donovan, J. (1985). *Feminist theory: The intellectual traditions of American feminism*.

Continuum.

Fuentes Vera, R. (2020). *Disney princesses: The evolution of the role of women within society*.

Dipòsit Digital de la Universität de Barcelona: Home. Retrieved from:

https://diposit.ub.edu/dspace/handle/2445/170823

Garlen, J. C., & Sandlin, J. A. (2017). Happily (n)ever after: The cruel optimism of Disney's

romantic ideal. *Feminist Media Studies*, *17*(6), 957–971. https://doi-

org.lib.pepperdine.edu/10.1080/14680777.2017.1338305

Liljeqvist, H. (2016). Royal subjects: Feminist perspectives on diary writing and the diary form

in Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries* series. *Stockholm University Department of*

English, 1–43. Retrieved from: https://www.diva-

portal.org/smash/get/diva2:936717/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Locke, J. (1980). *Second treatise of government*. Hackett Publishing Company.

https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7370/7370-h/7370-h.htm (Original work published

1690)

Marshall, G. (Director). (2004, August 7). *The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement*. Walt

Disney Studios Motion Pictures.

Monaghan, W. (2022). Feminism at the movies: Sex, gender, and identity in contemporary

American teen cinema. *Feminist Media Studies*, *23*(7), 3258–3273.

https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2022.2108481

Pullen, A., & Vachhani, S. J. (2021). Feminist ethics and women leaders: From difference to intercorporeality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *173*(2), 233–243. https://doi-org.lib.pepperdine.edu/10.1007/s10551-020-04526-0

Raflis, R., & Oktaviane, A. (2018). Self actualization in hierarchy of needs of a princess as seen in Meg Cabot's *The Princess Diaries*. *Jurnal Ilmiah Langue and Parole*, *1*(2), 52–59. https://doi.org/10.36057/jilp.v1i2.160

Schiele, K., Louie, L., & Chen, S. (2020). Marketing feminism in youth media: A study of Disney and Pixar animation. *Business Horizons*, *63*(5), 659–669. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2020.05.001

Steeves, H. L. (1987). Feminist theories and media studies. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *4*(2), 95–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/15295038709360121

Wood, J. T. (1993). From "woman's nature" to standpoint epistemology: Gilligan and the debate over essentializing in feminist scholarship. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 15, 1-24.

Closing the Gap: A Literature Review of Gender Disparities in Higher Education

Morgan Purdy, Pepperdine University[3]

Abstract

This literature review delves into the gender disparities within academia, focusing specifically on the field of Communication and addressing broader trends across higher education. The review highlights women scholars' persistent challenges by analyzing research, leadership, and service dynamics. In research, the Matilda effect and gender bias in citation rates hinder recognition of women's scholarly contributions. Leadership positions exhibit a significant gender gap rooted in institutional biases and inadequate support systems. Additionally, women shoulder a disproportionate burden in service engagements, driven by social pressures and power dynamics. Addressing these disparities requires systemic changes, including reevaluating evaluation criteria, fostering new leadership models, and redistributing service responsibilities. Despite strides toward gender equity, the review underscores the need for further research to inform ongoing efforts toward creating an inclusive academic environment.

Keywords

gender disparities, academia, communication, gender gap, research practices, leadership roles, service engagement, Matilda effect, citation rates, institutional structures

---

[3] Morgan Purdy is a Communication Studies Major at Seaver College

Introduction

In higher education, gender has significantly shaped institutional structures, influencing attitudes, behaviors, and, most notably, opportunities for women. Research indicates that a gender gap still persists in academia, influencing various facets such as research opportunities, citation rates, teaching roles, leadership positions, and service commitments within the academic sphere. These dimensions of educational expectations collectively serve as the evaluation criteria determining the trajectory of academic scholars' career paths, especially in the context of tenure and rising leadership positions. This literature review aims to analyze existing research by highlighting gender disparities in academia, focusing specifically on the communication field. This gender gap not only affects the experiences of individual scholars but also spreads into the entire knowledge process. The central question guiding this review is: What does the current research indicate about the influence of gender on research practices, leadership roles, and service engagement within the discipline of communication and academia as a whole?

To address this question, this review thoroughly explores studies in the three primary categories utilized for assessing faculty members in higher education: research, leadership, and service. When exploring these three classifications, the specific disparities between male and female gender categories will be addressed. It is necessary to recognize that intersectionality and other gender identities have an additional influence on representation and opportunities present in academia, but the main focus of this paper will be on the male and female classifications because that is where the majority of research is available. The most significant section of research available for the communication discipline pertains to publication and citation rate comparisons between male and female scholars. The statistics indicate a substantial disparity in citation rates, with men being cited nearly five times more than their female counterparts in

communication journals (Knobloch-Westerwick & Glynn, 2013). Further, the findings concluded that in the peer-review process, both men and women exhibit a biased tendency to favor men's submissions over women's (Fox et al., 2017). These statistics will be examined later in the review to address potential biases under the Matilda effect phenomenon.

In the subsequent sections focusing on leadership and service, a significant decline in communication field-centered articles prompted a broader analysis encompassing academia across all disciplines. The gender gap trends in leadership positions demonstrate that regardless of the type of institution, women occupy less than a quarter of university presidencies and experience notable disparities in other leadership roles and boards across educational organizations (Longman & Anderson, 2011; Madsen, 2011). The research attributes this gender position gap to institutional structures, lack of support, and a more male-centered network in higher positions.

Regarding the final section, aspects of service engagement, the findings indicated that women engage far more in extra service hours than men across all disciplines (Guarino & Borden, 2017). The research also underscores that one reason for women's heightened involvement in service is not due to a preferential bias or desire but rather that women often find themselves more inclined to say yes to service requests than men (Misra et al., 2011). The rationale behind this inclination is linked to social pressures and power dynamics, especially when women are asked by their superiors to serve in various projects. Notable, this observation that women are more likely to agree to such requests increases when the requestor is a male in a position of power (Guarino & Borden, 2017).

The following sections of this review will delve into the statistics and overarching themes contributing to and potentially responsible for this gender gap in academia—themes such as

power dynamics, personal family desires, and inadequate support. The examination will also briefly explain how aspects of research, leadership, and service contribute to considerations for the tenure track and how unequal weights in certain institutions often hinder women's advancement. This analysis of the gender divide in higher education aims to discern patterns and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the crucial role gender dynamics play in communication scholarship and opportunities.

Influential Variables

A constant push for excellence exists in academia, and the gender gap poses formidable challenges for women scholars' representation across various institutions and positions. Prior to delving into the observable gender disparities within the realms of research, leadership, and service, it is crucial to have an overview of external factors that contribute to this gap in academia. In order to achieve tenure, faculty members are expected to excel in three main areas: research, teaching, and service (Clark & Simeone, 1989). The expectations vary on how much weight each of these spheres gets based on whether the institution is categorized as Research I or a more teaching-oriented university or college. Regardless of the categorization, succeeding in academia is challenging, and the product of a gender gap is directly intertwined with institutional policies and systemic biases that shape the professional trajectories of women scholars.

Women face significant challenges when acquiring positions in academia and leadership roles and often have to make hard decisions that impact their lives outside their jobs. For those women who do choose to climb the academic ladder, they are less likely than their male counterparts to have children, fearing potential career setbacks (Isgro & Castañeda, 2015). While this review does not extensively explore external factors impacting women, it acknowledges the effects of marriage and children on academic careers, including institutional resources

influencing gender equity. Pursuing career success forces many women to make challenging decisions regarding family and work-life balance. This dilemma is a central overarching theme that may be one reason women are more prevalent in less prestigious institutions and hold less secure positions (Isgro & Castañeda, 2015). Although women in the last thirty years have significantly increased participation in undergraduate and graduate education and are even in the majority of degree recipients, the same cannot be seen in the employment rate of men and women as professors (Mason & Goulden, 2004; Fan & Sturman, 2019).

Despite strides towards increased representation and involvement in higher education, women still remain outnumbered by men in all types of four-year institutions, and the only exception is for two-year institutions where women outnumber men in faculty positions (Monroe, 2016). This gender disparity in faculty positions at two-year versus four-year institutions is one contributor to the statistics on the wage gap, with female faculty often being underpaid compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, horizontal and vertical segregation, where women tend to cluster in lower-paying departments, is also a leading contributor to the distribution of salaries (Monroe, 2016). However, the underpayment of women persists across all disciplines compared to men, according to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP).

Sexism is deeply embedded in the overall structures of higher education and the evaluation process for recognition and tenure promotion (Park, 1996). Less than a third of full-time professors in the United States are women, thus resulting in fewer women receiving tenure benefits, meaning that if they are not tenured professors, they lack certain funding and resources (Colby & Fowler, 2022). In the field of communication, female faculty and researchers historically lacked access to facilities and resources, with their careers often determined more by

their positioned gender than intellectual capability. Dorsten's (2012) research emphasizes the structural privilege in academia, particularly rooted in the white male-dominated sector. This longstanding male-dominated lens has led to women's experiences in higher education needing more research, with limited avenues available for female scholars' voices to be heard.

Women encounter considerable challenges in gaining recognition in the field of communication, grappling with obstacles such as a perceived lack of legitimacy, difficulties in securing funding, establishing research lines, and shaping overall discourse due to a disproportionate amount of power through leadership positions (García-Jiménez & Herrero, 2022). According to García-Jiménez and Herrero (2022), female scholars often have to fight the hegemonic lens that leads to specific research ideas being labeled as "soft academia," which can lead to a significant decrease in funding availability and overall perceived credibility. Now that some of the many embedded and overarching struggles women face in academia have been addressed, the focus will shift to the specific examination of the gender gap in research, leadership, and service in the field of communication and, more broadly, the whole institution system.

Research

The academic cycle of knowledge production is impacted by gender, as well as other social characteristics such as race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. The process begins with acquiring funding, in which some women face a gendered bias based on assumptions about the quality of work they will produce, their scholarly merit, and their choice of topic (Lundine et al., 2019). Next, after securing funding, there is the peer-review process that all papers must undergo in order to be approved for publishing. Fox et al. (2017) discovered that when reviewers are accessing submissions through the peer-review process both men and women were more likely

to recommend a male paper submission than a female's submission. Demonstrating that regardless of the reviewer's gender, there is some form of gender bias if the author's gender is revealed during the peer-review process.

   After the peer review process and once the submission is approved for publication, the final piece is gaining visibility, which is done through associated recognition and citations. Some general studies in all academic publishing fields have shown that women are less likely to be cited overall than men (Lundine et al., 2019). When looking at citation rates specifically in communication scholarly work, women still receive far less recognition for their articles (Knobloch-Westerwick & Glynn, 2013; Lutz, 1990). A study looking at the most cited authors in prominent communication journals between 2000 and 2019 found that in 2019, 71 percent of what they call the communication citation elite (CCE) was male (Freelon et al., 2023). This means that as of 2019, more than two-thirds of the most cited authors in the field of communication were men; of those men, 91 percent were white. Freelon's et al. (2023) study found that not only are women of all ethnicities being cited less often than men, but it also indicated that of the twenty-three elite communication scholars who were not white, only six were women. These statistics represent the disproportionate power that females and, more specifically women of color hold in shaping academic discourse.

   There is immense pressure to frequently publish high-quality work in academia, driven by the desire to establish oneself and gain recognition through publications in prestigious journals or scholarly book publishers. One's ability to publish is directly linked with the power to shape one's respective field, achieve personal progress, and advance in academic ranks. The more recognition achieved, the more doors will open—reflecting the sentiment scholar Merton (1968) inspired through the phenomenon he called the 'Matthew Effect'. This term was coined

based on the Gospel of Matthew in the Bible and illustrates the uneven recognition of scholars' work based on their status.

Merton (1968) believed that the more well-known scientists were, the more visible their new contributions would be compared to less well-known scholars. In some cases, the work of lesser-known scientists might even be attributed to more prominent names, even if they did not contribute to it. Years later, a new term took shape based on Merton's work; scholar Rossiter (1993) dubbed it the 'Matilda Effect,' which is the phenomenon where women's achievements often receive less recognition than their male counterparts for similar research. The Matilda effect was researched to demonstrate the historical and systemic omission of women's accomplishments in the scientific field. Since Rossiter studied the Matilda effect, similar investigations have been replicated to apply this effect to other disciplines like communication.

Research specifically examining citation rates in the field of communication has been limited, but over the past two decades, two key studies have shed light on the pressing issue of the gender gap in citation rates. The first study by Knobloch-Westerwick and Glynn (2013) investigated the Matilda effect by examining 1,020 published articles from 1991 to 2005 in the *Journal of Communication* and *Communication Research*. The study found that male authors were cited, on average, 17.73 times, whereas women were cited only 12.77 times, indicating that men were cited almost five times more than women scholars in these two communication journals. Additionally, the authors hypothesized that the Matilda effect would weaken over the fifteen-year span of their study. However, they found no significant improvement in gender equality in citation patterns, indicating that the Matilda effect did not decrease over time (Westerwick & Glynn, 2013). The second foundational research paper that explored the Matilda effect was conducted by Feeley and Yang (2021) over ten years from 2002 to 2006 and then

again from 2012 to 2016, and they analyzed eight journals and over 3,000 articles. Their research found that in some of the journals, there was also a gender gap in citations and that overall men tended to self-cite more than women (Feeley & Yang, 2021).

In the realm of publication, research, and citations, findings have consistently shown that women are being cited far less frequently than their male counterparts. A perpetuating cycle of exclusion is being performed through phenomenons like the Matilda effect when deciding to cite a female author. Additionally, the majority of scholars publishing in the field of communication are male, and in tandem, men tend to cite other men more frequently (Mayer et al., 2017). When examining the research, there is a significant gender disparity in citation recognition, which highlights a broader problem women face in their ability to secure tenure jobs and gain future success (Knobloch-Westerwick & Glynn, 2013; Freelon et al., 2023). Overall, it appears that communication scholars exhibit a gender bias or at least a gender implicit bias when examining and deciding to cite female scholars' work.

Leadership

This section will highlight prevailing trends and leadership statistics across various academic institutions. Unfortunately, there is not enough research focusing specifically on trends related to communication leadership positions, thus underlining that further studies are needed to foster a more nuanced understanding of leadership dynamics within this field. While progress has been made in diminishing the gender gap among university faculty members, as previously discussed, women remain outnumbered by their male counterparts. Furthermore, this pronounced gender imbalance extends to leadership roles across diverse academic fields within colleges and universities, with women of color facing an even more pronounced underrepresentation (Van

Ummersen, 2023). This leadership gender gap persists despite evidence showing no significant differences in leadership capabilities between men and women (Morris & Laipple, 2015).

In the 1970s, women occupying senior academic leadership positions constituted less than 5 percent at all colleges and universities (Baker, 2012). Although representation has increased since then, it has plateaued in the last few decades. According to the White House Project Report (2009), women constitute 57 percent of all college students but only 26 percent of full-time professors and a mere 23 percent of university presidents, with these statistics remaining relatively unchanged in the past decade. The report also found that women comprise less than 30 percent of college and university leadership board members (2009). These findings were consistently seen a few years later by The Almanac of Higher Education in 2013, indicating that in the USA, women accounted for 22 percent of all university presidents, 40 percent of chief academic officers, and 43 percent of other senior administrators. Despite women constituting a majority of individuals pursuing higher education, they occupy less than a quarter of university presidencies and remain a minority in other senior administrative positions.

Narrowing the scope to specifically Christian institutions, a study by Longman and Anderson (2011) focused on a comprehensive 12-year analysis of gender trends in senior-level leadership positions within the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). They found that at the end of their study in 2010, the mean number of male senior leaders was 4.9, while in contrast, the mean number of women in senior leadership positions was 0.99, clearly revealing the lack of female representation. Even more surprisingly, Longman and Anderson (2011) found that of all the Christian institutions they looked at, 78 percent had just one or no women on their leadership teams, with a mere 2 percent having more than four women in senior leadership positions. These statistics illuminate the magnitude of the gender disparity within

Christian institutions, emphasizing the urgent need to examine the systemic factors that contribute to this underrepresentation of women in senior leadership roles.

Many factors hinder the advancement of women in higher education leadership, a few key ones being the university environment, personal circumstances, and a lack of women role models in leadership positions. Regarding university and college environments, authors Moody and Toni (2015) argue that organizational biases against women exist in many institutions and the concept of similarity attraction when it comes to employing people in leadership positions. This means that during the hiring process if a man held the previous leadership role or the hiring board is made up of predominantly men, they are more likely to hire a successor they feel is similar to them, which continues this cycle of male higher-up leadership (Moody & Toni, 2015). These practices continue the status quo of gendered organizational cultures that place value on the male-centered network (Gallant, 2014).

Another possible reason for the leadership gap is that women tend to self-select career paths that will not interrupt their personal choice of raising a family, so women tend to gravitate towards less leadership-driven positions (Acker, 2010). Not only are women less attracted to leadership paths for the complications it can have on their personal lives, but also because, according to Ackers (2010) interviews, they find the work demanding and extremely stressful with little to no support networks that cater to women. Due to this lack of support, one way to improve and increase the number of women in leadership positions would be to develop stronger networks for women in higher education. If proper mentorship, resources, and organizational change can occur in academia, women will continue to take strides and break the glass ceiling.

Service

When faculty members are hired at institutions, it is expected that they participate in service engagements, with the degree of attention depending on the type of the institution, whether it be a Research I, comprehensive, or teaching-focused establishment. While professors are informed that service is a key component of their job description, caution is advised against taking on an overwhelming amount of service commitments, as it may interfere with their teaching and scholarly pursuits (War, 2003). This mindset conditions faculty to engage in service out of obligation rather than recognizing it as a vital aspect of their career development. This poses a potential concern when addressing the disproportionate amount of service engaged between male and female faculty.

In academia, service can be categorized into three key areas: service to the institution, service to the discipline, and community engagement (Ward, 2003). While faculty members assuming defined administrative roles are compensated for their service, the majority do not receive extra compensation for institutional service and community engagement. However, faculty performance reviews often acknowledge their contributions to the institution (Guarino & Borden, 2017). Even without the additional compensation, women often take up service roles beyond their academic responsibilities, driven by a strong sense of good citizenship, altruism, and civic obligation (Pyke, 2011). Research indicates a gender imbalance in faculty service loads across each service category in all fields of academia (Link et al., 2008; Misra et al., 2011).

According to Guarino and Borden (2017), women are more likely to undertake service roles than men, with women in disciplines such as liberal arts and public policy engaging in more service projects than female faculty in fields like STEM and business. Data from Guarino and Borden's (2017) study was based on a survey intended to track the academic performance of

service engagement of male and female faculty members at over 140 institutions in all disciplines in 2014. It revealed that, on average, female faculty members allocate 0.6 more hours per week to service activities than their male counterparts. Specifically, the communication discipline exhibited an even higher disparity, with women contributing 0.8 more hours each week than men. It is also important to note that this disproportionate workload was also seen when accessing women of color, who are often overextended in various committees and service engagements (Harley, 2008). Despite women's greater involvement in service, their contributions are often overlooked and considered purely voluntary and goodwill-based.

Guarino and Borden (2017) propose two potential explanations for this gender-service differential: women are either voluntarily choosing to engage in greater service acts than men, or women are less likely to refuse service requests from their superiors than male faculty members. However, the research strongly suggests the latter, with studies showing that, while women, on average, devote more hours to service than men, they do not inherently show a greater preference to engage in more service than research (Misra et al., 2011). This indicates that most women are not engaging in service activities solely out of preferential biases but rather that a fundamental issue is influencing their involvement. Pyke (2011) suggests that women may be unable to refuse service requests due to the underlying gender inequity structure built within the leadership boards in academia. Additionally, Guarino and Borden's (2017) study reveals that women are less likely to decline service requests from male departmental chairs compared to female chairs, indicating that social pressures and power dynamics contribute to the gender service gap. When administrators ask women to serve in various extra projects, it invokes a sense of confusion on whether they have the liberty to say no. Therefore, bridging the gender divide requires a

profound emphasis on leadership development to ensure an equitable distribution of service responsibilities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this comprehensive literature review highlighted the persistent gender disparities that permeate across all academic disciplines, with a particular focus on the communication field. The examination of research, leadership, and service within higher education reveals multifaceted challenges that disproportionately impact women. The gender gap is not confined to only individual experiences but extends to the broader knowledge production process, shaping the trajectory of scholars' careers.

In the realm of research, it is clear that the Matilda effect, gender bias in citation rates, and the peer-review process continue to hinder the recognition of women scholars. Since academic publishing is essential to being hired as a faculty member and promoted, the under-representation of women as authors in academic publications and more prestigious authorship positions potentially affects the overall representation of women faculty in academia (West et al., 2013). Studies have found that one way to improve journal gender biases is to conduct a double-blind review process to alleviate the discriminatory tendencies against female authors (Conklin & Singh, 2022). Efforts to address these issues in research involve reconsidering evaluation criteria, an anonymous peer-review process, and a commitment to promoting diverse voices in scholarly discourse.

As the review reported, leadership positions within academic institutions display a persistent gender gap as well, particularly at senior levels. This imbalance is rooted in institutional structures, biases in hiring processes, and the absence of adequate support systems for women. Unfortunately, women leaders in male-dominated contexts must deal with gendered

aspects of their self-presentation, such as dress and language, which leads people to evaluate women's credibility on a different scale than men. Institutions must promote systemic changes by fostering new leadership models as they reevaluate hiring practices and renew old policies such as family leave (Moody & Toni, 2015; Ackers, 2010). Also, establishing mentorship programs and peer networks can help increase the community's development, particularly for women striving to advance academically in leadership roles.

The final section of the review revealed that women often shoulder a disproportionate burden when it comes to service engagements within institutions. This gendered service gap is not a result of women's inherent preferences but rather a manifestation of social pressures and power dynamics. Department chairs must be aware of the overall service projects their staff is already involved in to avoid adding additional projects to faculty who are already over-extended. Leadership development becomes crucial in addressing this imbalance, ensuring service responsibilities are equitably distributed and enhancing mentorship programs to empower women faculty to make informed and selective choices in their service commitments.

Addressing the gender gap in academia requires a holistic approach that acknowledges and confronts systemic issues. From challenging biases in research practices to reevaluating leadership structures and redefining service expectations, institutions must actively work towards creating an inclusive environment. The solution is not to go "gender-blind" because institutions need to acknowledge the structural hurdles that women face in faculty advancement and opportunities; if they do not, then it places blame on women and their ability to achieve rather than on the structure as a whole (Pyke, 2015). Moving forward involves reviewing and revising institutional policies and peer-review processes fostering mentorship programs, peer networks, and supportive work environments.

After conducting this review, it is clear that there is a notable gap in available research and data on this topic, particularly in the discipline of communication. This lack of information highlights a substantial need for further research. Conducting additional studies would help facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the current gender gap and help assess trends and progress in years to come. Therefore, a commitment to further research is essential to help promote gender equity, not only within communication but across all academic disciplines.

.

References

Acker, S. (2010). Gendered games in academic leadership. *International studies in sociology of education*, 20(2), 129-152.

Allen, K. A., Butler-Henderson, K., Reupert, A., Longmuir, F., Finefter-Rosenbluh, I., Berger, E., ... & Fleer, M. (2021). Work like a girl: Redressing gender inequity in academia through systemic solutions. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 18(3), 03.

Baker, M. (2012). Academic careers and the gender gap. *UBC Press*.

Bellotti, E., Czerniawska, D., Everett, M. G., & Guadalupi, L. (2022). Gender inequalities in research funding: Unequal network configurations, or unequal network returns*? Social Networks*, 70, 138–151.

Clark, S. M., & Simeone, A. (1989). Academic women: working towards equality. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 60(6), 718–718. https://doi.org/10.2307/1981951.

Colby, G., & Fowler C., (2022, September 1). *Broadening Efforts to Address Gender Inequity.* American Association of University Professors. AAUP. https://www.aaup.org/article/broadening-efforts-address-gender-inequity

Conklin, M., & Singh, S. (2022). Triple-blind review as a solution to gender bias in academic publishing: A theoretical approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 47(12), 2487–2496.

Dorsten, A.-M. (2012). "Thinking dirty": digging up three founding "matriarchs" of communication studies. *Communication Theory*, 22(1), 25–47. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01398.x

Fan, X., & Sturman, M. (2019). Has higher education solved the problem? Examining the gender wage gap of recent college graduates entering the workplace. *Compensation & Benefits Review*, 51(1), 5-12. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886368719856268

Feeley, T. H., & Yang, Z. (2021). Is there a matilda effect in communication journals? *Communication Reports*, 35(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/08934215.2021.1974505.

Freelon, D., Pruden, M. L., Eddy, K. A., & Kuo, R. (2023). Inequities of race, place, and gender among the communication citation elite, 2000–2019. *Journal of Communication*, 73(4), 356–367. https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqad002

Fox, C. W., Burns, C. S., Muncy, A. D., & Meyer, J. A. (2017). Author-suggested reviewers: Gender differences and influences on the peer review process at an ecology journal. *Functional Ecology*, 31(1), 270-280.

Harley, D. A. (2008). Maids of academe: African American women faculty at predominately white institutions. *Journal of African American Studies*, 12, 19-36.

Isgro, K., & Castañeda, M. (2015). Mothers in US academia: Insights from lived experiences. *Women's Studies International Forum* 53(140),174-181.

Gallant, A. (2014). Symbolic interactions and the development of women leaders in higher education. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(3), 203-216.

García-Jiménez, L., & Herrero, E. (2022). Narrating the field of communication through some female voices: Women's experiences and stories in academia. *Communication Theory,* 32(2), 289–297. https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtac002

Guarino, C. M., & Borden, V. M. (2017). Faculty service loads and gender: Are women taking care of the academic family? *Research in higher education,* 58, 672-694.

Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Glynn, C. J. (2011). The Matilda effect—role congruity effects on scholarly communication. *Communication Research*, 40(1), 3–26. doi:10.1177/0093650211418339

Link, A. N., Swann, C. A., & Bozeman, B. (2008). A time allocation study of university faculty. *Economics of education review*, 27(4), 363-374.

Longman, K. A., & Anderson, P. S. (2011). Gender trends in senior-level leadership: A 12-year analysis of the CCCU U.S. member institutions. *Christian Higher Education*, 10(5), 422-443. https://doi.org/10.1080/15363759.2011.559874

Lundine, J., Bourgeault, I. L., Glonti, K., Hutchinson, E., & Balabanova, D. (2019). "I don't see gender": Conceptualizing a gendered system of academic publishing. *Social Science & Medicine*, 235, 112388.

Lutz, C. (1990). The erasure of women's writing in sociocultural anthropology. *American Ethnologist*, 17(4), 611-627.

Madsen, S. R. (2011). Women and leadership in higher education. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 14(1), 3–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422311429668

Mason, M. A., & Goulden, M. (2004). Marriage and baby blues: Redefining gender equity in the academy. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 596(1), 86-103. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716204268744

Mayer, V., Press, A., Verhoeven, D., & Stern, J. (2017). How do we intervene in the stubborn persistence of patriarchy in communication research? In D. T. Scott & A. Shaw (Eds.), Interventions: *Communication theory and practice* (pp. 53–64). Peter Lang.

Merton, R. K. (1968). The Matthew effect in science. *Science*, 159(3810), 56–63.

Misra, J., Lundquist, J. H., Holmes, E., & Agiomavritis, S. (2011). The ivory ceiling of service work. *Academe*, 97(1), 22-26.

Monroe, K. (2016). Gender inequality within the ivory tower. *Sex Roles*, 74(5-6).

Moody, A. L., & Toni, N. (2015). Women's access to higher education leadership: where are the role models? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 45(1), 45-52.

Morris, T. L., & Laipple, J. S. (2015). How prepared are academic administrators? Leadership and job satisfaction within US research universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(2), 241-251.

Park, S. (1996) Research, teaching, and service: Why shouldn't women's work count?, *The Journal of Higher Education*, 67:1, 46-84, DOI: 10.1080/00221546.1996.11780249.

Pyke, K. (2015). Faculty gender inequity and the "just say no to service" fairy tale. Disrupting the culture of silence, 83-95.

Rossiter, M. W. (1993). The Matthew Matilda effect in science. *Social Studies of Science*, 23(2), 325-341. https://doi.org/10.1177/030631293023002004

The Almanac of Higher Education. (2013). Distribution of presidents and senior administrators at 4-year institutions, by age, gender, race and ethnicity. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

The White House Project. (2009). The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women's Leadership.

Ward, K. (2003). Faculty service roles and the scholarship of engagement. ASHE-ERIC *Higher Education Report. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education Series.* 29(5).

West, J. D., Jacquet, J., King, M. M., Correll, S. J., & Bergstrom, C. T. (2013). The role of gender in scholarly authorship. *PloS one*, 8(7).

Van Ummersen, C. (2023). Women in academic leadership: Professional strategies, personal

choices. In D. R. Dean, S. J. Bracken, & J. K. Allen (Eds.), *Women in academe series*.

Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.4324/978100344878

Disclosing Bisexuality as a Chinese Daughter: An Autoethnography

Laury Li, Pepperdine University[4]

Abstract

This autoethnography explores the experience of the author, a bisexual Chinese woman, navigating a conversation about her same-sex relationship with her mother, in the context of Chinese family culture. Rooted in Confucian values, Chinese culture emphasizes traditional family roles of women and legitimizes heteronormativity, adding a burden to those who do not conform to those norms. The paper examines communication strategies adopted in the author's coming-out narrative within the mother-daughter relationship under the Co-cultural Communication Theory framework. This article seeks to contribute to the discourse of East Asian and Chinese queer studies by analyzing personal experiences.

Keywords

bisexuality, Chinese, queer, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, Co-cultural Communication Theory

---

[4] Laury Li is a Communication Studies major at Seaver College.

Introduction

Growing up in a traditional Chinese household, I was instilled with a strong sense of cultural values. My parents enrolled me in "Sunday schools" from fourth to sixth grade to learn Confucian teachings. While I appreciated learning about ancient Chinese literature, my parents anticipated my commitment to invaluable Chinese traditions. They envisioned me as an obedient daughter, then an obedient wife. However, this vision began to unravel in seventh grade when my mother discovered my secret relationship with my then-boyfriend. The latter expectation was shattered when I disclosed my current inclination toward homosexuality in my junior year of college. I brought up the subject with my mother on the dark sidewalk when we were going back home in our hometown, a small underdeveloped city. It was 10 PM. I knew I couldn't risk mentioning such a shocking topic at home where we live with our grandparents who have cardiovascular disease, but I have been waiting to say it. I noted down the coming-out conversation that night as much as I remembered to remind myself of the attitude of my closest family member and trace its evolution. In this essay, I will examine segments of verbal conversation with my mother about my sexuality, analyze my assumptions about Chinese cultural values, and identify my communication strategies through the lens of Co-cultural Communication Theory (Orbe, 1998). The selected text is categorized by two themes: defending my sexuality, and seeking the balance between kinship and my unaccepted sexuality. These two themes lead to three major co-cultural communication orientations: aggressive accommodation, assertive assimilation, and nonassertive separation.

Aggressive Accommodation

Mom: "It [homosexuality] is illegal and unnatural. Human beings will go extinct."

> Me: (Look up statistics from the internet) "Same-sex marriage is legalized in 34 countries
>
> and regions all over the world. Plus, same-sex marriage not being legalized doesn't mean
>
> homosexuality breaches the law. Even straight couples in China today are not getting
>
> married or having children. By your logic, human beings can go extinct even without gay
>
> people — the marriage rate and birth rate in China are so low due to economic downturn
>
> and a lack of social welfare. Besides, lesbians can have children through various means,
>
> including adoption."

My mother posed a classic question about homosexuality, questioning the perceived lack of

morality deviating from the mission of reproduction. Homosexuality was declassified as a mental

disorder by the Chinese Psychiatric Association in 2001 (Gittings, 2001), a year before my birth.

However, I came to realize that my mother grew up during the period when same-sex

relationships were outlawed, between 1949 to the 1990s (Bie & Tang, 2016). In denying

homosexuality, I infer that she endorsed the legal and so-called natural practice of heterosexual

marriage and the traditional roles of wife and mother.

The co-cultural communication model is constructed on the standpoint theory, to describe

the "interactions among underrepresented and dominant group members" (Orbe, 1998). The

framework is particularly useful for studying "what" and "how" in the coming out discourse,

according to Bie and Tang (2016).

To address my mother's biases regarding same-sex relationships, I engaged in a debate by

presenting facts, employing logic, and redirecting blame. The aggressive accommodation

approach, as outlined by Orbe (1998), seeks to promote change within dominant structures with a

genuine desire to collaborate with members of the dominant group. This involves the practices of

confrontation and seeking advantages, also occasionally incorporating the assertive

accommodation approach to avoid a separatist perception (Orbe, 1998). While the government reinforces the stigma of homosexuality through strict censorship of diversity discourse in mass media (Engebretsen, 2014), I categorized the administration as the dominant group, along with heterosexual couples. Through blame-shifting, my aim was to confront her by transferring the significant burden of sustaining the population to the dominant group. I brought up adoption and the increasing number of countries legalizing same-sex marriage to counter her assertion of "unnatural." Simultaneously, I sought to educate her on current policies regarding homosexuality. Notably, the Chinese adoption policy permits single women to adopt children, offering an alternative for homosexual couples to fulfill filial norms without adhering to heterosexual marriage, thus aligning with the expectations of the dominant group. My response addressed my mother's question with refutation while expressing a desire to meet traditional expectations.

Assertive Assimilation

Me: "I've talked to some friends, and even straight Chinese girls at my school don't like their male peers. Why do you insist that I like men?"

Mom: "Because it's normal."

Me: "I didn't live in a vacuum, I've still been getting in touch with men. My standards are high, and I haven't found anyone I like… Meanwhile, I was attracted by a girl."

I realized that the Western discourse on equality wouldn't sway my mother. Therefore, I shifted to comply with norms within my dominant social group – straight Chinese girls my age studying at Pepperdine. In addition, my mother and I concurred on the notion that a woman should rather be single than pursue a partner who fails to meet her standards. Without explicitly conveying that I was attracted to an excellent person regardless of her gender, I emphasized my efforts to align

with the norm and once again shifted the blame to heterosexual male peers in the dominant group.

Bie and Tang argue that coming out to parents in the Chinese context is the most challenging scenario compared with coming out to other audiences (2016). Chinese homosexual individuals often adopt an assertive assimilation orientation if they perceive mere tolerance instead of full embracement (2016). Assertive assimilation strives to "downplay co-cultural differences and try to become absorbed into dominant society" (Orbe, 1998). I alluded to a long-existing consensus between my mother and me about how women should keep a high standard when seeking their partner, in order to convince her that my sexuality is desirable. While my mother was concerned about the abnormality of my sexual orientation, I referred to my experience with female peers in the dominant group and focused on our similarities in choosing romantic partners, making an effort to assimilate with a rising norm.

The intergenerational difference in processing topics on sexuality is tightly related to the level of exposure to marginalized groups. Parental panic over rejections stems from parents' struggle to comprehend homosexuality and their limited experience on this subject (Wei, 2023). Presenting homosexuality is unprecedented in my family. I sought to defend my sexuality by highlighting similarities between the co-cultural and dominant groups through the heterosexual perspective, in order to fit in a relatively dominant narrative. While my mother implied my choice of partner failed women's traditional role in reproduction, I attempted to redirect the blame to males who did not meet my expectations, in an effort to change the subject of criticism.

Nonassertive Separation

Me: "I'm just letting you know; if you don't support it, it's okay."

…Mom: "Have you thought about how the family will react?"

Me: "I don't plan to tell them."

Mom: "Have you considered the consequences of society not accepting it? Your family will become the subject of gossip and ridicule."

Me: "It's not like I'm going to walk down the street and announce that I'm a lesbian."

Mom: "Your dad has provided for you for so long."

Me: "He's been hoping for me to get married and have kids soon. I'm only twenty, and I haven't even finished my undergrad degree. I don't plan to tell him; I'll delay it."

The conversation approached its end, as my mother and I were staring at each other outside the neighborhood at midnight and both felt exhausted. The reason for having this conversation in a public place with few people around was to save face for both me and my mother — to avoid exposing it to other family members. I have always perceived my mother and me to be the two most open-minded people in the whole family. If she didn't accept it, facing the rest of the family would be even more challenging.

Engebresten states that in the East Asian context, sexual identity itself is not the problem, but an intimate relationship that "interferes with the ability to perform one's role in the family" is the cause of conflict (2014). Making my sexuality open risks my parents' reputation for raising a deviant daughter and their incapability to correct me. The risk has two layers, my parents' reputation among the extended family and my family's reputation in social relationships. I expected to make both of my parents aware of my sexuality but not to the extended family. When my mother said, "Your dad has provided for you for so long," it was more of a statement than a question that I should obey his expectations out of filial piety: giving back to the family with gratitude, not with humiliation.

I understood that my mother's attitude would not shift overnight, thus altering my preferred communication outcome from accommodation and assimilation to separation. Separation can involve "subtle communicative practices to maintain a separation orientation" depending on situational circumstances (Orbe, 1998). Wei developed the concept of "stretched kinship" to describe the long-distance and long-term separation between young queer people and their families, which often intensifies detachment as queer individuals conceal their sexual orientation (2023). In order to preserve family relationships, I chose to psychologically maintain barriers from my father and other family members in the dominant group. Studying abroad in the United States as an international student and being away from my home country also contributes to physical detachment. While I recognized them as a potential source of pressure, I am aware that my sexuality may subject them to social and moral pressure as well.

In navigating interactions with the dominant group, co-cultural group members often find themselves fulfilling existing expectations while facing unavoidable encounters, as highlighted by Orbe (1998). If I face inevitable occasions with family members of the dominant group, I may pretend by "passing up the opportunity for repair" the heterosexual presumptions, for the purpose of avoiding condemnation and conforming to "normality" (Land & Kitzinger, 2005). The decision of avoidance aims to maintain the balance between my kinship and unaccepted sexuality.

Moving Forward

Through this reflection on my own communication orientations and approaches, it reminds me of the underlying heteronormativity within my narrative. I attempted to convince my mother about the "normativity" of me being attracted to a woman. To achieve that, I continuously negotiate under a heterosexual norm and align myself with that logic to create

seemingly valid arguments. Yet, I forgot that it is a strong repulsive force of heteronormativity that marginalized queerness in the first place. It may never yield productive outcomes since they are contradictory. Though there was significant pushback, and the progress stopped at separation, I believe that there is room for future communication with more friendly approaches. Moreover, I realized the pressure and responsibility that fell on my mother's shoulders, as she carried my secret and came into my closet. Moving forward, I intend to use the model to guide my future coming-out strategies, and compose well-considered communication approaches that can reach higher acceptance. I will also avoid taking acceptance for granted and think through my family's perspective to reach an optimal outcome for both the co-cultural and dominant group — in this case, my family and I.

References

Mayfield J., Mayfield M., Sharbrough W. C. III. (2015). Strategic vision and values in top leaders' communications: Motivating language at a higher level. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *52*(1), 97–121.

Men, L. R., Qin, Y. S., & Jin, J. (2022). Fostering employee trust via effective supervisory communication during the COVID-19 pandemic: Through the lens of motivating language theory. *International Journal of Business Communication*, *59*(2), 193–218. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294884211020491

Sharbrough W. C., Simmons S. A., Cantrill D. A. (2006). Motivating language in industry: Its impact on job satisfaction and perceived supervisor effectiveness. *The Journal of Business Communication* (1973), *43*(4), 322–343