

Message patterns of online gender-based humor, discriminatory practices, biases, stereotyping, and disempowering tools through discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT: This study explored the message patterns of gender-based humor in social media in different layers of discriminatory practices against certain genders, language biases against women and LGBT including elements of stereotyping and disempowering tools against the personal images of subordinate genders. This research used discourse analysis based on the mapped-out online posts and comments of the fourteen (14) profiles of individuals and extracted their important testimonies based on the collected online gender-based humor to elicit the message patterns. Gender-based humor online enhanced the language use in creating messages that express biases towards women and the LGBT. Humor has both implicit and explicit messages that stereotype women and LGBT as weak and slow. These senses of humor also disempower the women and LGBT's personal images as groups who are easily dominated or are cowards. As asserted, gender-based humor posed a threat to community as it highlights hierarchy-enhancing social roles. Gender-based humor in social media appeared as a mainstreamed form of social differentiation.

KEYWORDS: gender-based humor; discourse analysis; message patterns of discriminatory practices; biases; stereotyping; disempowering tools

1. Introduction

There is a war in the online world for gender and development (GAD) mainstreaming because of the massive prevalence of gender-based humor. These jokes are powerful messages which can pierce the campaign for mainstreaming because there are message characteristics of these jokes which may slow down the success of GAD campaigns.

This study employed discourse analysis (Eisenhart and Johnstone, 2008) as the approach for utilizing social components of communication and the ways people use language to achieve certain effects required in changing what has been perceived in reality and in this case, to breakdown message patterns into language features of the gender-based humor online which can play as a contrarian mainstreamer for GAD.

Gender mainstreaming is aimed to help government officials, field personnel, and customers of various organizations (Woodford-Berger, 2007). There are GAD capacity-building programs available to assist officials and bureaucrats in their efforts to mainstream gender (PCW, 2020). Gender and

development mainstreaming is the gold standard for achieving gender equality and protection. The community is dedicated to supporting gender equality, recognizing gender differences, and allowing for varieties determines this (United Nations, 2002). Upon learning the discourse language patterns of messages within these online humors, the key players of the GAD advocacy and the language educators can fine-tune campaigns on how to deconstruct language mainstreaming campaigns in social media.

The purpose of this study was to examine the language message patterns that are hidden in the coats of humors specifically on language-promoting discriminatory practices, language reproduction of gender bias, gender-stereotyping in language use, and disempowering tool to personal images. This research attempted to uncover the contexts of these messages by mapping out the themes and purposes of gender-based humors. Conventionally, this study does cover the humors and its message patterns beyond the scope of culture and social classes.

Sexist jokes, for example, have been used to discriminate against people based on their gender orientation, identity, and roles, and they are sometimes disguised as comedies or jokes that others may overlook. Language choices in regular speech that are sexist perpetuate gender stereotypes of men as capable and women as communal (Elias and Gurbanova, 2018; Menegatti and Rubini, 2017). Because of the nature of social media, people's attitudes have evolved, allowing for discrimination in comments and dialogues across the mechanisms of virtual engagement (Herry and Mulvey, 2022).

In specific portrayals of humors online, males are depicted as capable, whereas women are portrayed as communal. People's opinions have developed because of the nature of social media, allowing for discrimination in statements and debates through virtual community (Herry and Mulvey, 2022). As this study moves to unveil the characteristics of the discourses in humors online, it wants to proceed to identify the different sources of these types as well as languages and how their sources of contexts related to the traits of the humors they form and use in conversations and comments.

2. Research objectives

- 1) Map out the common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions in social media in terms of:
 - a. Posts
 - b. Commentaries
- 2) Determine the message patterns and themes of online gender-based humors based on:
 - a. Language promotion as discriminatory practices
 - b. Language reproduction of gender bias
 - c. Gender-stereotyping in language use
 - d. Disempowering tool for personal images

3. Theoretical underpinnings of gender-based humor

Humor also functions as an escape from situations that are stressful. Moreover, definitions of comedy frequently focus on the intended message of the speaker or audience. Humor is "a particular sort of communication that establishes an incongruent relationship or meaning and is delivered in a way that causes laughing" (Dewi et al., 2022). Undoubtedly, more research is required in assessing humor and gender over the years (Dewi et al., 2022). This is being done to determine if there are any connections or distinctions between the gender humors from previous studies and the most recent humor phenomenon.

However, the rise of humor in social media-imposed concerns about its social implications. In particular, hate speech is targeted at certain people or groups who are deemed inferior based on fundamental identity characteristics or demographic indicators (Godinez et al., 2022; Hernández, 2011; Townsend, 2014; Traum, 2014), promoting the stigmatization of an individual or people (Benesch, 2014; Godinez et al., 2022; Maussen and Grillo, 2014). It constitutes an intrusion of human integrity and establishes attacks on specific individuals or groups (Godinez et al., 2022; Jubany and Roiha, 2018; Parekh, 2006).

To frame this study, social dominance theory was established. Essentially, the SDT individual and institutional aspects that lead to several kinds of group-based oppression are emphasized. All common forms of communal oppression (e.g., racial profiling, prejudice, classism, ethnocentrism, and misogyny) are viewed as special manifestations of a broader human tendency to build and sustain group-based hierarchies (Sidanius et al., 2004).

3.1. Humors as discriminatory practices

In the context of discriminatory practices, gender-based humor that is derogatory towards women can be seen to reinforce the notion that women are inferior to men. As described by social dominance theory, discriminatory acts are carried out by individuals with particular behavioral dispositions, subgroup allegiances, and social identities, within certain social settings, frequently in relation to the conduct of social institutions and roles in society and rooted within cultures with specific social views and structural ties (Sidanius et al., 2004).

Instead of being a movement in psychological reductionism (Schmitt et al., 2003; Turner and Reynolds, 2003), the social dominance theory seeks to shed light on how psychological perspectives, communal identities, social circumstances, societal structures, and ideologies of culture all interact to generate and perpetuate social inequality based on groups (Sidanius et al., 2004). This leads to the initial assumption of the study that discriminatory practices of people in social media through gender-based humors have specific connotations from hierarchy and social strata.

Gender role differentiation and group segregation also result in unequal distribution of privileges and responsibilities across arbitrarily determined groups and gender (Pratto et al., 2006). This does not imply that individual behaviors are determined by their status in society. In contrast, a hierarchical structure implies that it is easier to perform actions that maintain or increase inequality than actions that diminish the hierarchy. There are strong differences among people with the same social class in terms of what groups their actions favor, the extent to which they discriminate, their level of group prejudice, and how firmly they choose to discriminate compared to egalitarian policies (Pratto et al., 2006). This is an indication that the behaviors of individuals are not solely influenced by their position in the social structure.

3.2. Humors as gender bias

Gender-based humor that reinforces traditional gender roles and stereotypes can perpetuate gender bias by reinforcing these attitudes and behaviors in individuals. This can lead to the reproduction of gender bias in language use and other aspects of social interaction. In relation to the social dominance theory, persistent inequality between groups is preserved in part by the inappropriate use of power towards groups that are subordinated (Pratto and Stewart, 2011).

One significant type of confluence involves the categorization of individuals into different hierarchies—attenuating and hierarchy—enhancing social roles and social institutions. Males score

higher than females on social dominance orientation; they are significantly disproportionately represented in hierarchy-enhancing roles, e.g., law, finance, and military, while females are over-represented in hierarchy—attenuating roles, e.g., charity works, and social work (Pratto and Stewart, 2011).

Empirical evidence demonstrates that this is the result of “self-selection, institutional discrimination in employment, ideological socialization, and differential feedback and attrition” (Pratto and Stewart, 2011). Similar selection processes are applied to hierarchy-enhancing roles within groups perceived to be dominant, who also score stronger on social dominance orientation and uphold hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing beliefs compared to inferior members of the group.

People of dominant social groups typically receive an imbalance of desirable and symbolic resources, including political influence, wealth, physical security, leisure activities, and educational opportunities. The negative social value can be disproportionately imposed upon or left to people from subordinate groups in the form of disproportionate punishment, vilification, and stigmatization (Pratto et al., 2006). Even though the extent, seriousness, and defining foundations of group-based hierarchical structure vary throughout communities and over period within their community, group-based hierarchical structures appear to have become a human universal (Brown, 1991; Lenski, 1984; Pratto et al., 2006; Tilly, 1998).

3.3. Gender-stereotyping in language use

Gender-based humor that relies on stereotypes can reinforce these stereotypes and lead to gender-stereotyping in language use (Locke et al., 2018). This can lead to a range of negative consequences, including discrimination and the perpetuation of gender inequality. Stahlberg et al. (2007) found that masculine generics elicit a male bias in mental images and cause listeners and readers to consider male exemplars of an individual categorization more often than male exemplars. Women are not given authority because they appear incapable of upholding it “... as demonstrated by their linguistic behavior...” (Lakoff, 1973). In line with the theory of dominance (Lakoff, 2004), women are viewed as oppressed bodies whose language is dominated by males.

Several factors contribute to the development of linguistic differences between males and females. It was implied that masculine language was more abrasive mature, and forthright or pointed (Dewi et al., 2022). These expressions include mhm, yes, and right. These words are frequently employed by males to assert dominance. Men frequently use the words gimme, gotta, and going to when giving instructions and orders, particularly when speaking with other men (Dewi et al., 2022). Third, it was commonly believed that males used more profanity than women (Dewi et al., 2022).

3.4. Disempowering tool to personal images

When ideologies become standard, they can exert a significant impact on behavior and on individual standards for the behavior of others. Social interpretations have constantly recognized the significance of social norms for human behaviors, and for recognizing discrimination and coordinated action in relationships between groups, social norms are crucial (Stewart, 2015).

Gramsci (2020) was mindful of the significance of ideological norms for preserving the authority of the dominant group. To normalize the social status of dominant groups, he argued that dominant individuals controlled the strongest normative ideologies as well as the language that expands these views. By establishing dominant group authority and making their social status appear innate, unavoidable, and positive, dominant groups could prevent subordinate groups from compromising the unequal society and preventing any resistance from arising from subordinate groups (Stewart, 2015).

In the case of cyberbullying, adolescents report feeling angry, sad, and hurt (Walker et al., 2011). Also of concern, they are poor concentration and subpar academic achievement (Beran and Li, 2005). Gender-based humor that objectifies women can be seen as a disempowering tool that reduces women to their physical appearance and reinforces the notion that women are primarily humorous objects. Gray and Ford (2013) argued that only 20% of respondents considered sexist remarks and crude language to be harassment. This further extends the assumption of this study that humors can be a channel for disempowerment tool to personal images.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

The research design is based on the exploratory research by Saunders et al. (2012) and Singh (2007) which deeply examines the narratives of the participants from the different orientations. It aimed to go deeper into research issues which may be useful for further analysis from the pathways of discourse analysis. The process of using discourse analysis will uncover important contextualization of the gender-based humors online as with the reactions of the participants in the study as they belong to diverse profiles.

4.2. Population and sampling technique

Purposive sampling was used to collect data for this investigation. The participants were initially determined as social media users who spend at least 1 h on social media. Essentially, purposive sampling ensures that the participants share specific characteristics (Hassan, 2022), i.e., social media users who spend at least 1 h online. The social media sites that participants used are presented in **Table 1**. They were coming from various orientations and profiles to deeply portray the origins of online comedy manifestations. Purposive sampling, also known as purposive and selected sampling, is a method used by qualitative researchers to discover individuals who may give particular information on the issue under investigation (Hassan, 2022). The qualitative researcher determines the qualifying criteria that each participant must satisfy in order to be picked for the research study, which is very subjective (Yadav, 2022).

Table 1. Social media platforms.

Participants	n
Facebook only	3
Facebook and TikTok	7
Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter	2
Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram	2
Total	14

There were 14 participants for this study who spend at least 1 h using social media daily and actively engaging for communication or for commentaries and conversations. The profiles of the number of the participants were showing in **Table 2**.

4.3. Sampling technique

Purposive sampling was used to acquire participants since this demands certain profiles, roles, and qualities. Purposive sampling may be advantageous when just a small number of people are available to serve as primary data sources due to the nature of the study design and aims and objectives. Purposive sampling investigates how to generate a sample population (for example, homosexuals) even if it is not statistically representative of the larger community under study, which is why discourse analysis was

Table 2. Participants' profile.

Profile	Participants	n
Person in power or authority	One person as head of a government office and one as head of private office	2
Persons with different educational background	One individual with college degree and one individual with no college degree	2
Persons from different gender roles	One lesbian, one gay man, one heterosexual female, and one heterosexual male	4
Persons from different generation (Age)	One adult and one millennial	2
Language teachers	–	2
GAD point persons	–	2
Total		14

1) Person in power or authority—[i] anyone who is holding a public office, who leads a certain department, or who has a certain role in a publicly established office (e.g., department head, government official), he/she has to be in current position for more than 5 years; [ii] anyone who is in private institution and in public institution who has a high authority to certain department or office (e.g., President, private department head).

2) Educational attainment—[i] one who had been and graduated in higher education from either private or public university; [ii] one who had (or not) finished either high school, or elementary, and has access to social media platforms.

3) Gender roles—[i] anyone from any age (not specified) who consider themselves as a member of any gender-based groups (e.g., heterosexual, gay or lesbian).

4) Generational classification—[i] two from adult bracket (1979 and beyond), two from millennial bracket (1980 onwards).

utilized. Purposive sampling allows information to be extracted from data.

4.4. Research instrument

To cover the extraction and analysis of the research, the study used an online gender-based-mapper, one-on-one interviews, and FGD-oriented tools. All participants were invited to the interviews and FGD, were informed of the goal of the study, were informed of their rights and privileges as participants, and were ensured of the confidentiality of the information retrieved. Consent was requested for the researcher's dissemination efforts.

1) Online gender-based humor expressions mapper: To identify prevalent discriminatory gender-based comedy expressions in social media postings, comments, and discussions. The researcher requested permission from the participants to monitor and submit inventory posts on humors. These were accomplished by taking screen photos or copying and pasting them into a Word document. This is accomplished by an examination of the degree of gender-based comedy, how people react to it based on gender, how marginalized individuals react to it, the existence of tolerant behaviors, and the repetition of actions over time. Identification tags on these documents were deleted during the study process and the researcher's dissemination activities.

2) Online humor-mapper and message pattern validators: To determine the message patterns and themes of online gender-based humors based on language promoting discriminatory practices, language reproduction of gender bias, gender-stereotyping in language use, and disempowering tool to personal images. This was a one-on-one in-depth semi-structured interview with all participants to validate the message patterns and themes found in their social media activities. There were two extractions of data in this part as well. The first was to categorize the message patterns and themes from the inventory of humor posts, commentaries, and conversations from the social media account of the participants. The second extraction of data took place through one-on-one interview with the respondents to validate and analyze their humor posts, commentaries, and conversations on social media.

4.5. Data collection procedure

The study used inventory monitoring, interview, and focus group discussion (FGDs) as the methods to gather in depth information from the participants as well as their humor expressions on social media in terms of statements, commentaries, and conversations. The monitoring-inventory of humor

expressions covered their activities in the social media from November 2021 and twelve (12) weeks earlier. The monitoring-inventory served as the collection of gender-based humors in social media.

The inventory in **Table 3** is collections of gender-based humors collected in different social media platforms that the participants are using. Most of these were among their friends and contacts. This inventory was presented to the participants during the interview and FGD.

In conducting an FGD, the researcher used the guidelines from Hollis et al. (2002). As noted, “[One] ingredient in a successful focus group is the questions or exercises that are used to stimulate ideas” (Hollis et al., 2002). The researchers used the guide questions from **Table 4** in collecting the data through FGD. This, along with the inventory in Table 3, stimulates the ideas of participants towards gender-based humors and its message patterns.

Table 3. Monitoring-inventory for gender-based humors in social media.

Message	Posts	Message	Posts
What’s six inches long, two inches wide, and drives women wild? Money.		If my wife made a dollar for every sexist joke I make. She’d be \$0.77 richer right now.	
Did you hear they finally made device that makes cars run 95% quieter? Yeah, it fits right over her mouth.		I’m a woman and I have rights. LOL.	
I’m not sexist. Sexism is wrong. And being wrong is for women.		They say a women’s work is never done. Maybe that’s why they get paid less.	

Table 4. Online humor-mapper and message pattern validators flow of questions.

Discourse message patterns	Interview set question 1	Interview set question 2	Interview set question 3
Language promoting discriminatory practices	What are the messages of these jokes (exhibit sample humor text)?	What are the common traits or characterizations made for genders (women, LGBT, and men)?	Can humors or jokes be converted into beliefs by others who read or listen to humors or jokes on social media?
Language reproduction of gender bias	Do these humors give positive or negative characterizations to specific genders?	Are these portrayals of genders (e.g., women, LGBT, and men) good and appropriate for them?	If I say that women are weak, or gays are cowards in humors, others will believe that they are?
Gender-stereotyping in language use	Are the genders specified in the humor compared to other genders?	Is it possible that these discriminated genders be treated as such by the rest of the population (depending on which adjectives: weak, poor, and coward)?	How do you think humors and jokes are constructed as a language in social media?
Disempowering tool to personal images	Can you explain the manifestations of these comparisons?		

4.6. Data analysis

Based on Kiger and Varpio (2020), semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used to validate these discourse indicators in order to gain a thorough understanding of the origins and circumstances of

these humors. Generally, “unstructured interviews [serve] as a natural extension of participant observation, because they so often occur as part of ongoing participant observation...” (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009). Coding and a thematic approach were used to determine the paths of the objectives as well as to reveal probable emergent themes from the data extraction and analysis process. Thematic analysis enables the researchers to translate and communicate the data (Nowell et al., 2017). Thematic analysis is a powerful analytical tool for qualitative research because it is a versatile qualitative data analysis method that may extract information in an inductive or deductive manner. This study utilized the process outlined by Lochmiller (2021) where the researchers categorized the responses into smaller and compressible themes that share similar and relevant codes. In coding, the researcher should “fracture” or separate the narratives into tiny bits of information (Riessman, 2011).

5. Results

5.1. Research objective 1: Common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions in social media in terms

Table 5 showed that gender-based humors from fourteen (14) participants for the last 12 months starting from November 2021 with the content on women as being hard to understand, overacting, and unreasonable comprise the highest frequency posted and commented in the online. It is followed by women being objectified based on their bodies, being portrayed as weak, dependent, as well as being the subject of entertainment on the online jokes. Furthermore, the LGBT community is also portrayed with different characterization in gender-based humors online including language content pertaining to their lesser rights compared to other genders, being weak and being easy topics for funny conversations.

Table 5. Sample inventory of gender-based humors online (posts) based on themes.

Posts	Common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions
1 Do you think you can win an argument with a person who stands like this for 7 h just to look pretty?	Women use high heels just to look pretty and arguing with them is not a good choice.
2 Ariel, why do you wear seashells? Because B-shells are too small and D-shells are too big.	Bossy shaming of women based on their bust circumference.
3 Why can't women ski? Because there's no snow between the bedroom and the kitchen.	Women should only be limited to doing household chores.
4 What's six inches long, two inches wide, and drives women wild? Money.	It is described that women are concerned about wildly attaining money.
5 Philippine presidency is not a job for women.	Women don't have the capacity to be president.
6 Q: Is Google male or female? A: Female, because it doesn't let you finish a sentence before making suggestions.	Women don't allow someone to talk before reacting.
7 Did you hear they finally made device that makes cars run 95% quieter? Yeah, it fits right over her mouth.	It describes sexually cutting off women to remain silent.
8 I'm not sexist. Sexism is wrong. And being wrong is for women.	Women are described to be always wrong.
9 Sometimes, these feminists are really a bit OA. I mean, that's funny. Come on. Just laugh.	Sexist jokes are just normal.

The following gender-based humor materials (**Table 6**) were gathered from the online comments of the research participants from November 2022 and 12 months earlier.

5.2. Research objective 2: Message patterns and themes

The emerging trend of humor in social media was represented by message patterns and themes based on language promotion, biases and disempowering.

Table 6. Sample inventory of gender-based humors online (comments).

	Comments	Common discriminatory gender-based humor expressions
1	“Gay is bad” Audience: claps “Gays is good”. Exact same audience: claps.	Gays are good and bad.
2	Remember when rainbows were just a fun thing of nature?	Stereotyping rainbow as the LGBT symbol.
3	It’s very difficult to be discriminated. It’s like that there’s nothing you can do about what they say.	Being homosexual is bad.
4	My straight friends love my gay jokes though.	LGBT members should be treated as jokes.
5	None of my straight friends are this straight. They love my bad gay jokes.	LGBT members are topics for gender-based jokes.
6	What I find funny is that all my past friends have been bisexual.	LGBT shall be unfriended.
7	Apparently, I don’t have any straight friends, even the ones who appear to be.	Gender expression is being neglected.
8	Bold of you to assume I have any straight friends.	All his friends are gays.
9	Imagines a couple of girls. Married for thirty years...when one of them snaps and asks the question that’s been bugging them the entire time. “Are you gay?”.	Gays cannot marry a woman.

5.2.1. Language promotion as discriminatory practices

There are different targets for the language promotion based on the intent of the gender-based humors online. The audience perceived reactions and language are the prevalent aspects of language promotions. Audience reaction is dependent on how particular gender-based humors “go viral” in the social media and this is where the message proceeds to the many actors in the social media. The algorithm of the online world is easier for the gender-based humors to propagate and reach its target audience or even the unintended audience. This is an open space for the attached discriminatory and sexist content and meanings to spread effectively and continue its influence on diverse audience. That is why Asemah et al. (2022) admits that the online space has shattered communication challenges by accommodating people to openly express their thoughts, opinions, and the many aspects of their lives. Because there is massive distribution and high impact on individual persons and cyber-communities, the prevalence of jokes with sexism and hate speech on the internet has become an expected concern.

“They give negative characterization. Sometimes it is spreading. We are offending the specific gender. It can affect their emotions. It can affect their confidence. Sometimes, I can say that for women, the jokes are offensive. Not the natural way they react. Not all of them will react similarly to these kinds of matters. It can affect their emotions. Some are not true. They are below the belt.”—(Participant 2)

“...or for fun, life is boring if there’s no joke. Usually, they are not structured. Because if the structure is street-smart, they are more appealing, and they are funnier. Possible like gay lingo, if they are joking, that is what they use. Although [it is] lingo, most people can still understand it...”—(Participant 3)

“They are appealing. Because it’s fun. It adds spice. Starters of conversations. Message is sacrificed compared to how fun and entertainment value of the joke. It affects our emotions. I think, it is easy to change side [opinion]. What is trending... because a lot of people share it, the reader will believe.”—(Participant 4)

“For me, I notice that they are putting pictures, they use words so others would understand. They use colors for backgrounds because sir image ad different backgrounds tend to attract. They will be curious. They will read it... after that, they will absorb it. They think what they read is real or true which is actually not.”—(Participant 5)

5.2.2. Language reproduction of gender bias

The messages of the gender-based humors are accepted and reproduced according to the type of audience or recipients on the web. Message patterns of the gender-based humor online are important dissection for the development and reproduction of gender biases which may have many routes with respect to gender and development and the actors advocating it. As more extensive representations of the messages from the humors online, gender biases and other forms of gender disenfranchisements, were patronized by the type of audience in terms of gender roles and preferences. These biases are particularly patterned on the “imbalance role” treatments among genders, particularly in “characterizing” certain genders, like women and LGBT as “weaker” and “softer” genders against the males or even against themselves. That is why Jiang et al. (2019) had to advocate for minimizing language biases on gender by transitioning into gender-neutral language: to reduce gender bias, different peoples’ language patterns should be modified by making these audiences aware of the advantages of gender-neutral words, phrases, and language usage.

“The characteristics is that women are different from other genders like straight. They cannot do the same things. Women are weak. LGBT is not right or acceptable.”—(Participant 1)

“Comparison of the capability of the genders, women, or men. Normalization on what is acceptable to a woman or man as they relate to how women react or respond or think...”—(Participant 2)

“I think jokes are made for fun. In fact, it involves certain sectors. So, it makes the jokes not good anymore...”—(Participant 5)

5.2.3. Gender-stereotyping in language use

The language on gender-stereotyping is one of the most common message patterns extracted from the sources of gender-based humor online. Recognizable from these humors are themes related to the traits of the actors in the humor itself. These message patterns are particularly elaborations of stereotyping in terms of “inequality”, “characteristics”, “qualities”, and “capacities” of a particular gender group. Perception and assumptions determine the stereotyping tendencies of certain genders. These progresses as some gender and social profiles generalized the traits of certain genders in the language of underestimating their abilities, weakening their capacities, and subsequently defending their assumptions through their experience and group validations.

Because there are message gaps in the humors, Budziszewska et al. (2014) reiterate that the prevalence of communication barriers and gaps influences word delivery, which is causing the humor language to be misconstrued in general. Stereotyping intentionally or unknowingly produces language that presents “bad images to someone” while representing it as a humor. Stereotyping was “illustrations” and “representations” of genders being portrayed negatively as these are formed by the author of the humors and the distributor of the humor material. Generally, the “illustration” of stereotyping for certain genders (weak, softer, limited abilities) is automatically considered as negative portrayal of women and the LGBT members.

“Stereotyping is underestimating their capabilities in attitudes and movements of the females.”—(Participant 6)

“I think especially on the illustration, it tries to give bad image to women. Bring them to lower level in terms of the gender, where men are better...”—(Participant 7)

5.2.4. Disempowering tool to personal images

Disempowering message pattern appears to be one of the most critical aspects in characterizing

gender-based humor in social media because it directly and indirectly affects the campaign dynamics of mainstreaming gender and development. Much more dangerous because it empowers potentially powerful actors in the social media to continue the discriminative and sexist of the humors prevailing in the vast arena of the web.

Message patterns are very powerful tools that target the very effect of the humor's content to the very identity of the gender group or groups because of its feature to characterize them in bad light such as their "abilities", "capacities", and "opportunities" to do it. This is the very initial impression of Peters (2015) where he contends that males possess innate qualities in them such as aggression that proceed to more power as well as social status.

"Based on the materials, depicted in the messages, women are less dominant. Women are vulnerable to sexism. They shouldn't have equal rights..."—(Participant 8)

"With women here, women are just a homemaker, not capable of being handling positions, even presidency positions. Discriminatory, like not being able to become a doctor, lesbians are characterized as nobody..."—(Participant 10)

"I think they will believe. For gays, they have to be coward. I think somehow, when I encountered jokes on genders parang ma-change ang belief ko (like my belief will change). It becomes a part of my belief. When I get to react to it, on those jokes it becomes a belief..."—(Participant 9)

5.2.5. Levels of beliefs and conversion

A very important theme emerged in the study, specifically on nuancing and analyzing the message patterns on "beliefs" and "conversion". The narratives suggest that social media users, especially those with low educational background pose more susceptibility to passing through language and humor as a "belief" and a "social norm". From the other lens, those who advocate and who are aware of the progressive nature of GAD mainstreaming have less susceptibility to adapting to the culture surrounding the gender-based humor online.

Conversion of these humors distributed online solidified beliefs and posed serious aspects for "discriminatory practices" as well as carrying the "influential" trait to other web actors. Segments of the online players who could recognize legitimate classification of neutral and sexist language from these humors were "less manipulated", considering the potential "misinforming quotations" from someone in power. Hodson et al. (2010) was correct in this assumption that gender-based humors or jokes are not thought to self-reflect or encourage biases due to the belief that it has lower perceived offense as created by sarcastic elements and very indirect communication. This is the possible reason why beliefs and conversion happen because these groups do not see anything bias among the humors online.

"For some sir they do, for some they don't. It depends on the person how they understand the joke. For those who believe in these jokes, these are people that are less knowledgeable about live. Like if, you are not easily believing in these jokes. Those who less believe, are having knowledge of the meaning of these words..."—(Participant 11)

"I think, especially if consumers or users who are less educated are easily manipulated that these jokes are true. Example on women who are not fit for presidency, that followers will listen and believe..."—(Participant 14)

"At some points... But not all are converted because people search for it if they have spare time. To know what is true and not, we should choose what is right..."—(Participant 13)

6. Discussion

Language promotion as discriminatory practices. The other aspect of promotion is the language used itself. The language used becomes a tool in promoting the content and message of the content including aggression (Esposito, 2021). The type of language used in the gender-based humors online actually becomes a tool for comprehension of humor, including the use of “informal” and “unstructured” tones of the language which adds to the element of justified appeal to the humors towards a large portion of the population immersed in the social media (Ford and Ferguson, 2004; Ford et al., 2013). The language of the humors is simplified, giving it more relatability to the audience or potential recipients. As it is relatable and simplified, the gender-based humors are easily distributed to as many parts of the population even if it has cyber bullying content on genders (Kowalski and Limber, 2013; Liao, 2007; Liao and Chang, 2006; Locke et al., 2018; Walker et al., 2011).

For its implication, this means that whatever gender-based undertones of discrimination and sexism, are easily promoted to the internet users who are exposed to the gender-based humors. Bergmann (1974) painted a clearer picture where discrimination, and sexist attributes are reinforced through the language of sexist jokes in the comfort of the features of humors which is spread easily because of its language features.

Language reproduction of gender bias. Cameron (1992) believed, the implication was clear that from the conversations surrounding gender-based humors, “comparison among groups” was a prevalent pattern among the online actors. This type of comparison aids bigger pictures of biases against certain genders because the comparison releases direct differentiation of traits from the origin of the author of the humors who may not really represent the group or population’s opinion towards the perceived traits of the “compared” genders (Crawford, 1995). Manifested languages of biases shape into “one is better than the other” or “they cannot do the same things”. Subsequently, these reproduced language of gender biases perpetrates on bigger audiences because there is a neutral ground for its control and corrections. This is supported by Tajfel (1978), where gender biases come in different forms of humors expressions and language and groups. These comments or conversations are remnants of classifiable discourses which may promote gender biases especially in repeated interaction and frequency of use in arguing or long discussions, taking the language reproduction to longer survival on the Internet and even redistributing through sharing online.

Gender stereotyping in language use. The implication supports Eagly (1999) expands the issue on stereotypes in social dynamics, where gender stereotyping is not really content-neutral since reflect power and status imbalances that favor the males and are associated with the social performances (Elias and Gurbanova, 2018; Jamshed et al., 2022; Peters et al., 2015) and roles that go with their perceived traits, including those who are in power and those in the mass segment of the society (students and those not in authority), stereotypes in the gender-based humors (Cantor and Zillman, 1973) represented the message for language that demean or underestimate character and qualities of the compared genders (mostly women and the LGBT). In the long run, it is an important move to clarify through language campaigns the levels of stereotyping where it already endangers the images of certain genders being forwarded by the gender-based jokes (González-Cabrera et al., 2018; Selkie et al., 2016).

Disempowering tools to personal images. The implication is on point. There are clear demarcation lines that tell humors based on gender characterized women as weak and fragile as they show them in the language of “nobodiness” or “nothingness” (Valledor-Lukey, 2012). These message patterns validate its disempowering element as they can discredit what certain groups (women, LGBT) can do. In many

instances, “cowardice” is somewhat associated with LGBT (gay), and this becomes a personal image and identity to that particular group as opposed to men who are touted as the stronger roles (Lewis and Sussman, 2014). This very image proceeds and extend its effects in “discriminating personal images”. Gays are tagged to be easily dominated and subsequently disempowered by their ability to be equal in the standards of the society. This is very aligned with the idea of Eagly (1999) that there are power imbalances that favor males and are associated with the social roles that go with them which affects how women are portrayed in the societal strata including in the workplace.

In many perception games on gender, women lose in the arena of equal playing field. Menegatti and Rubini (2017) succumb to a firm assertion that female characters are cast as the powerless or victim since they are more docile and sensitive. The woman’s “ability of women to hold executive positions” is one of the most remarkable messages extracted from the narratives among the online actors. The very humor about gender neutralizes the fair characterizations of women in the workplace or any portrayals in the society. Women are magnified in the humors as the gender with “less” leadership traits, as echoed by Agassi (1977, 1988, 1989) and Blumberg (1976, 1984), that primary or supportive employment outside the home is not for women. Conversely, these portrayals may not necessarily fly in the belief system of some online actors because leadership as competence can be associated with women being a “homemaker”, but these beliefs are minority in the population. Some of these progressive thinking about role portrayals is still dominated by personal images indicating women, as well as LGBT, as the weaker actors, as compared to men which further fall prey to more discrimination against women (Davey, 2020).

Level of beliefs and conversion. There is no definite mechanism to control and regulate highly discriminatory beliefs which means that accountability will not be enforced to anyone who believe and spread the dangers of language in the gender-based humors. This emergence of these promoters and converters of the sexist and discriminatory humors are more alarming if they are coming from the group with authorities and position in the society. But unlike Bill and Naus (1992), they affirm that public domains are presumably based on the belief held by the general public and humor theorists alike that there is gender-based humors online with negative consequences. Specifically, it is thought to create and reinforce beliefs of stereotypes of social groups and, thus, perpetuate prejudice.

Also, there is even lesser accountability as the authors and distributors of the discriminatory and sexist humors are coming from anonymous actors, thereby continuing the efficacy of believing and converting recipients into assuming that these humors are normal and tolerable.

7. Conclusion

Gender-based humor online has multiplied language use in creating messages that express biases towards women which proceeds to send expressions that they are lesser genders in many jokes online. As part of its strong traits, these humors online cannot be controlled or regulated because there are no institutionalized policies to police discriminating or sexist jokes.

This study was able to explore complex social contexts within gender-based humor and its linguistic implications. Language promotion as discriminatory practices indicated that gender-based humors were unstructured such that its message transcends across social media. Discriminatory practices in essence indicate that women were inferior to men because of their demographical characteristics. Moreover, it is notable that gender bias upholds more message patterns that pertain to comparison between men and women, i.e., differentiation, disproportionate representation, and between-group segmentation. In terms of the general implication of gender-based humor online, it served as a channel for disempowering social

images that it focused on instilling social norms as standards to be attained by subordinate groups. Nevertheless, this was able to identify theoretical components relevant to social dominance theory.

Particularly, there is a need to extend the definitions of social dominance in social media especially because social media heavily relies on linguistic and visual messages. Future study has to consider complex human relations beyond the scope of messages considering humors act as both positive and negative reinforcers.

Author contributions

Conceptualization, JVC, DDL and CCC; methodology, DDL; software, CCC; validation, JVC, DDL and CCC; formal analysis, JVC; investigation, DDL; resources, CCC; data curation, DDL; writing—original draft preparation, DDL and CCC; writing—review and editing, DDL and CCC; visualization, DDL and CCC; supervision, JVC; project administration, DDL and CCC; funding acquisition, JVL, DDL and CCC. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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