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UNVEILING GENDERED SCRIPTS ABOUT BASIC EMOTIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS*[1]

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Abstract. *This paper explores the complex relationship between cultural norms and gender differences in emotionality, specifically regarding basic emotions. Examining the bio-psycho-social model, the review focuses on socialization practice and situational contexts converging to produce gendered patterns of emotionality. The review further analyzes the implications of gendered emotional schemas and scripts on human functioning. It is argued that while women are often perceived as more emotional, this perception is largely rooted in expressiveness rather than emotional experience. Further, the paper explores interpersonal dynamics, which might be related to these gendered norms, with women generally displaying greater emotional sensitivity and expressiveness, particularly in contexts that value emotional interdependence. This is contrasted with the cultural pressure on men to conform to traditional masculine ideals, which often discourages emotional expressiveness, particularly in public settings. The potential mental health implications of these gendered emotional patterns are also explored, suggesting that women's greater emotional engagement and reliance on social support may enhance their well-being. The review concludes by underscoring the importance of continued research to further understand the causal links and underlying processes that contribute to these gender differences.*

Key words: *emotion, gender differences, cultural norms, gendered emotional patterns*.

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[1] This article focuses on traditional gender roles and stereotypes. However, it is important to acknowledge that gender exists on a spectrum, and individuals may identify as transgender, gender fluid, non-binary, or other gender identities. These identities are valid and deserve full recognition and respect.

1. INTRODUCTION

The process of social perception, i.e., evaluating others, requires us to think about others and make an effort to understand their actions to be accurate (Baumeister and Bushman 2011). However, the capacity for thinking is limited, so people are prone to using shortcuts when they feel overwhelmed (Gilbert, Pelham, and Krull 1988). Since automatic thinking requires less effort than conscious thinking, people tend to rely on it (Baumeister and Bushman 2011). What makes the automatic system quick are knowledge structures – organized sets of information existing in our memory that result from the frequent co-occurrence of these data in experience. When one of the concepts that make up this organized knowledge structure arises in someone's thought process, another concept from that structure will automatically follow.

Schemas and scripts are such experiential formations (Baumeister and Bushman 2011). Schemas are knowledge structures that contain basic information about a concept (self, a specific person, group, or object), its characteristics, and its relationships with other concepts. Connecting beliefs about certain phenomena into a coherent system allows a person to organize information about the internal and external world. This organization makes the world clearer, more predictable, and easier to function in. As mentioned above, this organization may rely on someone's group membership – the social category he or she belongs to. Social categorization is the act of dividing people into groups based on shared qualities like race, gender, religion, etc. Stereotypes are specific types of schemas that involve generalized beliefs about a particular group of people. They contain generalized beliefs and expectations about the characteristics, behaviors, and attributes of members of particular groups, simplifying social perception by categorizing individuals based on group membership. Scripts, on the other hand, are knowledge structures composed of information about how social objects react in different situations. They contain data about motives, intentions, goals, causes of certain events, specific behaviors, and situations that enable or prevent certain behaviors. We use them to define a particular situation and organize our actions accordingly. Individuals develop schemas and scripts throughout their lives, starting in childhood. These frameworks shape how they perceive, understand, and react to life experiences.

In this review, we aim to unveil gendered schemas and scripts related to primary emotions and their implications for expressions of emotion, interpersonal relations, and mental health.

2. BASIC EMOTIONS AND THEIR REGULATION

Emotion is a multifaceted phenomenon, considered as a hypothetical construct that involves several components, according to appraisal theories (e.g., Lazarus 1993; Roseman 1984, 2001; Scherer 2001). It encompasses the cognitive component, which involves the evaluation of an event; the emotional response, which consists of experiential, physiological, and motor aspects; and the readiness to act.

Emotions can be categorized into basic and more complex ones. Ekman (1999) set the criteria for identifying primary emotions, which include: universal emotional signals (such as specific facial expressions), unique physiological responses, automatic appraisal, and specific developmental and cross-species presence. Primary emotions also feature a quick onset, short duration, spontaneous appearance, and specific subjective experiences. Ekman identifies anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise as primary emotions. He also includes

contempt, although its recognition across cultures was less consistent compared to other primary emotions (Elfenbein and Ambady 2002).

Happiness is a positive emotion that people seek, manifesting from mild joy to elation (Ekman and Friesen 1975/2003). It can arise from self-affirmation, social approval, or pleasurable experiences and can be expressed quietly or with exuberant laughter. Sadness is a reaction to loss or disappointment, involving a passive, sorrowful state. It often combines with other emotions, such as fear or anger, and often persists for some time. Fear emerges in response to perceived threats and can be linked with physical or psychological dangers. Disgust is a reaction to something unpleasant leading to avoidance or distancing. It can be pathogenic, sexual, or moral, and may occur with other emotions like anger or surprise. Surprise is a brief emotion triggered by unexpected events and can range from mild to intense. It often shifts quickly to another emotion, such as fear or happiness, as the situation is evaluated. Anger arises from frustration or perceived injustice, often due to interference from others or physical threats. It can vary in intensity and is sometimes accompanied by other emotions like fear or sadness. Contempt is the emotion of disapproval and a sense of moral superiority over another person, group, or their actions (Ekman 2003).

When discussing the motor aspects of emotion, i.e. its expression, Ekman and Friesen (1975/2003) argue that emotions primarily manifest in the face. Unlike the specific facial muscle configurations that correspond to particular emotions, body movements that accompany a certain emotional experience are not as specific.

Individuals often need to manage their emotions, for which they use different emotion regulation strategies (Koole 2009). According to the process model, these strategies can be focused either on antecedent events (input), which refers to the situation that triggers the emotional reaction, or on responses (output), which involves modifying one of the components of the emotional response (experiential, physiological, and/or behavioral) once it has already occurred (Gross 1998). This model is also known as the input-output model. Antecedent-focused emotion regulation includes strategies applied before the emotional response is formed, such as situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change. While the first two strategies aim to change the activating situation, the latter two focus on its interpretation. Cognitive change alters the meaning the person attributes to the situation, thereby affecting both the experiential and behavioral components of the response. Garnefski, Kraaij, and Spinhoven (2002) differentiate nine cognitive strategies for emotional regulation (self-blame, other-blame, rumination, catastrophizing, putting into perspective, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal, acceptance, and planning). There are gender differences in the frequency of using these strategies. For instance, women are more likely to ruminate on their emotions, which is a risk factor for developing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Nolen-Hoeksema 2000), while men tend to divert their attention away from such emotional states (Nolen-Hoeksema, Larson, and Grayson 1999).

Response-focused emotion regulation (output) includes strategies used after the emotional response has been formed, such as intensifying, diminishing, prolonging, or limiting the ongoing emotional experience, physiological, or behavioral response. Cultural norms can shape how emotions are expressed. Ekman and Friesen (1975/2003) identify three methods for managing facial expressions of emotion, as the main channel for their manifestation: adding elements of another emotion to an existing facial expression, as a form of commentary (qualifying); changing the intensity of the facial expression, by altering the number of active facial areas, the duration of the expression, or the intensity of facial muscle

activity (modulating), and concealing true feelings (falsifying) through simulation, suppression, or masking.

This understanding of emotion regulation provides the foundation for examining how societal norms related to gender shape expressions of emotion and behavior in various contexts.

3. Understanding Cultural Gender-related Norms in Emotional Behavior

3.1. The Cultural Construction of Emotionality

Chaplin (2015) provided an overview of different theoretical approaches that explain the differences in emotional behavior between men and women, such as the greater expressiveness of women when it comes to positive emotions (e.g., LaFrance, Hecht, and Levy Paluck 2003) and internalizing negative ones (e.g., Allen and Haccoun 1976; Matsumoto et al. 1998), and conversely when it comes to anger, which is more typical for men (e.g. Archer 2004; Potegal and Archer 2004). That overview includes three main approaches: biological theories, psychosocial developmental theories, and social constructionist theories. Based on them, this author provides a bio-psycho-social model of gender differences in emotion expression. The model posits that gender differences in emotional expression arise from a combination of biological predispositions, socialization experiences, and situational factors, which interact to shape how individuals perceive, experience, and express emotions within specific cultural contexts. According to this model, parents may encourage boys to regulate negative emotions during infancy to manage their heightened arousal and activity levels, as biological predispositions. In contrast to parenting practices for boys, the bio-psycho-social model suggests that parents often engage in more emotionally focused interactions with their daughters. Girls' typically lower arousal levels and more advanced language skills may facilitate these exchanges, leading to increased emotional expressivity.

This review will primarily focus on the role of socialization in shaping gendered behaviors and beliefs related to emotion. While acknowledging the potential influence of biological factors, as suggested by research (see Chaplin 2015), the primary emphasis will be on understanding how cultural and social processes contribute to the development of gendered emotional scripts. Understanding belief systems, values, practices, and ways of life within a specific culture is crucial for comprehending how individuals form and develop their cognitive patterns (Miller 2001). This cultural approach examines social-psychological phenomena, subjectivity, and individual behavior through the lens of the culture in which a person develops. With the cognitive revolution and the study of schemas, scripts, and other cognitive structures, there has been increased attention to how cultural contexts influence the meanings attributed to information and their impact on individual thinking and behavior.

Patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior are formed through experience (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). Hofstede and his colleagues describe these patterns, which partly influence human behavior, as *mental programs* or the *software of the mind* (p. 5). These mental programs are influenced by the social environment in which an individual is raised, with culture being one form of such mental software. Those authors (Hofstede 2001; Hofstede et al. 2010) identify three levels of mental programming: the universal level (inherited and related to basic human functions), the collective level (learned and shared

among specific groups), and the individual level (unique to each person). In terms of emotions, while the capacity to experience emotions is part of the universal level, how individuals manage and express these emotions is influenced by their cultural context. Despite cultural variations, certain traits are predominantly associated with men or women. Men are generally expected to be strong, self-confident, and competitive, while women's roles are considered gentler, involving caring for others, social relationships, and the environment. Those common norms related to basic emotions will be the focus of this paper.

3.2. Gendered Schemas and Scripts About Emotionality

There is a widespread belief that women are more emotional than men, often seen as more easily overwhelmed by their feelings and influenced by emotions in their decisions, whereas men are perceived as more rational. However, numerous studies challenge this widely accepted notion of women's greater emotionality, suggesting that these differences are more about expressiveness than actual emotional experience (Dimberg and Lundquist 1990; Kring and Gordon 1998; Larson and Pleck 1999; Larson, Richards, and Perry-Jenkins 1994). Additionally, research shows that women are not generally more expressive than men; rather, their expressiveness varies depending on the type of emotion (e.g., Davis 1995; Dimberg and Lundquist 1990; Goos and Silverman 2002; LaFrance et al. 2003; Matsumoto et al. 1998). Those results could be related to social norms concerning emotionality, which differ by gender.

Findings highlight cultural expectations about how men and women should behave. Timmers, Fischer, and Manstead (2003) developed an instrument for measuring beliefs about the emotional behavior of men and women, which Pejičić and Ćirović (2019) adapted and partially reconstructed for a sample of Serbian students. The findings of this study (Pejičić and Ćirović 2019) suggest that beliefs about the emotional behavior of men and women are systematically organized into a coherent cluster of interrelated beliefs, thereby creating structured gender stereotypes regarding emotional behavior. Women are generally expected to display positive emotions (Timmers et al. 2003), while negative emotions are more acceptable for women only if they do not harm others. Conversely, men are not supported in expressing negative emotions that signify weakness or helplessness. Emotions indicating a sense of helplessness were more often recognized in women. Additionally, there is a belief that emotional expression at work is less functional when exhibited by women compared to men. The study's authors concluded that men's emotional expressions were viewed more positively and less stereotypically than those of women, leading to a perception of men as more competent due to their greater emotional sensitivity. However, when individuals evaluated their own desired emotional behavior, these gender differences vanished. This implies that perceived differences in emotional expression between men and women might be more about societal expectations than inherent traits. Research also suggests that people generally believe women express emotions like happiness and fear more often than men, while men are associated with anger and disgust (Hess et al. 2000; Plant et al. 2000). Perceptions of women as more affiliative and less dominant in interpersonal relations align with these norms (Algoe, Buswell, and DeLamater 2000; Bernardi 2006; Pejičić 2020). Men also find smiling women more physically and sexually attractive, while women's attraction to smiling men is less pronounced (Tracy and Beall 2011). These findings highlight the cultural pressure on women to be pleasant and agreeable.

A study by Pejičić and Ćirović (2019) showed that male participants hold stronger beliefs about how people should behave emotionally compared to female participants, indicating that they have more generalized perceptions of emotional behavior. This finding aligns with a meta-analytic study by LaFrance et al. (2003), which revealed that women indeed smile more; however, studies with a male first author reported larger gender differences in smiling frequency, possibly due to social learning influenced by gendered perceptions of emotional norms.

Brody and Hall (2008) suggest that many gender differences, such as women's greater interpersonal sensitivity (McClure 2000) or men's clearer nonverbal expression of anger (Goos and Silverman 2002) and women's more successful nonverbal communication of happiness and fear (Huang 2009), may stem from the perceived vulnerability of women due to self-schemas shaped by interdependence and gender roles, as well as societal expectations that value these traits. In contrast, expressions of pride and disgust align with the socially constructed image of men as independent. This image influences their self-schema, emphasizing competition, high social status, and its maintenance.

Research suggests that these expectations start early (Brooks-Gunn and Lewis 1982, as cited in Oatley and Jenkins 1996; Chaplin, Cole, and Zahn-Waxler 2005; Diener and Lucas 2004). In a cross-cultural study (Diener and Lucas 2004), although there was no gender difference in the preference for happiness in future children, the results revealed a stronger preference for fearlessness and anger suppression in boys. This supports the notion that boys, through socialization, are expected to learn to suppress emotions, including fear and anger, aligning with the belief that men should be strong and unemotional. This expectation may seem contradictory to the idea of men being strong and dominant, where expressing anger is more acceptable than it is for women. However, this can be interpreted through gendered schemas in which women are viewed as less dominant and more affiliative – since the expression of powerful emotions is not expected from them, strict control is deemed unnecessary, while the norms concerning men's control are more explicit. This is in accordance with results from Pejičić's (2020) study, in which greater emphasis on controlling emotions of power was placed on men. The study (Diener and Lucas 2004) also found that male participants placed greater importance on managing anger, supporting this explanation. Mothers often respond differently to crying boys and girls, implying that boys should be less emotional (Brooks-Gunn and Lewis 1982, as cited in Oatley and Jenkins 1996). Over time, boys learn to suppress their emotions more than girls. Research by Chaplin et al. (2005) also revealed some patterns in parental responses to children's emotions. Fathers, in particular, were more likely to acknowledge and respond to expressions of sadness and anxiety in daughters, while being more attentive to anger and disharmonious emotion in sons. This study showed that even a subtle act of giving attention may serve to reinforce or validate specific gender roles related to emotions. Also, girls were more likely than boys to believe others would accept their emotional displays (Zeman and Garber 1996). Mothers were seen as more accepting of sadness than peers, and both parents were viewed as more understanding of pain. Older children, compared to younger ones, perceived fathers as less accepting of emotional displays. The subsequent section will explore how these early experiences and societal expectations translate into observable behavioral differences in the actual expression of emotion.

4. Implications of Gendered Schemas and Scripts About Emotionality

The previous sections have established a foundation for understanding how gendered social norms shape schemas and scripts about emotionality. In the following sections, we will explore the potential implications of these culturally ingrained patterns on various aspects of human functioning, specifically focusing on the expression of emotion, interpersonal relations, and mental health outcomes. Although many studies reveal correlations that align with these norms, establishing causal relationships demands more rigorous experimental designs and longitudinal research. Therefore, while these findings offer valuable insights, they should be interpreted with caution, highlighting the need for continued research to uncover the causal links and underlying processes that shape those gender differences.

4.1. Implications for the Expression of Emotion

The empirical evidence (Chaplin and Aldao 2013; Else-Quest et al. 2006; Hall and Halberstadt 1986; LaFrance et al. 2003) suggests that gender differences in positive emotion expression develop progressively from infancy through adolescence. They reveal that while no significant gender differences in smiling were observed in early childhood, small but consistent differences emerge in middle childhood and become more pronounced in adolescence. Specifically, studies indicate that girls show higher levels of smiling and positive emotion expressions compared to boys during these later stages. These findings support the notion that biological factors and socialization processes interact over time to shape these gender differences. Initially, girls may have biologically-based advantages such as lower arousal and a richer emotion vocabulary. Over time, socialization reinforces these differences, encouraging girls to express more *relational* positive emotions and adopt behaviors consistent with traditional female gender roles. Davis (1995) observed that boys in first and third grades displayed more negativity than girls of the same age when they received an undesired gift. Girls exhibited similar levels of positive behavior regardless of the attractiveness of the gift, whereas boys showed fewer signs of positive emotion when receiving an undesired gift compared to a liked one. Further analysis revealed that girls exhibited more signs of self-control. The authors interpreted these findings as reflecting the influence of socialization, which instills different norms for emotional expression in boys and girls. Girls are typically expected to display socially acceptable behavior, leading them to become more skilled at masking negative emotions, whereas boys receive less encouragement to develop this skill.

The results of Chaplin et al.'s study (2005) suggest that differential parental attention may subtly influence children's emotional expression, encouraging girls to exhibit sadness and anxiety while potentially discouraging anger. Supporting this notion, parental responsiveness to children's expressions of sadness and anxiety predicted an increase in these expressions two years later, while a similar pattern was not observed for disharmonious emotions, suggesting potential stability in their expression over time. The meta-analytic evidence (Chaplin and Aldao 2013) indicates that girls express fear on higher levels in infancy, the toddler/preschool years, and middle childhood, but not in adolescence, with no significant differences in sadness. This suggests that gender differences in internalizing emotion expressions are likely influenced by biological factors or very early socialization processes, as they remain relatively stable across different ages. When it comes to externalizing emotions, in one study (Potegal and Archer 2004) girls aged 4 to 5 tend to suppress anger, while boys aged 7 to 8 express more anger compared to girls of the same age. A meta-analytic study (Chaplin and Aldao 2013) revealed that gender differences in externalizing emotions are not present in infancy, but emerge during the

toddler/preschool period, with boys showing higher levels of externalizing emotions such as anger compared to girls. These differences persist into middle childhood but shift direction unexpectedly in adolescence, with girls exhibiting more externalizing emotions than boys. This might be a result of social learning – as Diener and Lucas (2004) suggest that a stronger preference for anger suppression in boys may indicate that parents are more inclined to teach boys to control their anger due to gendered schemas that view men as more dominant and less affiliative, and therefore more prone to experience and express anger.

Research suggests that gender differences in social behavior begin early in life (Erwin 1993, Paley 1984, as cited in Coats and Feldman 1996). Girls tend to form smaller, more cooperative groups, while boys often create larger, more competitive ones. According to Coats and Feldman (1996), these patterns continue into adulthood and may influence how men and women express emotions. Men's ability to express anger may be linked to their competitive social environment, while women's skill in expressing happiness may be related to their emphasis on building and maintaining relationships. Additionally, Maccoby (1990) showed that, from an early age, boys and girls often engage with peers of the same gender, leading to the development of distinct "gender cultures". In the study of Zeman and Garber (1996), younger children reported expressing sadness and anger more frequently than older children, while girls were more likely than boys to express sadness and pain. Additionally, boys reported using aggression in response to anger and sadness, while girls were more likely to report using emotional expressions such as crying. This difference may reflect reporting biases rather than actual behavior, as boys might feel it is unacceptable to admit crying over minor events. Alternatively, it could be that girls have learned through socialization that crying elicits support, whereas boys are rewarded for more aggressive responses.

As already mentioned, research challenges the idea that women are more emotional, suggesting that differences are more about expressiveness than actual emotional experience, with expressiveness varying by emotion type (e.g., Allen and Haccoun 1976; Archer 2004; Davis 1995; Dimberg and Lundquist 1990; Goos and Silverman 2002; LaFrance et al. 2003; Larson and Pleck 1999; Matsumoto et al. 1998). For instance, Larson and Pleck (1999) used the experience sampling method and found that both men and women reported experiencing positive and negative emotions with similar frequency and intensity. Despite these similarities, gender differences emerged: men were more likely to report feeling competitive, strong, self-assured, and confused, while women more frequently reported feeling tired. Although some studies suggest that women report stronger emotional reactions (for example, in the study by Chaplin et al. (2008), women exhibited more pronounced emotional behavior and bodily sensations related to anxiety, such as restlessness, or sadness, such as crying), LaFrance and Banaji (1992) argue that this may be attributed to internalized social norms. These norms could influence how men and women report their emotions, potentially leading men to underreport their emotional experiences. A study by Fisher and Dubé (2005) supports this interpretation. Those authors found that although men and women responded similarly to sentimental advertisements when alone, the presence of another man made men less likely to enjoy and more likely to criticize these ads. This suggests that men may feel pressure to conform to traditional masculine stereotypes in public settings, affecting their emotional expression. Accordingly, studies show that women are better at suppressing negative emotions like anger and disgust, while men are more likely to hide fear and surprise (Matsumoto et al. 1998). Additionally, social norms lead men to often mask their distress with anger, while women may direct their anger towards themselves or transform it into distress, which they express through crying (Ekman and Friesen 1975/2003).

Empirical evidence supports the hypothesis that gender differences in emotion expression are influenced by interpersonal context, prooving Chaplin's (2015) model. According to a meta-analysis, women tend to smile more than men (France et al. 2003), but the extent of this difference varies based on several factors. This meta-analytic study shows that women smile more when they are being observed, interacting with strangers, or when the sample consists of younger participants. Thus, these differences are more pronounced in situations where women are expected to smile. Embarrassment, but not sadness, increases this tendency. Another meta-analytic study (Chaplin and Aldao 2013) revealed that gender differences in externalizing emotions are more pronounced in the presence of peers, indicating that peer dynamics may amplify gender-role-consistent expressions of anger or aggression. In the study of Zeman and Garber (1996), children reported that they would be more inclined to regulate their negative emotions (anger, sadness, and pain) in the presence of a peer compared to when they were alone or with their parents. However, the evidence on internalizing emotions is less consistent.

The evidence suggests that while both biological and socialization processes contribute to gender-specific emotional expressions, these differences are often reinforced by cultural expectations and norms. This understanding highlights the need for more refined approaches to emotional education and support, recognizing that both men and women may benefit from more flexible norms around emotional expression. Encouraging a balance between traditional gender roles and the healthy expression of a wide range of emotions may reduce some of the constraints imposed by existing social expectations, which will be further elaborated in the subsequent sections.

4.2. Implications for Interpersonal Relations

Research indicates that women possess interpersonal skills important for maintaining successful relationships, which may be related to gender differences in social roles that define women as more relationally oriented and nurturing. For example, they generally score higher on interpersonal sensitivity tests and tasks that require recognizing emotional states (McClure 2000; Rotter and Rotter 1988). While women are generally more effective at recognizing emotions in facial expressions (Campbell et al. 2002; Collignon et al. 2011; Hall, 1978; Hall and Matsumoto, 2004; Hampson, Van Anders, and Mullin 2006; Thayer and Johnsen 2000), men have demonstrated a superior ability to decode anger on male faces (Rotter and Rotter 1988). Knapp and Hall (2010) analyzed existing studies on gender differences in processing nonverbal messages and concluded that women's advantage is primarily evident in tasks where facial expressions are important.

Across different cultures, women place greater value on intimate communication comforting skills, and emotional interdependence than men (e.g., Kashima et al. 1995; Samter et al. 1997). This emphasis on interpersonal engagement leads to more frequent and pronounced interpersonal emotional expression among women compared to men (Shields 1995; Wills 1998). Ryan et al. (2005) showed that women tend to prioritize emotional support networks more frequently than men. While cultural variations exist, where these gender differences emerge, women consistently show a greater tendency to rely on others and share emotional concerns.

Gender differences in self-disclosure persist from childhood to adulthood, with females consistently engaging more in and valuing self-disclosure compared to males (e.g., Camarena, Sarigiani, and Petersen 1990; Cross, Bacon, and Morris 2000). This pattern reflects broader relational norms that encourage and reward emotional sharing among women, while men's

norms often discourage self-disclosure, as it is sometimes seen as a sign of weakness in the context of traditional masculine ideals. However, Chaplin (2015) concludes, based on empirical evidence (e.g., Izard and Ackerman 2000), that expressions of positive and internalizing emotions, such as sadness, often strengthen social bonds. For instance, shared joy can foster connection, while expressions of sadness can elicit empathy and promote solidarity in times of loss. Additionally, women are more likely to utilize emotional disclosure as a means of building and maintaining intimacy (Caldwell and Peplau, 1982). When it comes to romantic relationships, cross-cultural research (Sorokowski et al. 2023) revealed that participants from countries with higher gender equality reported experiencing more love with their partners, particularly in terms of Intimacy and Commitment, according to Sternberg's Triangular Love Scale.

Further evidence (Barrett et al. 2000) supports the notion that women exhibit greater emotional awareness and are more adept at articulating emotional experiences, especially when predicting emotions in themselves or others across various scenarios. This improved differentiation and complexity in emotional representation, even when controlling for verbal intelligence, the authors link to women's societal roles across different cultures.

The evidence indicates that gendered norms regarding emotional engagement and interpersonal skills might play a role in shaping relationship dynamics. Women’s greater emphasis on emotional support and self-disclosure contributes to stronger interpersonal connections. These findings highlight the importance of fostering environments that encourage emotional sharing and support to enhance relationship quality.

4.3. Potential Implications for Mental Health

Some findings (Chaplin et al. 2008; Stroud et al. 2002) indicate that men and women have different stress responses. In the context of antecedents, women tend to exhibit greater physiological reactivity (cortisol responses) to social rejection challenges, whereas men are more responsive to challenges related to achievement (Stroud et al. 2002). This aligns with the schema of women as interdependent and men as independent, with an emphasis on competition and high social status (Brody and Hall 2008). In Chaplin et al.’s study (2008), despite experiencing similar or lower physiological stress responses compared to men, women reported and exhibited heightened levels of sadness and anxiety following stressful events. Additionally, while men's alcohol cravings were linked to increased negative emotional states in response to stress and alcohol-related cues, no such association was found for women. This divergence may contribute to the gender differences in susceptibility to stress-related disorders, with women being more vulnerable to anxiety and depression (e.g., Angold et al. 1991), and men being more at risk for alcohol-use disorders (e.g., Kajantie and Phillips 2006; Nolen-Hoeksema and Hilt 2006).

Starting in adolescence, women exhibit higher rates of clinical depression and certain anxiety disorders compared to men (e.g., Angold et al. 1991). These disorders are characterized by the experience and expression of heightened internalized negative emotions, such as fear, sadness, and guilt (Chaplin and Cole 2005; Zahn-Waxler, Shirtcliff, and Marceau 2008). On the other hand, men have higher rates of antisocial behaviors and alcohol abuse (Fleming, Boyle, and Offord 1993; Kajantie and Phillips 2006; Nolen-Hoeksema and Hilt 2006). These disorders are linked to a reduced experience and expression of anxiety and sadness; therefore, those results may be partly due to socialization processes in which anger is viewed as a more acceptable emotion for boys, and sadness and fear as less acceptable

(Chaplin et al. 2008). On the other hand, women's proneness to rumination (Nolen-Hoeksema et al. 1999) might be a risk factor for developing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Nolen-Hoeksema 2000).

A greater inclination towards emotional engagement, relationship-focused coping, and self-disclosure in women compared to men, a common pattern in their socialization across cultures, appears to be beneficial for them (Ryan et al. 2005). When coping with emotional events, women show a greater willingness to rely on others for emotional support than men, which is associated with greater well-being. Furthermore, regardless of cultural background, the benefits of emotional reliance on well-being are evident for both genders.

The patterns observed in gender differences regarding emotional coping, stress responses, and mental health outcomes reveal significant implications for understanding and addressing gender-related mental health issues. These findings once again underscore the need to promote emotional connectedness and support networks, this time with a focus on enhancing mental health.

5. Conclusion

The present review highlights the complex interaction between gender, emotion, and social context. While biological factors may affect initial emotional predispositions, this review focused on gendered schemas and scripts and their implications for how individuals perceive, experience, and express emotions, as well as for individuals' interpersonal relationships and mental health. Findings suggest that women are often socialized to prioritize emotional expression, particularly those that emphasize interpersonal connection, while men are frequently encouraged to suppress emotions, particularly those associated with vulnerability. While many studies suggest behavioral patterns and outcomes consistent with gendered norms, none provide sufficient evidence to establish causal relationships. Longitudinal and experimental studies are crucial for understanding the complex interactions between biological, psychological, and social factors in potentially shaping gender differences in emotional expression, interpersonal relationships, and mental health outcomes. Future studies should investigate the mechanisms underlying these gender differences to develop more effective interventions and support systems that enhance emotional health, interpersonal relations, and mental well-being.

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RAZOTKRIVANJE RODNIH SKRIPTI O PRIMARNIM EMOCIJAMA I NJIHOVIH IMPLIKACIJA

Ovaj rad analizira složene odnose između kulturnih normi i rodnih razlika u emocionalnosti, kada je reč o primarnim emocijama. Kroz analizu bio-psiho-socijalnog modela, članak se fokusira na prakse socijalizacije i situacijske kontekste koji doprinose stvaranju rodno specifičnih obrazaca emocionalnosti. U radu se dalje analiziraju implikacije rodno specifičnih emocionalnih shema i skripti na različite aspekte ljudskog funkcionisanja. Empirijski podaci pokazuju da percepcija žena kao emocionalnijih uglavnom počiva na njihovoj većoj ekspresivnosti, a ne stvarnim razlikama u emocionalnom iskustvu. Nadalje, članak se bavi dinamikom interpersonalnih odnosa koja bi mogla biti povezana sa ovim rodnim normama, pri čemu žene generalno pokazuju veću emocionalnu osetljivost i ekspresivnost, posebno u kontekstima koji vrednuju emocionalnu međuzavisnost. Ovo je u suprotnosti sa tradicionalnim maskulinim idealima, što često obeshrabruje emocionalnu ekspresivnost muškaraca, posebno u javnosti. U radu su predstavljene i potencijalne implikacije ovih rodno specifičnih emocionalnih obrazaca na mentalno zdravlje, gde empirijski podaci sugerišu da veće emocionalno angažovanje žena i njihova veća spremnost da se oslone na socijalnu podršku mogu poboljšati njihovo blagostanje. U zaključku se naglašava važnost istraživanja ovih fenomena i njihovih odnosa i u budućnosti kako bi se bolje razumele uzročno-posledične veze i mehanizmi koji doprinose ovim rodnim razlikama.

Ključne reči: *emocija, rodne razlike, kulturne norme, rodno specifični emocionalni obrasci*.